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Trust walkout leaves Bradford school in limbo

- > Trust: We won't say why and we won't say what funding we used
- > Union: 'Children are not cans of beans that can be left on the shelf'

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Investigates

A second trust given a slice of £5 million northern academy hub funding has walked away from a school in special measures – meaning it has now

been in limbo waiting for a permanent sponsor for six years.

The Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT) will no longer sponsor Hanson academy, in Bradford, after it finishes a 12-month "try before you buy" period in which it

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JOHN TOMSETT
'TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IS NOT EASY TO DO'

HEADTEACHERS' ROUNDTABLE
SUMMIT 2017 | ENABLING SCHOOLS TO THRIVE & FLOURISH

FIRST KEYNOTE SPEAKER ANNOUNCED, MORE TO FOLLOW...

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Features editor:	Cath Murray
Head designer:	Nicky Phillips
Designer:	Matthew Willson
Sub editor:	Jill Craven
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Trust turns back on Bradford school in special measures

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW **Investigates**

provided support to the school.

WCAT, which was handed some of £5 million government funding given to five trusts to take over failing schools and drive up standards in the north, has refused to explain why it is now walking away from Hanson.

It is the second of the northern trusts to pull out from schools in the region.

Schools Week revealed last month that Bright Tribe withdrew from sponsoring a federation in Cumbria. However, it said these schools did not fall under the extra funding remit.

WCAT's rejection follows a similar move by School Partnership Trust Academies, now renamed Delta Academies Trust, which pulled out of a promise to sponsor Hanson in 2015.

This latest drop-out raises serious questions over how the government can ensure schools deemed too toxic for an academy takeover will get improvement support.

Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said: "This shows the dangers of leaving education to the market – it's a rational market response because it jeopardises your brand.

"But children aren't cans of beans that can be left on the shelf. There doesn't seem to be a coherent strategy to ensure ministers can ensure these schools get the support they need and that they aren't left floundering."

Hanson first planned to convert to an academy after being put in special measures in 2011. It was rated as "requires improvement" in 2013, but put back into special measures in 2015.

Former education secretary Nicky Morgan once famously said "a day spent in a failing school is a day too long when their education is at stake". But the year 7 Hanson intake in 2011-12, the first time it was rated inadequate, left the school last year without ever seeing a permanent sponsor.

WCAT has refused to comment on its reasons for not

staying with Hanson. It will also walk away from University Academy Keighley, also in Bradford.

The organisation would not confirm whether the abandoned schools were covered by the northern academy hub deal. A spokesperson said the trust had converted three primaries in Bradford.

Morgan said the northern hub funding was for "top performing" academy sponsors to "improve performance for pupils in the most challenging areas".

Imran Khan, Bradford council's executive member for education, employment and skills, said the decision was not a reflection on the schools, but a result of the trust's "organisational structure".

Dr John Hargreaves, WCAT chairman, said the trust's focus was on improving standards in its current 21 academies, and pledged to work with the government to limit disruption during the "transition".

The education department is yet to publish the findings of a financial and governance investigation into the trust.



Autism diagnosis can miss other special needs, say experts

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Schools are struggling to support the rising numbers of pupils diagnosed with autism because the label means other learning needs can be "neglected", parents and experts have told *Schools Week*.

The latest Department for Education (DfE) data shows a 25 per cent increase in autism diagnoses over the past four years. However, experts say the rise is a result of overly simplistic assessments of pupils by local authorities that leave out more specific issues related to speech, language, mobility and auditory problems.

Faced with a 40 per cent reduction in core government funding since 2010, councils are reluctant to pay for assessments by therapists, say SEND specialists, in case more expensive needs are identified.

School budgets are also squeezed with an 8 per cent real-terms fall expected by 2020, according to the Institute of Fiscal Studies.

Some parents are appealing council decisions and are funding their own assessments for their children, which can cost thousands of pounds.

Alicia McColl, who lives in Surrey, said the educational psychologist appointed by the local county council only observed her 13-year-old son and carried out no assessments for different needs. "It was down to me, as a single parent, to fund these assessments myself," she told *Schools Week*.

Therapists told McColl that her son had a receptive and expressive language disorder, slow auditory processing and hypermobility syndrome, as well



as dyspraxia and a sensory processing disorder.

She said the local authority was reluctant to fund comprehensive assessments because further therapies for his needs would be expensive.

"These kinds of assessments eat into local authorities' budgets as it means they have to provide a speech and language therapist.

"It's easier to neglect to assess children properly, to label them autistic and leave it at that."

Jessica Wheatley, who has four children, three with autism and other needs, went to a tribunal to contest her son's statement from Surrey county council.

She paid almost £10,000 for private reports and expects to pay a further £2,000 to have her two daughters assessed by a speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist.

"The local authority thinks that the diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder tells it everything it needs to know about a child without any further need for any other kinds of assessment. It also seems of the opinion that they can all just carry on in mainstream".

Surrey council was recently found by

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to have numerous weaknesses in its provision for autistic pupils. It has been ordered to submit a written statement of action.

A spokesperson said the authority was aware before the inspectors visited that "there was more we needed to do to make sure [pupils] always get the right support and were already putting in place a series of improvements".

The spokesperson added that inspectors said the young people they met felt "happy, safe and well-cared for" but there was "much more to do" in the face of a rising demand for services.

Lesley Wood, a speech and language therapist in Sussex, said therapists were unwilling to recommend multiple interventions to councils as "once it's all down in a legal document it has to be funded, and no one really wants to when budgets are small".

She added that a preference for a single rather than multiple diagnoses, and pupils remaining in mainstream schools, had been in fashion since the 1990s.

Malcolm Reeve, executive director of SEND and inclusion at multi-academy group Academies Enterprise Trust, said that by definition an autism diagnosis should identify communication, socialisation, sensory and comprehension issues, but that many schools did not understand its "various dimensions".

The number of pupils with identified special educational needs fell by more than 72,000 between 2015 and 2016 – but pupils with autism as their primary need now make up 25.9 per cent of all pupils with special needs statements.

Managing director: Shane Mann

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NEWS

Ofsted ignores more than 100 schools for a decade

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

Exclusive

More than 1,200 schools in England have not had a full Ofsted inspection in seven years, with more than 100 given respite for longer than a decade, a new *Schools Week* analysis reveals.

A policy introduced by the government in 2011 exempts schools graded outstanding from further routine inspection as long as data shows they are "maintaining performance".

Instead the watchdog's "risk assessment" approach monitors outstanding schools for factors such as academic performance and pupil attendance, but there are fears this does not reveal the full truth about a school, such as its safeguarding.

The latest official statistics from Ofsted show that 106 schools have gone more than 10 years without a full inspection; 372 are recorded as not receiving one since 2007; 398 since 2008; and 407 since 2009. In total 1,283 schools appear not to have been inspected for more than seven years.

Union leader Malcolm Trobe, interim general secretary at the Association of School and College Leaders, said he wants the policy reviewed, arguing that it is dangerous for such a high number of schools to go so long without a full inspection.



He said: "Ofsted does have to prioritise what they are doing, but 10 years is way too long for them not to have picked up on a reinspection."

"The risk assessment procedure will not necessarily cover everything that is going on. It is important for all aspects of school life be accounted for."

The government reduced inspections of outstanding schools in 2011 with the aim of allowing Ofsted to "focus its resources on underperforming schools".

However, *Schools Week's* sister paper *FE Week* has learned the policy could be changing for further education providers.

A spokesperson for Ofsted said the organisation had "no plans at the moment

to change" the exemption and noted it was the government, not the inspectorate, that created the policy in the first place.

A Department for Education spokesperson said that while outstanding schools were exempt from routine inspection, they were still subject to accountability measures.

But the introduction of regional schools commissioners (RSCs) who oversee school performance using data has now created overlap with Ofsted's data monitoring.

Trobe said his union would ask the new chief inspector, Amanda Spielman, and the national schools commissioner, Sir David Carter, for "absolute clarity" about the responsibilities of each group.

Spielman, who took the reins from Sir

Michael Wilshaw this month, also said during a parliamentary hearing last year that she was looking at scrapping the outstanding rating altogether.

However, because the government wrote the exemption from inspection for outstanding schools into law in 2011, parliament would need to repeal the law before the top grade could be scrapped.

Trobe said he hoped Spielman would "open up the debate" about the outstanding grade now she was in post.

"Obviously you want schools to have high aspirations so you can see why you want an outstanding grade to be available. But there are a number of reasons why, particularly given the shortness of a lot of inspections now, as to how the judgment can be made in the amount of person-hours spent coming up with such an important decision," he said.

But Rachel de Souza, founder of campaign group Parents and Teachers for Excellence and chief executive of the Inspiration Trust, said outstanding schools should be "left to get on to do what they do best" if they still delivered excellent results and parents had not raised any concerns.

She told *Schools Week*: "Ofsted only has so many resources available to it and should focus them on schools that are failing. Inspecting top performing schools is a waste of time and money."

School places left out of plans for garden villages

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Investigates

Tens of thousands of homes are to be built in new self-sufficient "garden villages" and towns across England, but the announcement has prompted questions about school places.

The government has given its backing to 17 projects for almost 100,000 new homes and associated infrastructure in areas of need throughout the country.

Under the proposals, developers will create 14 "garden villages" of between 1,500 and 10,000 homes and three new "garden towns", which will each have more than 10,000 homes.

The "enormous potential" of the developments has been heralded by the government, but analysis by *Schools Week* shows some communities are proposed in areas already struggling with school place capacity, especially at primary level.

On average, most areas have about 10 per cent of places unfilled to meet fluctuating capacity. The national average for surplus places is currently 9.8 per cent across the country.

But new garden village, Dunton Hills, set to be built near Brentwood in Essex, is in an area where just 7.3 per cent of primary school places were unfilled in 2015. The county has also predicted a 6 per cent rise in the number of primary-age pupils over the next few years.

Welborne, planned for an area of



Hampshire near Fareham, will be built in an area that had 7.6 per cent spare capacity at primary level last year and in which primary-age pupil numbers are expected to rise 6.5 per cent by 2019-20.

In Buckinghamshire, where a garden town is proposed near Aylesbury, there was additional primary capacity of just 7.2 per cent in 2015.

Malcolm Trobe, the interim general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said the creation of garden villages was a "good idea", but education issues should be "near the top of the priority list" as the developments were planned.

A development of 10,000 homes would constitute "a pretty big village", Trobe said, adding that each community would need several primary schools and at least one secondary school.

He said that councils needed to ensure capital funding was available for school provision, with transport links.

"Experience tells us that they [councils] can often get enough money from the developers for primary provision, but not always for secondary."

Trobe also urged the government to ensure that schools were open "within sufficient time" to avoid an "unnecessary strain" on existing provision.

His concerns are not without foundation. Last year, lack of suitable land delayed by a year the opening of new schools in housing developments in Red Lodge and Lakenheath, Suffolk.

According to the *Newmarket Journal*, council officials had to negotiate the expansion of nearby schools to meet immediate demand.

The government has allocated £6 million in capital funding to support the developments, but it is not yet known how much of this cash, if any, will go towards establishing new schools.

Councils can demand cash from developers for public amenities – including new schools – under the terms of the community infrastructure levy.

However, in some areas this money is collected by a district council, which is the planning authority, rather than the county council, which has responsibility for school places, and can lead to poor co-ordination on school buildings.

The Department for Communities and Local Government said it would outline further details, including proposals for school places, "in due course".

REFUSE ALL CALLS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Fraudsters posing as government officials are contacting schools in attempts to hold important computer files to ransom, police have said.

Action Fraud has issued an alert following "numerous reports" of attempts to inflict "ransomware" – which encrypts important files until a ransom is paid – on school computer systems.

According to police, fraudsters call schools claiming to be from the "Department of Education", ask for the personal email and/or phone number of the headteacher or financial administrator and then send damaging files.

Scammers reportedly claim they need to send forms to the head, varying in subject from exam guidance to mental health assessments.

They then claim they need to send these documents directly and "not to a generic school inbox", arguing that they contain sensitive information.

Emails include zip files containing ransomware which, once downloaded, encrypt files before demanding up to £8,000 to recover them.

The scam is similar to fraudsters telling schools that they are from the Department for Work and Pensions or a telecoms provider.

Schools are being urged to listen out for scammers who describe their employer as the Department of Education, rather than the correct Department for Education, not to click on links or open attachments in unsolicited emails and not to pay extortion demands.

Anyone affected should call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

NEWS

Language teachers top returners to the classroom

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

A pilot to encourage qualified teachers to return to teaching in state schools had mixed results last year, with many more modern language teachers getting on board than physics teachers.

A programme by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), which rewarded schools that retrained and employed “returner teachers” who were not working in the state sector, was also more successful in London and the south east.

A Freedom of Information request by *Schools Week* revealed that only three of the 53 lead schools in the pilot trained 20 or more returner teachers, despite funding available for up to 40 teachers in each case.

In the pilot ranging across all Ebacc subjects and regions from 2015 to 2016, the NCTL promised schools £1,900 for every teacher with qualified teacher status (QTS) they trained and then returned to employment. Latest data shows 335,000 people with QTS are currently “not in service” in state schools.

Of the 428 returner teachers trained in the pilot last year, 100 taught languages and 106 English. In total, 574 “returner teachers” applied to be involved.

But only 17 were recruited to retrain in chemistry and 18 in physics. Computer science was the next lowest with 27.

The south east had more than double the number of recruits (108) than most other regions. London came second with 91, compared with the east Midlands, which only had 18 recruits overall.

None of the 644 schools in the pilot came close to filling the government’s maximum of 40 places.

Only three had more than 20 returners enrolled in their training programme. Bromley Schools’ Collegiate, a partnership of 13 schools in Kent, had 23, Knutsford academy in Cheshire had 25 and Ringwood school in Hampshire also had 23.

The Department for Education could not confirm how much funding was issued to the pilot overall, or how many returner teachers went on to become employed after the programme, as “final employment figures are yet to be determined”.

But the government has announced a second pilot focusing on maths, physics and foreign languages that will begin from February. It will run only in the north west and south east. Schools will be offered £2,500 to retrain teachers in these subjects.

In the south east, they will also be offered “up to £1,500” more if workers are returned on a part-time or flexible basis after experts said such working arrangements could encourage more qualified teachers back into the profession.

Behavioural scientists join the DfE team

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

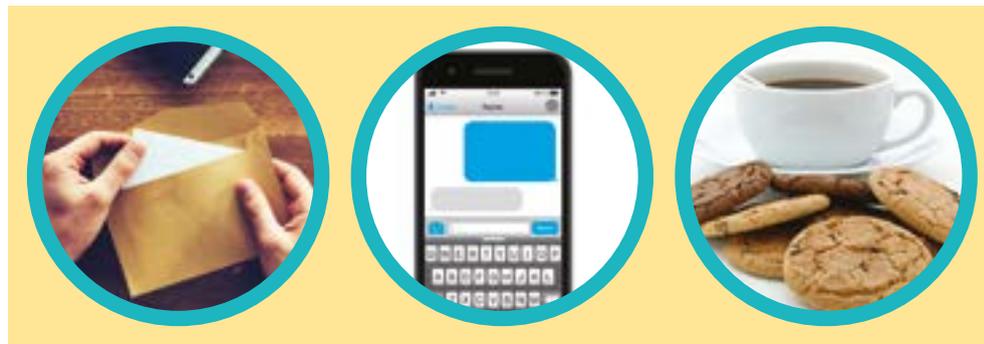
The Department for Education is recruiting a team of “behavioural insights” experts to aid ministers in their policymaking decisions.

The move is aimed at changing the “culture” of the department with psychology specialists applying behavioural science from the start when new policies are developed.

The team is also expected to help policymakers adopt a more “customer-centric”, behavioural approach when making “key” decisions.

David Cameron set up the first government behavioural insights team (BIT) as part of the Cabinet Office. It later became a social purpose company jointly owned by the Cabinet Office and charity Nesta, and became unofficially known as the “Nudge Unit” as it used experiments to determine how small changes in public policy could improve behaviours – for example, sending text messages to court debtors reminding them of the need to pay reduced by half the need to send bailiffs to collect the cash.

The department has posted job adverts for a permanent behavioural insights manager and an adviser, with salaries of up to nearly £59,000 and £42,500 a year respectively. It is expected this team will also manage a relationship with the existing behaviour insights team.



Zhi Soon, director of BIT’s productivity team, welcomed the department’s decision to create its own team.

He told *Schools Week*: “Behavioural science and education is an area full of potential, so it is terrific to see education setting up a behavioural insights unit.

“BIT has run successful behavioural insights projects with the department in the past, and is working with it to help to set up and support the new unit.”

In November, BIT released its annual report for 2016 that revealed how school leaders could use letters, texts – and coffee – to “nudge” pupil behaviour.

At a seminar in central London after the release of the report, Raj Chande, an economist and head of schools and early years at BIT, explained the results of “insights” from experiments run by the company.

During a trial at Bridge academy in Hackney, east London, truanting pupils improved their attendance when a letter

home listed the number of learning hours missed. A second trial on increasing pupil conversations with their parents used weekly texts home with questions such as “Ask Anita why you can’t hear a scream in space”. More than half of pupils said they wanted it to continue – showing “deep down, kids want their parents to ask and care”, Chande said.

The department’s job adverts say the new team will “ensure that behavioural insights are at the heart of our strategic policymaking process”.

Based in the department’s strategy unit, the team will be required to develop policy ideas that address the department’s “biggest priorities”, while leading on changing the department’s “culture” and working with the its policy teams and analysts to commission primary research, trials and interventions to draw on behavioural insights to “improve our education and children’s services”.

Zhi Soon said the new team, if used effectively, would go a long way to create better policies in the future.

Teachers in England to get access to research journals (finally)

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Teachers in England will finally be able to dodge hefty paywalls to use education research journals when the Chartered College of Teaching opens to members later this month.

For two years *Schools Week* has highlighted how teachers in England have been forced to shell out for research journals, despite teachers in Scotland accessing academic journals free.

But now the college, which launches on January 18, is offering similar access as part of its annual membership fee of £39.

The move is likely to be welcomed by the education community. More than 800 teachers signed a petition first set up in 2015 calling for the introduction of a free academic journal scheme in England.

Schools Week revealed last year that a deal, similar to that agreed by the General Teaching Council for Scotland, would cost the government less than the £134,000 salary of the then education secretary, Nicky Morgan.

Dame Alison Peacock, the college’s chief executive, said: “Educational research can sometimes be seen as quite esoteric and separate from the realities of day-to-day teaching.

“We hope the knowledge and research platform we are developing will help to

connect the big research ideas to classroom practice and allow our members to share their own insights on what works.”

English teacher Dr Vincent Lien, who set up the petition, said access to research was “fundamental” to teachers and could “empower the teaching profession to improve the quality of education”.

He said the college’s membership offer was “a good thing”, but its success would hinge on the level of journal access on offer.

Peacock said the deal would provide access to an online research database that included the “widest possible” range of education research journals. *Schools Week* understands this is similar to the Scottish scheme, which allows access to more than 1,700 journals.

The Department for Education previously said it was keen to support the use of research and evidence in teaching, and highlighted the Education Endowment Foundation for making “great strides in making this more accessible”.

However, it refused to create national access arrangements, despite other departments running similar schemes. The NHS, for example, allows its staff to access electronic journals freely.

Alex Quigley, an English teacher and director of Huntington Research School, a research hub for the Yorkshire area, said: “For too long, we have been subject to lousy evidence for policy that has been



imposed on teachers. I am all for any proposal that promotes teacher autonomy and critical thinking.”

But he said teachers needed more support to “distil the complexity” of academic journals and to “translate the academic jargon into worthwhile action”.

Glen Gilchrist, science adviser for a consortia of local authorities in south Wales, raised more than £1,500 via a Kickstarter fundraising campaign to set up a peer-led journal, written by teachers for teachers, but has struggled to entice teachers to construct research-based papers.

Five schools were last year given a share of £2.5 million from the Education Endowment Foundation to become education research hubs. They will build support networks to support 1,000 schools to make better use of evidence.

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NEWS

GOVERNMENT LOSES £800,000 ON FREE SCHOOL PUPILS

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

The government has written off £800,000 it was unable to claw back from free schools.

Schools Week revealed last month that the DfE needed to claw back £11 million from more than 100 free schools after they failed to recruit the expected numbers of pupils in the past academic year.

New free schools are initially funded on anticipated numbers. The Education Funding Agency (EFA) then reviews how many pupils are on roll at the end of that year and retrospectively retrieves or hands out extra funding.

Figures released after a parliamentary question from Labour MP Diana Johnson show the government is still to claw back £1.2 million it dished out in 2013-14. Another £700,000 handed out that year has been written off.

For 2014-15, the government is still to collect £2.9 million, with a further £100,000 written off.

Johnson told *Schools Week* this raised "serious concerns about financial mismanagement" that she would flag to the National Audit Office, the government's spending watchdog.

"It is irresponsible for the government to waste money on a chaotic free school funding system that is simply not fit for purpose."

Free school critics have said the ability to have debts written off shows "special treatment".

It is not clear what the specific reasons were for the write-offs, but it could relate to free schools closing without being able to repay their debts.

The Department for Education's (DfE) annual accounts, published last week (and covered in more detail on page 7) show this is a problem among university technical colleges (UTCs).

For instance, the government wrote off £1.8 million of claw-back funding from Royal Greenwich UTC, which is converting to become a mainstream secondary school, because the debt would put "severe financial pressures" on its new sponsor, University Schools Trust, east London.

The DfE said it worked closely with schools each year to review estimates and minimise the likelihood of significant adjustments.

Schools Week also reported last month that councils must now estimate how many pupils will move to free schools opening in their area to help with recoupment.

Under the old system, the government recouped cash it gave directly to free schools from their council's dedicated schools grant.

If a free school was set up because of a places shortage identified by the local authority, this recoupment started from the first year.

However, for free schools established through the government's central application process, recoupment started from the second year.

The government said this was unfair and meant that for seven months of the first year, pupils in those free schools were "double funded". The new system is now in place.

Ofsted 'samples' letters to judge independent school inspectors

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Investigates

The inspection bodies responsible for independent schools were not observed at all by Ofsted last year – with just 10 inspection letters used as the basis for the annual report on their performance.

For the first time, the Department for Education (DfE) last year did not commission any "on-site monitoring" by Ofsted of the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and School Inspection Service (SIS) – and refused to explain why, when asked by *Schools Week*.

Instead Sir Michael Wilshaw (pictured), then Ofsted head, said his team checked the quality of 10 reports out of the 389 produced by SIS and ISI in 2015-16.

Ofsted delivered a mixed verdict on SIS, which oversees a branch of religious schools and Steiner schools, after seeing just three of its 47 inspection letters.

Noting three letters was a "small sample", Wilshaw said one report delivered an overall grade of "good" for pupil personal development when its content suggested the grade should have been "requires improvement".

Another made recommendations in a way that was "not in keeping" with the SIS's own guidance.

Meanwhile the DfE has changed the inspection framework for the ISI, which inspects schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council, following consultation last year.

Regulatory compliance inspections – which check that teaching, pupil progress,



safeguarding, accommodation and leadership are of a "good" standard, but do not look more closely into learning outcomes – are now carried out separately from broader "education quality" inspections.

A DfE spokesperson said: "So far, Ofsted has monitored the new compliance inspections and reported solely on those."

Wilshaw said in his two reports on the inspectorates that his team had not been commissioned to carry out any on-site monitoring.

For ISI, Ofsted looked at seven regulatory compliance inspection letters, rather than its more in-depth inspections. ISI carried out more than 342 inspections last year.

According to the seven letters, the ISI inspected on compliance issues in line with its own regulations, said Wilshaw.

The DfE would not explain to *Schools Week* why the more in-depth education

quality inspections by ISI were not overseen this year. At the time of going to print, the DfE also had not confirmed if this would continue this year.

Nor would it confirm if SIS was also operating under a new inspection framework – or whether Ofsted on-site monitoring would be reintroduced for 2017.

Both ISI and SIS referred *Schools Week* to the memorandum of understanding between themselves, the DfE and Ofsted. This asks Ofsted to review a "sample of the evidence" collected during their inspections and report these back to the education secretary.

ISI said its new inspection framework included more frequent inspections every three years after a shorter notice period.

SIS does not have a listed telephone number and did not respond to repeated email requests for further information.

Travel costs of transferring UTC students hit £100k

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

Exclusive

The government is to stump up thousands of pounds in travel costs to send children from a closing university technical college to another 20 miles away, according to the leader of the failed institution.

Daventry UTC announced in December that low student numbers would force it to close this August.

The "new technologies" specialist institution in Northamptonshire said it would work with local education providers to "bring about a smooth transition for existing students", including transferring them to Silverstone UTC, an engineering specialist school based in the famous British motorsport racing ground.

But parents were concerned about the costs of sending their children to the college.

Silverstone UTC currently offers transport services for pupils who need it, with costs paid by parents. A service that goes directly from Daventry to Silverstone would normally cost £1,400 a year for each pupil. If half of Daventry's current pupils transfer, the total cost will be more than £100,000.

However, the Daventry principal Russell Ball told *Schools Week* that the Department for Education (DfE) has told Daventry parents

it will cover the extra costs.

"The DfE has made it clear that when the time comes for students to transfer then their costs will be met by the department. There is no question of Silverstone having to pay for the travel, nor for the parents," he said.

School to home transport is traditionally the responsibility of parents and the local authority, but Ball said these were extreme circumstances.

Neil Patterson, principal of Silverstone, added: "Obviously moving from Daventry to Silverstone UTC is not a choice the parents expected to make, therefore for them to have to bear the costs of that additional transport would be a little unfair. It is brilliant news the department has agreed to do it."

The department declined to confirm or deny the promise of additional funding.

Concerns about a clash in curriculum as Daventry delivers a BTEC extended diploma in engineering, while Silverstone delivers a Cambridge national diploma in engineering have also been overcome.

Patterson said the two organisations have "aligned" their curriculums to ensure a smooth transfer.

The extra pupil intake is welcome news to Silverstone as other UTCs face a string



of financial troubles, mainly because of low pupil numbers.

Figures obtained by *Schools Week's* sister paper FE Week show Daventry ran at 25 per cent capacity last year with 151 on roll, down from 169 in 2014-15 – although it has room for 600. Silverstone was also running at 68 per cent capacity in 2014-15.

Daventry is the sixth UTC to close or announce closure since the project launched five years ago.

The announcement followed the closure of UTCs in Hackney and the Black Country in 2015, and in Lancashire and Bedfordshire earlier this year. Royal Greenwich UTC in south-east London is to become a secondary school this summer following financial problems.

NEWS

PAY-OFFS, WRITE-OFFS AND FAILED UTCs

SEVEN KEY FINDINGS FROM THE DFE'S ACCOUNTS

JOHN DICKENS AND FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@SCHOOLSWEET

The Department for Education has published its annual accounts for 2015-16. As expected, the National Audit Office, the government's spending watchdog, has again warned that the accounts lack "truth and fairness". *Schools Week* takes a forensic look at what the accounts tell us...

1. PFI COSTS AND LIABILITIES CONTINUE TO SOAR

The Department for Education's obligations under controversial PFI contracts rose from £1.6 billion in 2014-15 to almost £2.5 billion in 2015-16.

The department also reported that its liabilities in respect of PFI contracts on buildings used by academies amounted to £7.9 billion as of March last year, up from £7.3 billion in March 2015.

The accounts explain the liabilities are the result of the department agreeing to provide an indemnity to local authorities for potential PFI-related costs when council-owned buildings are used by academies.

The increase in the liability reflects the expansion of the academies programme, the government said.

It follows an investigation by *Schools Week* that revealed the problems caused by the toxic legacy of PFI.

2. ALMOST £8 MILLION WRITTEN OFF, BUT DOWN ON 2014-15

The Department for Education (DfE) wrote off £7.8 million in cash losses, abandoned claims, "fruitless payments" and store and stock losses in 2015-16, down from £9.7 million in the previous year.

The fall comes despite a rise in the number of written-off cases – from 113 to 179 over the same period.

Although the amount lost in fruitless payments fell from just over £8 million to less than £3 million, total cash losses soared from £898,000 to £4.9 million (see 3, below).



3. FAILED UTC AND SCHOOL PROJECTS COST £4.7 MILLION

Among the cash losses in the latest accounts are payments totalling £4.7 million that the department tried to claw back from failed UTC projects and other schools that did not meet their pupil projections.

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) decided not to pursue repayment of £1,884,303 from Royal Greenwich UTC, which will become a secondary school this year, because the transfer

of the debt to the new school would place "severe financial pressures" on its new sponsor, University Schools Trust, east London.

The agency was also unable to recover £732,000 from the Hackney UTC, which closed in 2015, because of a lack of remaining assets following the college's liquidation.

Recovery of £768,209 from Central Bedfordshire UTC, which closed last summer, was also abandoned, with officials recognising the UTC had already transferred debts of £184,000 to Bedford College, which took its staff and pupils.

Further clawbacks of £608,617 from the Al-Madinah school and £1,477,628 from the Harperbury school were also abandoned.

Harperbury had incurred the capital costs trying to deliver its preferred site at the former Harperbury hospital before the local council intervened and asked for changes to the proposals.

4. DAVID LAWS RECEIVED SEVERANCE PAY

The 2015-16 accounts show that David Laws, the former schools minister, got a severance payment of £7,920.

This was a quarter of his £31,000 ministerial top-up, the accounts said. The payout is based on a rule that entitles ministers to three months of their ministerial pay when they leave office.

Laws lost his seat at the 2015 general election following a stint of more than two years in the department, during which he championed the pupil premium policy, among others.



David Laws

5. GOVERNMENT CUTS DOWN ON STAFF EXIT PAY-OFFS

The DfE has trimmed its spend on severance packages, down from £7.6 million to £6.3 million last year.

Only one employee at the DfE (or its agencies) got a pay-off of more than £100,000, compared with seven in 2014-15.

But the same can't be said for academies, with pay-offs of up to £200,000.

The total spend on exit packages when academy trusts are included is £58 million, a rise on the £49 million in 2014-15 (although the number of trusts has grown, with nearly 1,000 more staff given pay-offs).

But the accounts show two employees – presumably of academy trusts – got pay-offs of between £150,000 and £200,000 last year.



6. OFF-PAYROLL STAFF PAY SOARS

The department is now paying a lot more staff off-payroll – something that the Treasury isn't too keen on because it means staff could pay a lower rate of tax.

The total number of employees paid off-payroll (and who are on more than £220 per day, for more than six months) rose from 102 as of March 2015, to 193 in March last year.

The report states that tax assurances have been sought on many of these deals, but not for all of them.

Assurances for 13 contracts in place in 2014-15 haven't been received and the DfE has terminated the contract in a further six instances where assurances were not provided.

One out of nine "board members or senior officials with significant financial responsibility" is paid off-payroll.

Government guidance states these senior figures can only be paid off-payroll in "exceptional circumstances", and then only for a maximum of six months. The report does not state who is paid this way, or what the circumstances are.

7. 'SPECIAL PAYMENTS' TRIPLE IN A YEAR

Academy trusts made 178 "special" severance payments worth almost £10.5 million in 2015-16, which means the amount shelled out has more than tripled since 2014-15, when they made 164 payments totalling just over £3.8 million.

Trusts can make such payments of up to £50,000 themselves, but need permission for payments of more than that. The EFA does not disclose payments that are over the limit.

The agency has, however, disclosed that it made a one-off exceptional payment to Hampshire Pension Fund in relation to a deficit in the local government pension scheme for Totton college, which was dissolved.

178 payments

2015-16

TOTAL

£10.5 MILLION

164 payments

2014-15

TOTAL

£3.8 MILLION

NEWS

DFE NUDGES DEADLINE ON FOI REQUESTS

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

The Department for Education is in danger of falling below the floor standard for meeting its legal duty to respond on time to information requests – although it has finally released a controversial grammar school document a year after claiming it did not hold the information.

Figures published before Christmas show the department responded within the required 20-day deadline in 86 per cent of freedom of information requests between July to September last year.

The rate has fallen from 91 per cent for the same period in 2015, and has hovered just above the 85 per cent minimum floor standard for most of the past 12 months.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the public data regulator, could step in to monitor the department should it fall below that standard.

Monitoring inspections can also be triggered if the ICO receives four complaints about delays within a six-month period.

Schools Week understands that at least six complaints have been lodged with the ICO since October about the lack of timely responses to requests.

The newly appointed information commissioner, Elizabeth Denham, has said the current floor target "seems a little low" and is seeking to increase it, putting the department under risk of intervention.

Speaking last month, she said: "I know which organisations we need to focus on...I just won't say where."

Figures released by the Ministry of Justice show that nine of 24 departments of state fell below the 85 per cent standard in July to September last year.

The Department for Communities and Local Government, the worst offender, responded to just 57 per cent of requests in time.

Tim Turner, a data protection specialist, told *Schools Week* that some departments took the ICO warning seriously, while some did not and "not much happens to them".

"It's like being on the naughty step – a lot depends on how you feel about being there. If you don't care, it doesn't work."

There have been just four FOI enforcement notices since 2005.

A DfE spokesperson said it aimed to respond to all FOI requests within the relevant timeframes.

However, it has finally released the application form lodged by Weald of Kent grammar school before it was granted approval to expand in October 2015.

The department originally claimed late in that year that it "did not hold" the information, a claim that forced campaigners to abandon a legal appeal against the opening of the first new grammar school in 40 years.

But after a lengthy appeal, the department released the information days before Christmas. The 95-page application form includes detailed information about how the expansion will be funded, and the consultation responses from parents.

Catholic church challenges decision on priest's letter

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

The Catholic church is set to take the government to court early this year over its decision to reject a priest's letter as a legitimate way of admitting faith pupils.

The diocese of Westminster will challenge the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) in a judicial review planned to take place between March and May, *Schools Week* has learned.

The dispute focuses on the church introducing a new certificate, backed by the Catholic Education Service (CES), which confirms a pupil is from a "practising Catholic family" if signed by a priest. The certificate can then be used to support admission to a Catholic school.

Following complaints from Surrey county council and Richmond council in west London, the OSA said the certificate broke the school admissions code's requirement for admissions to be "reasonable, clear, objective and procedurally fair".

The diocese will use the review to seek clarification about how to correctly define practising Catholics, a spokesperson for CES told *Schools Week*.

"For the sake of clarity for schools, all parties are pushing for a speedy resolution

Religious studies allocation scuppers plans for Jewish free school

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

The government has rejected a bid to open a Jewish free school in London after criticising its plans to dedicate 20 per cent of learning time to faith-based education.

The application from Barkai college to open a new five-form entry secondary in north-west London was thrown out by the Department for Education (DfE) after officials claimed the amount of religious education would be "disproportionate" and that the school would not provide a "broad and balanced curriculum".

But the ruling raises questions about the government's approach to considering faith free-school bids, especially in the context of a recent consultation that proposes the relaxation of admissions rules.

A bid for another Jewish free school, Kavanagh college, has also been rejected in recent weeks, but the reasons for that decision are not yet public.

According to the *Jewish News* website, Barkai was proposing that pupils in years 7 and 8 have three in 30 lessons for religious studies and another three for Hebrew, with optional GCSEs in those subjects from year 9.

But the DfE said the amount of time dedicated to faith-related studies was

to this issue and we are hopeful for a decision in the spring."

Last November the OSA ruled that the certificate did not meet requirements that admissions practices be clear to parents.

It agreed with objections that the certificate was "the gift of an applicant's parish priest" and the lack of criteria could lead to "different priests applying different measures of practice".

Anne Heavey, policy adviser at the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said schools were facing uncertainty over admissions following a public consultation on summer-born children announced in 2015 and yet to be published, and the education green paper.

"The green paper has huge implications for the admissions code.

"That's where this is coming from, everyone's going to push on the admissions code until we're clear what it is.

"We know that the government is already planning changes to it so this is almost the Catholic church suggesting what it would like to see most."

Jay Harman, education campaigner at the British Humanist Association, which is part of the Fair Admissions Campaign against faith-based entry to schools, said the code was clear.

"It should have been very clear to the Catholic church that without any objective measure of attendance, this admissions policy wouldn't be code-compliant. So it is difficult to understand how the diocese of Westminster can now be confused by it.

"Without such an objective measure, two Catholic families could be similarly religiously observant, but one could be signed off by their priest while the other not."

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said: "The admissions code is in place to ensure school places are allocated fairly. It would be inappropriate to comment further at this stage."

An OSA spokesperson has previously said its decision was "binding and enforceable", and Catholic schools had two months from November to revise their admissions practices.



"disproportionate compared with the time allocated for core subjects", the website reported.

According to the government's guidance, modern Hebrew counts towards the EBacc school performance measure because it is considered a modern foreign language. It is not known if Barkai intended to teach to that framework.

The rejection follows an announcement that ministers want to change rules around faith-based admissions to free schools in over-subscribed areas to allow more new Catholic schools.

However, some commentators say the government's approach to reviewing free school proposals is making it hard for new Jewish schools to open.

Writing in the *Jewish Chronicle*, the journalist Simon Rocker said it was "hard to fathom the DfE's thinking" given that strict orthodox schools already open in the state system "allocate more time to Jewish studies than Barkai was proposing to do.

"On the one hand, the government professes to encourage faith schools,

which it sees as a force for good, but on the other it seeks to curb religious insularity," he said.

According to guidance issued by the New Schools Network, founders wanting to open faith-designated free schools have to include details of the "proportion of time spent studying RE or faith-related subjects", as well as alternatives for pupils of other faiths.

But *Schools Week* understands there is no hard and fast rule on the time that can be devoted to religious study.

Eve Sacks, Barkai's chair, told *Jewish News* that there was "no point in having Jewish schools without Jewish education.

"If a school offering a similar amount of *kodesh* (religious studies) as other top performing mainstream Jewish schools gets refused, the question for the DfE must surely be what is an acceptable amount and balance for the government?"

Schools Week understands that both schools can resubmit their applications for the next wave of free school bids, thought to be planned for the spring.

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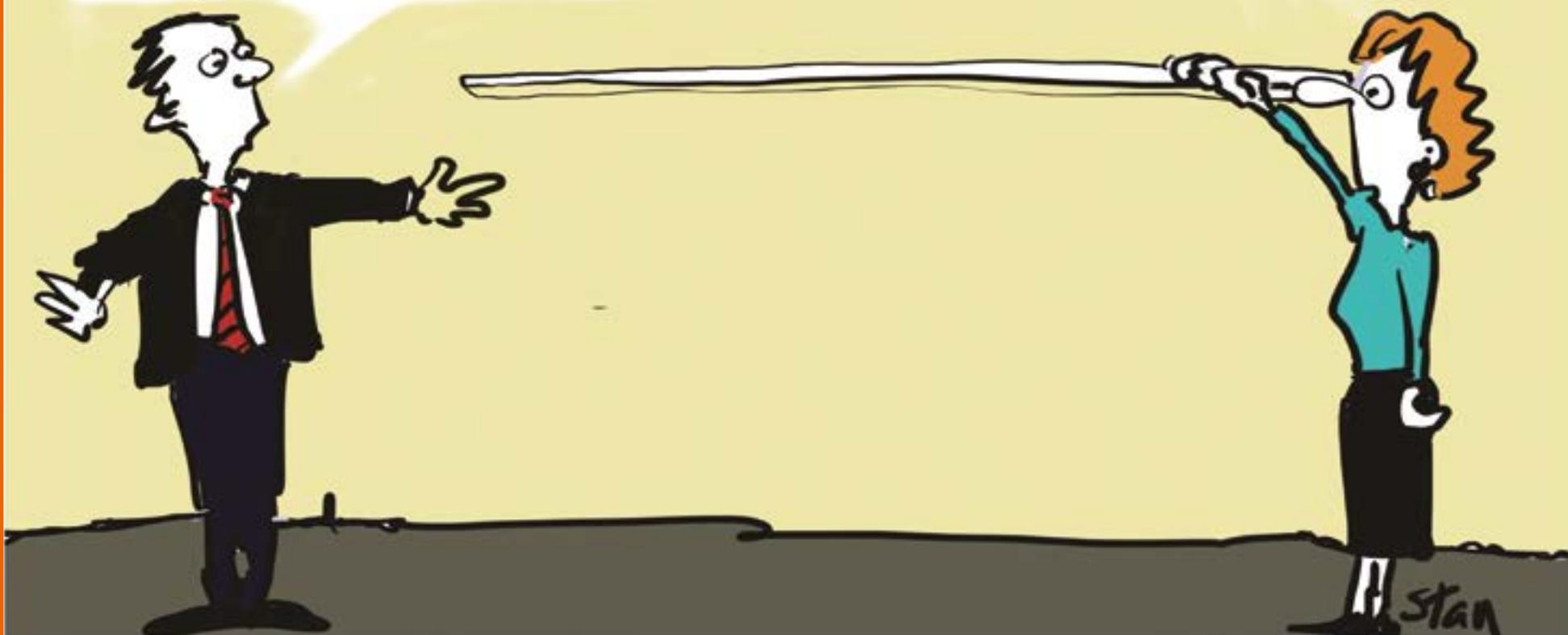
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NEWS

I'm sure you could see a way to improve an under-performing school if you removed that beam from your eye...

It's not a beam...
It's a barge pole.



EDITOR'S COMMENT

@miss_mcinemey | laura.mcinemey@schoolsweek.co.uk

DfE and Ofsted need to keep their eyes on the road ahead

There are two types of blind spot: one in your eyes, the other in the world around you. Education is suffering from both.

Every eye has a punctum caecum, a small spot at the back of the eyeball that cannot absorb light and so causes a hole in your sight. If you have two eyes, you can use information from one to cover for a lack in the other. But if you lose an eye, the brain has to fill in the information as best it can. Optical illusions trade on this, making shapes appear and disappear when you close one eye.

This sort of blind spot is affecting the decade-long plan to make academies the ultimate vehicle for school improvement.

See, the whole idea of moving under-performing schools into the hands of brilliant academy chains only works so long as the organisations are willing to take the under-performers on. The

obvious problem, which politicians have let sit on their punctum caecum for too long, is what happens when no one wants the school?

Last year, the government came up with a solution. Cash! Give awesome academy chains boodles of cash so then they'll want the schools. Only, even that isn't working. Despite offers of millions of pounds chains are still walking away from schools in need, just as we predicted in our 2015 story on "toxic schools".

The way to break an optical blind spot is to stare directly at the object you want to see. Not to one side of or slightly above it. You must glare at it dead on.

What, exactly, are we going to do with the schools that no one wants? That's the question for 2017. Let's see how long it takes to answer.

The second type of blind spot is created

by the environment. When driving, for example, some parts of the road are almost impossible to see by looking in wing mirrors. The "almost" is important, though. Automotive engineer George Platzer designed in the 1990s a way of angling car mirrors to eliminate blind spots large enough to hide a car. His next invention, a stick-on convex mirror, eliminated blind spots altogether.

This sort of blind spot is more akin to what we are seeing at Ofsted. As our story this week reveals, some schools have not been inspected for more than a decade. Right now, they are sitting in a blind spot, unseen by Ofsted. However, the inspectorate has set up a series of mirrors that it feels are adequately showing the school is currently safe

and not doing anything risky. Should a school start zig-zagging wildly, then the inspectorate will see it. If it's chugging along merrily, then there's no problem.

The question here is whether Ofsted really can check on everything in a school from a distance. Can it see if physical conditions are appropriate? Curriculum broad? Safeguarding appropriate? After all, rearview mirrors stop being helpful if you suddenly hit fog.

One suggestion for the further education sector is that outstanding colleges might join the roster of good-rated institutions given shorter inspections. If this happens, it will be fair for schools to ask why they should not be treated similarly. Let's wait and see how long it takes to get an answer to that one.



INTRODUCING THE TEAM SCHOOLS WEEK



CATH MURRAY
FEATURES EDITOR
@CATHMURRAY_NEWS



JOHN DICKENS
CHIEF REPORTER
@JOHNDICKENSSW



FREDDIE WHITTAKER
POLITICAL REPORTER
@FCDWHITTAKER



JESS STAUFENBERG
REPORTER
@STAUFENBERGJ



BILLY CAMDEN
REPORTER
@BILLYCAMDEN



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ALDRIDGE EDUCATION



We are seeking outstanding senior leaders to join our growing trust for the following positions:

- **Executive Principal** - South East Cluster (Brighton/Newhaven)
- **Principal** - Darwen Aldridge Community Academy (Lancashire)
- **Principal** - Darwen Vale High School (Lancashire)

Aldridge Education is a charitable trust whose non-selective, entrepreneurial community schools and colleges help young people to reach their potential. We work in different regions across England where often the opportunities and prospects for young people are often most limited, and where the introduction of our entrepreneurial approach to education can have most benefit. To find out more about our academies, support and resources please visit www.aldridgeeducation.org.

We really want to hear from you if you are an experienced leader who is able to demonstrate passion, determination, creativity and outstanding team working skills. You will also be an excellent practitioner and looking for the next significant challenge in your career.

Executive Principal Brighton

We will see the first three academies join our newly formed South East cluster in February 2017. The academies are based in the Brighton and Newhaven area - Brighton Aldridge Community Academy, Portslade Aldridge Community Academy and UTC@harbourside. Each has its own substantive Principal.

We seek an Executive Principal to provide outstanding leadership of the SE cluster - building on the significant successes to date, securing benefits of working across academies, strategically growing the regional cluster and building strong relationships with key stakeholders in the area. You will actively promote Aldridge Education and be part of the development of not only the cluster but also the Trust more generally and be a key component of its senior leadership.

Closing date: Monday 9th January 2017 (9am)

Interview date: Monday 23rd & Tuesday 24th January 2017

Shortlisted candidates must be available to attend on both days.

Salary in the region of **£110-130K** negotiable depending on circumstances and experience.

Principal posts Lancashire

The following two Principal opportunities are both based within our North West cluster and the successful applicants will be supported by the NW Executive Principal whose wider remit is to develop the cluster and secure improvements across the region.

Principal Darwen Aldridge Community Academy (DACA), Darwen

This exciting opportunity arises as a result of the founding Principal's promotion to Executive Principal of the North West cluster. This is a highly successful 11-19 school rated Good by Ofsted (2013) and with rapidly improving numbers (1340 students in 2016 from 735 in 2008) and a thriving sixth form. DACA is based in an iconic, state of the art building in Darwen.

Closing date: Monday 9th January 2017 (9am)

Interview date: Monday 16th & Tuesday 17th January 2017

Shortlisted candidates must be available to attend on both days.

Salaries in the region of **£70-90K** negotiable depending on circumstances and experience.

Principal Darwen Vale High School, Darwen

This position arises due to the retirement of the previous Principal. This improving 11-16 academy currently has around 770 students and is based in a well-resourced and impressive building within Darwen which has impressive facilities. Vale converted to become an Aldridge sponsored academy in 2014.

How to apply (all posts)

You can apply for more than one post in the same application. For job descriptions and application details please visit www.aldridgeeducation.org/about-us/our-people/vacancies

To apply please submit the documents below and clearly state which post(s) you are applying for in your covering letter:

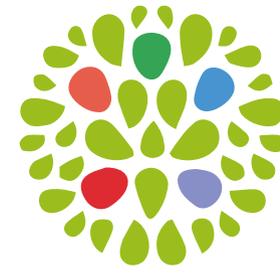
- A completed application form
- A personal statement describing why you think you have the skills and experience for the advertised role (2 sides A4)
- A Curriculum Vitae

All posts are subject to enhanced DBS checks.

Please submit your application by the published deadline to HR@aldridgeeducation.org.

Further information:

Potential candidates can also speak informally to Chris Tweedale, Chief Executive of Aldridge Education, or Andrew Weymouth, our Education Director. Please contact HR@aldridgeeducation.org or call **0207 297 0340** to arrange a time.



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We are looking for an aspiring individual who seeks new challenges looking for a stimulating environment and will lead on high performance and addressing the role and accountabilities, but also outlining how you would support the academy into the next phase of its development.

Closing Date: 18 January 2017 (12.00 noon)

Interviews: 23 & 24 January 2017

The main purpose of the post is to provide professional and strategic leadership and management for the academy, securing rapid improvement in standards and achievement of all students across all subject areas.

Lead on innovative curriculum design and analysis across all Key Stages to support high quality teaching and learning and ensure all students make good and outstanding progress.

Oversee the work of the Assessment team and quality assure time-tabling and curriculum modelling; providing guidance on applications such as Nova T6 as appropriate.

In partnership with the Principal and other members of the Academy Leadership Team, provide vision, leadership and direction for the academy ensuring that all relevant standards of conduct are met by students and staff.

Play a lead role in promoting the inclusive ethos of the academy, creating and maintaining an environment which promotes and secures good teaching and effective learning for all students. The successful candidate will be an experienced/aspirational professional, who is enthusiastic, influential and committed to working in pursuit of success for the academy and its learners. If you are highly motivated, respond well to a challenge and have excellent communication skills, this could be the job for you!

If you decide to apply you should include a letter with your application form on no more than two sides of A4, giving your reasons for applying for the post, addressing information you have read in the pack and particularly the person specification, and outline any relevant experience and personal qualities you would bring to the Academy. Please do not send a general letter; we really are looking for someone who is prepared to respond to us as an individual Trust.

You can be sure we will take time and care in reading your letter; we appreciate how much energy goes into it. Please ensure that you address your application to;

Sonia Turner, Human Resources Officer,

The Shared Learning Trust,
Wilbury Drive,
Dunstable,
LU5 4QP.

E-Mail: academyrecruitment@thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk

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For an informal discussion about the post, please contact **Karen Wespieser** at:

Phone: **01753 637480** - Email: k.wespieser@nfer.ac.uk -
Twitter: [@karenwespieser](https://twitter.com/karenwespieser)

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Completed applications should be submitted by **5pm on Wednesday 25th January 2017** at the latest.
Interviews will be held on **2nd & 3rd February 2017**

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- Being an internal agent of change, supporting other teams to increase the impact of their work.

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Download the recruitment pack or go to www.northerneducationtrust.org for further information. Closing date: Friday 13th January 2017 at 12 noon.

For informal discussions about the role please contact Christine Hopkins PA to the Chair of the Trust Les Walton CBE on 0191 594 5239.

Closing date 12 noon Friday 13th January 2017

Please apply by forwarding your CV and a covering letter to the Trust Company Secretary andy.thom@northerneducationtrust.org

Andy Thom can be contacted on **0191 594 5149**



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Autism diagnoses rise by a quarter in four years

 **Julie Cordiner, Hartlepool**

Meanwhile, the Department for Education (DfE) still refuses to fund additional places in specialist provision. In the recent reform of high needs funding it says local authorities will be able to move money out of the schools block and into the high needs block if they get agreement from the Schools Forum and a majority of schools. That is hardly likely to happen, especially in areas where schools are losing money in the national funding formula. Some of it relates to the pressure on schools to improve standards. But if the DfE sees this scale of diagnoses, some of which are severe enough to warrant places in special schools or units, then isn't it discriminatory to refuse to fund the provision?

 **Sunshine Frankie (Facebook)**

Please don't say that other conditions have dropped, that is misleading. More resources are being put into supporting ASD and less into other conditions such as dyslexia and dyspraxia leading to missed or late diagnosis. Learning difficulties due to genetic conditions are on the rise as more babies survive, especially pre-term.

 **@EdPsych60**

"With autism... they're all so different." Makes you question the value of the label, doesn't it?

Lodgers move into empty UTC site

 **@RRaimato**

The money wasted on all of this is staggering, given the state of school funding.

The rise of tick-box teachers

 **John Viner, Adept Education Association**

As tutor for a leading provider, I find the article on the assessment-only teaching route misleading in suggesting this is about ticking boxes.

This route is for experienced teachers who, at an initial visit, first present evidence – including observations – of meeting the Teachers' Standards. The visit includes both observations and a review of the evidence, against the standards and the initial teacher training (ITT) criteria.

They might then undertake activities to strengthen weak evidence and meet the criteria. They could have to teach in a second

school, teach their whole age range and prove familiarity with the age ranges bracketing their own. This could take a term, sometimes two.

Before the 12-week assessment window, a pre-assessment visit ensures that evidence is tight. If not, candidates have until the assessment to get it right. Because assessment only is what it says, we are not allowed to call it training but, for candidates, this can be as rigorous as a training programme.

The assessment follows a robust process. The school's evaluation is essential, just as it is on any School Direct programme. To suggest that this is merely a tick-box exercise ignores the important role of schools and dishonours the many fine teachers who have secured QTS by this route.

Lessons in how to deal with the media

 **Julie Carter, London**

I suggest the money is spent on transparency training instead.

 **@HopeStreetBlues**

Is academy staff dealing with the media preferable to local authority press officers handling journalists?

Profile of Sir David Carter

 **James Wilding, Berkshire**

Don't get too impressed too quickly. Schools need stable populations, stable curricula, stable assessment, stable finances. There aren't enough quality surfers like Sir David Carter around, capable of staying atop the turbulence. And anyway all surfers end up beached!

 **@Carter6D**

I enjoyed my interview with @miss_mcinerney and the range of points we covered, from MATs to *The Italian Job!*

Research Review 2016: Lifting the lid on a layer of delights

 **@DavidRussellTF**

Interesting. And I look forward to the day when schools and FE research programmes join up.
#oneprofessionmanycontexts

SEND has become a headline issue rather than an also-ran

 **@StarlightMcKenz**

Are these great things actually happening for the kids/families? Do they know? I'm not seeing much there.

Autism diagnoses rise by a quarter in four years

 **DEBBIE ELLISON, LONDON**

I agree with the article. As a SENCO in a mainstream primary school I have seen the increase in the number of children with a diagnosis and those still waiting. This has taken its toll on resources and staff as we are expected to become experts in providing support and learning for children with often complex needs at a time of decreasing funding. I am aware of teachers who have left the profession because of the strain as the emphasis for class teachers to take responsibility for their cohorts has increased, and rightly so. However, if this is to continue, local authorities need to provide better support to schools not only in the form of ensuring that education and health care plans are given, but with training and helping schools to equip themselves to support and educate our ASD children.

REPLY OF THE WEEK
RECEIVES A
SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!



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OPINION: 'FORMAL' vs 'INFORMAL' EDUCATION

On this page, two educators go head-to-head on which kinds of books are best for children, while the opposite page features a review of the book written by teachers of the "strictest school in England" and a look at how a creative science teaching initiative of the 1960s was pushed aside by standardised testing



KATIE ASHFORD

Deputy head and director of inclusion at Michaela community school, north London

Easy books are not the route to a lifelong love of reading

Forget the pap: kids should have access to good quality books to get them to read, says Katie Ashford

In the past I have gone to great lengths to persuade reluctant readers to pick up a book and, as many teachers will know, this is never a straightforward task. Hopeful that their efforts will pay off, teachers can spend hours making costumes for World Book Day, creating beautiful reading wall displays, planning trips to places of literary significance, investing time and money in extensive reading programmes that over-promise and under-deliver – and pour their energy into numerous other strategies, all aiming to inspire a love of reading. Despite all their efforts, however, they can still end up faced with a bunch of grumpy year 10s complaining that reading is "pointless" and "just like TV but slower".

In 2016, the National Literacy Trust reported a worrying downward trend in teenage reading habits. Only 40 per cent of 14 to 16-year-olds told one survey that they enjoyed reading; a mere 24 per cent said that reading was "cool". It's all very worrying; there isn't a teacher in the land who doesn't recognise the importance of reading to build knowledge and skills, and ultimately to transform lives.

If kids find reading boring, then it seems logical to try to find ways to make reading not boring for them. And so many teachers work hard to find the book that will change their view, the book that best appeals to their interests, the book that makes reading "click" for them. They might go for something gritty with a surprising plot twist like *A Monster Calls*, or something fun and accessible like *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*.

It's a seductive idea. If pupils start on books they love, the cloak of fear that surrounds reading for many of them could be removed. Through tailored teenage gems like *The Fault in our Stars* and *The Hunger Games*, they might see that books are not to be shunned and ignored, but embraced.

It strikes me, however, that this approach is built on the false assumption that reading

is dull and that it is therefore our job as teachers to find ways to make it less dull. Like parents hiding bits of broccoli in a kid's macaroni cheese, it's as if we are desperate to get them to just read something, as if we are begging them, and therefore conceding that reading is indeed boring and not worthy of our engagement.

Encourage pupils to explore something new

This approach doesn't cut to the core of the issue. What does the child read after they have finished reading that story about football or celebrities? What if that doesn't spur them on to read more? What do they do when they inevitably have to read something that is outside their comfort zone?

What if, instead of looking to pander to children's tastes, teachers step back and remember what it is that makes literature great? The best writers, such as Orwell, Angelou, Chaucer, Tolstoy, Marquez, Shakespeare, have all touched upon aspects of the human condition that transcend time, place and personal interest. Rather than sugar-coating reading by giving pupils something that echoes the world they already live in, why not encourage them to break out of it and explore something new and uncharted?

Getting kids to read books they will find easy and accessible isn't intrinsically bad, but it should not be the route to inculcating a lifelong love of reading.

As teachers, it is our job to broaden horizons and support young people to escape the limitations of their own experience. If we make reading great literature a habit – by reading daily and discussing their ideas – we help them to see the merits of reading. Reading isn't just about reading what you enjoy: it's about expanding your world and being brave.



JOY BALLARD

Principal, Ryde academy, Isle of Wight

Let them read magazines. Goosebumps? Equally great

Kids should be exposed to all kinds of books (and that includes Mills & Boon), says Joy Ballard

As a teacher, I know that instilling hard-to-reach and reluctant young students with a love of reading is one of the most difficult aspects of our job – yet in many respects it is also the most important.

Literacy skills are the key building block for life, from which almost all other future successes grow, so it is vital we find a way to instil as many children as possible with a love of reading. Experts argue over the best way to do this, but my mantra is very simple – expose children to all kinds of material when they are young and a love for reading more complex texts will follow.

I adore reading so people are often surprised when I tell them that I was not particularly interested in books at school. I fell under my teachers' radar somewhat and left education with the most rudimentary literacy skills. I would get by, but I would never excel. By 21 I had three children. My horizons had been shut off by my weak grasp of reading and, in truth, I grew bored.

One day, after the morning school run, I was browsing in a shop and came across a Mills & Boon novel. I can't recall its title, but I remember being drawn in by the characters on the cover, and the sunset – it pulled me in and I bought a copy. I finished it within two days and went back for more.

Admittedly, Mills & Boon will never be anyone's idea of classic literature. But the principles are largely the same and for me it was a foot in the door to a wealth of other books waiting to be discovered. I travelled the world with Mills & Boon; the characters and storylines exposed me to exotic places that I had never visited and did not ever dream that I would. From then on my relationship with reading was changed and I used it as a stepping stone to the worlds of Austen, Brontë and Dickens. I enrolled in night school, studied for a degree and trained as a teacher – all because of a few cheesy romance novels.

It is this belief in the transformative power

of reading that steers my approach to literacy to this very day. While reading should be prioritised in the classrooms it does not help when teachers are overly prescriptive about the types of material that their students are looking at. They like magazines? Great – let them read them. *Goosebumps*? Equally great. There's a good deal of academic evidence to suggest that boys, traditionally the most hard to enthuse, prefer reading non-fiction books on subjects such as space and history over

I travelled the world with Mills & Boon

the traditional novel. Any interest in reading, however small, should be encouraged.

I am proud to say that our work on literacy is paying off. Ofsted noted in its recent report – in which Ryde academy moved to "good" from "requires improvement" – the strong emphasis that we place on literacy and how its positive effects permeate through the wider curriculum.

The love for reading is a journey rather than an end goal. A seven-year-old is not going to start this journey wanting to pick up *Don Quixote* or *Anna Karenina*, but that does not mean that it would be an unrealistic aim in the future. Intelligence isn't fixed, it needs to be exercised and this is best done through reading. When I picked up my first Mills & Boon I never would have thought that it would have led to me discovering the joys of Shakespeare and Chaucer.

I would urge everyone to open their minds to all kinds of reading material – I can say first-hand that its effects really can be transformative.

Joy Ballard previously starred in the Channel 4 series Educating Cardiff and was secondary headteacher of the year in the 2015 Pearson teaching awards

Battle Hymn of the Tiger Teachers: The Michaela Way

Edited by Katharine Birbalsingh

Publisher John Catt

ISBN-10 1909717967

ISBN-13 978-1909717961

Reviewer Jules Daulby, specialist leader of education in literacy and SEND for the Dorset Teaching School Alliance

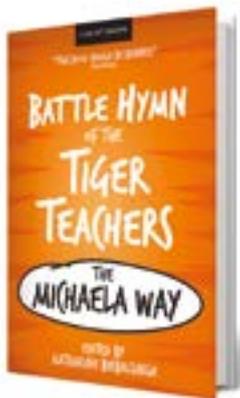


This book is a pastiche of *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. It substitutes matriarchs attempting to create divine children with teachers (at Michaela free school in north London) trying to shape disciplined and erudite scholars. Both rely on the same premise: a strict, no-nonsense and rigorous regime underpinned with fierce competition because the outside world is cold and unforgiving. These wards will serve you, thank you (even for a detention) while the Tiger looks on proudly. It is not so much a battle hymn the teachers are singing but a haka cry.

Joe Kirby writes an interesting chapter on curriculum design; mapping out and overlapping subjects chronologically. It makes perfect sense. However, the book goes downhill after this. A didactic, teaching-me-to-suck-eggs chapter was flick through-able which I did... quickly. Each subsequent chapter uses a similar format: criticise "most schools in England", intersperse with "research says" then triumphantly announce "we did this and it works perfectly". It became tiresome. Whatever

magic the teachers believe they possess, it is overshadowed by criticising "most" schools. Their success is built on others' failure, yet relies on the false impression that most schools are inadequate. In fact, more children are reaching expected key stage standards, more schools in England are now rated good and outstanding than ever before and the most successful region for school improvement is Michaela's own. Other schools are not broken.

I also wonder how poor the students are (one, we are told, has a tutor that the parents pay for) and whether families mind being labelled as "disadvantaged" and stereotyped as feeding their children sugary cereals in a "language-deprived" environment. The feeder primaries may also feel aggrieved. Students that they have nurtured for the past seven years are labelled as being unable to hold eye



contact or use cutlery, turning up cussing and making misogynistic insults, some defecating in the urinals. Within a week of boot camp, this changes.

At what cost is this transformation? Even lunchtime is controlled with themes given to students, "Here's your vegetable pie and a Brexit discussion. Under no circumstances must you talk about Honey G." There are no displays, windows have blinds

to keep the daylight out and the students' minds in. Dreaming prohibited.

The sparrows in *Game of Thrones* remind me of the Tiger Teachers. It's the virtuousness: nothing seems to go wrong. God knows I have days where I question whether I know anything at all. In *Battle Hymn*, however, teachers ooze with self-assurance, chapters drip with certainty and the book punches you in the face.

Staff at Michaela play misunderstood heroes,

ahead of their time and persecuted for their beliefs. Cynics might argue that they revel in the attention but this is denied. Why, I then wonder, put a false claim on the front of the book? "THIS BOOK SHOULD BE BANNED" it screams like controversial tomes before it. The quote, however, is not from "the blob", outraged by Michaela's traditional methods, but BFF and fellow provocateur, Toby Young. The other half of the quotation "because parents will want the same for their children" hides inside. A devious publisher's device to court controversy, which perfectly highlights the marketing strategy. In short, it offers a veneer of effortless perfection driven by a hidden system of suffocating micro-management.

The Tigers question everyone other than themselves. They won't adjust for SEND; nevertheless, clients must obey unquestioningly. No parent partnership. No excuses. Love is conditional.

It reminds me of extreme ironing: impressive, but completely unnecessary. A school is a school is a school. With strong leadership, committed teachers, consistency and a clear identity, all schools do well. Michaela has the correct ingredients to be successful but it's not the faddy ideas in this book that make it so.

Next week

The School Leadership Journey

By John Dunford

Reviewed by Liz Free

As the debate rages once again between "traditional" and "progressive" curriculums, and between formal and informal methods of teaching, I wonder whether we are doomed to revisit these themes with every successive generation.

In 1965 I was part of the Nuffield junior science project pilot year. The goal was for children to come up with problems they could investigate using scientific methods. So when Rosalind, 8, wanted to know if her guinea-pig was intelligent, my job was to help her to find out.

Using wooden play bricks, she decided to construct a maze with food at the end to study her pet's strategy. The guinea pig indeed explored possible routes but then proved its intelligence in an unexpected way by jumping over the bricks to reach the food.

Two other pupils, Carol and Amanda, wondered whether Amanda's mum's anti-histamine cream (new, at the time) was better for nettle-sting than Carol's gran's traditional cure: crushed dock leaves. My special job was managing the stinging operations and gaining parental consent – not least explaining we all had to be stung twice, once untreated, to judge the effect of the cure. Both cures showed a slight positive effect and the comparison was ultimately inconclusive, as science often is.

A more satisfying result was procured at a primary school where the seven and eight-year-olds had observed molehills along their football pitch lines. They were keen enough when asked their

THE PAST WILL MAKE YOU SMARTER



WHO ARE THE GUINEA PIGS HERE?

MERVYN BENFORD

investigation plans to seek university support – which indeed they did get. Together they produced samples that went back to the lab for analysis. The best explanation was that economy creosote used on local authority fields sufficiently damaged the roots of the grass to make tunnelling easier!

As with all such work, it generated interest among others. Parents and local people were

often consulted and certainly knew what was going on. Language and mathematics were consistently required, often touching the wider curriculum. Plan, do and evaluate were central processes for which young people proved both enthusiastic and capable. So why did Nuffield and the superb McDonald books accompanying the project never really take off? Because after three years the Department for



Education decided it was not sufficiently systematic and needed a "curriculum" with "targets." Knowledge – the resource most amenable to testing and which is dependent mainly on memory and speed of working – was preferable to encouraging scientific exploration, or what Brian Cox and others recognise as "blue-skies science" or "curiosity-driven science".

How far was the Nuffield project from the OECD PISA testing currently used to compare students' scientific literacy internationally? PISA, like the first Bennett report into effective learning published in 1976, judges only what can be tested.

Bennett's report, *Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress*, examined primary school teaching methods similar to those pioneered in the seminal Nuffield trials and concluded that more formal teaching methods were superior. However, this was part of a much wider political debate in the late Sixties and early Seventies between so-called "progressives" and "traditionalists" in education. The Plowden report (1967), in contrast, recommended a more child-centred approach to learning and Bennett himself later retracted a report that endured a lot of criticism, precisely because education was more than what could easily be "tested".

Parents are foolish if they fail to realise that quality education is far more than meeting ideological targets ruthlessly exploited by organisations professing to judge performance by a process (testing) that is inevitably limited and flawed.

FEATURES

The growing sense of a crisis in schools prompted his new book, says John Tomsett

It seems that a day does not pass without a new report on the perilous state of children and young people's mental health. Only last month a government report claimed that 110,000 children in London were suffering from significant mental ill health. It is hard to ignore the growing sense that we face a "mental health crisis" in our schools.

Indeed, in 14 years as a headteacher I have encountered more children presenting mental health problems in the past four years than I did in my first ten. It is something that we will have to address at a time of shrinking budgets.

In preparing my second book, *This Much I Know About Mind Over Matter – improving mental health in our schools*, I decided to talk to people who knew more than I did about it. Norman Lamb MP is a tireless mental health campaigner and his interview sets up the debate that threads throughout the book about the extent to which we have a "mental health crisis" in our schools.

I interviewed others such as Professor Tanya Byron, Natasha Devon, Professor Kathryn Ecclestone, Dr Ken McLaughlin, Claire Fox and Tom Bennett to get a rounded view. Each has his or her own views about the causes, and the extent, of our children's mental health problems.

No matter what might be the cause, it is hard, as a head, to disagree with Tanya Byron when she says, "we have just got to

JOHN TOMSETT

Headteacher, Huntington school, York

How we can avert a mental health crisis in our schools

get on with the business of trying to address this challenge of increasing mental health problems in young people".

The more I read and the more I spoke to people, the more I became convinced we could do a number of things to avert a "mental health crisis" in our schools. The book proposes some simple, cost-effective measures to support our children and young people to manage their own mental health with greater confidence.

What has been interesting is the number of people who have said to me that it is a brave subject to write about. There is nothing "brave" about it, really. It seems to me that talking and writing about mental health is only the first step to improving our young people's mental health.

If we can create a school culture where young people can understand their own minds, where they realise that they don't

have to believe everything they think, and where everyone is aware of children's mental health in the same way we are cognisant of their physical health, then we can turn the tidal wave of mental health problems and avert this oft-proclaimed "crisis".

And then there is my mother. What drove my first book, *Love Over Fear*, was the narrative of my dad's life; my mother's life propelled *Mind Over Matter*. I explain what it was like to be brought up in a household with a mother who suffered from manic depression (now known as bipolar).

Mother was a bright spark, but left school at 13 because of her

illness, never to return. I recount what it was like when she whirled around the house all night singing, what it was like when she had to be sectioned and what it was like to visit her in a dilapidated Victorian mental asylum. It is an honest, sometimes raw, account of life with my mother.

Talking and writing about it is only the first step

Last summer I had to show her what I had written. The previous night I hardly slept; it was like the night before I receive the GCSE results. She chuckled a few times as she read, and when she had finished she said it was great, that she wasn't bothered, that it was all a long time ago and if it helped other people then I should publish it all.

Talking about mental health with openness, honesty and wisdom is not an easy thing to do. If *Mind Over Matter* makes it slightly easier for just one person to benefit from discussing his or her mental health, then it will have been worth the writing.



School Bulletin with Sam King

Balding embarks on a body confidence mission

FEATURED

Broadcaster, journalist and author Clare Balding is currently touring UK schools to spread a message about self-confidence and body positivity.

Following the release of her first children's book *The Racehorse Who Wouldn't Gallop*, Balding hopes to bring the book's themes of "finding the Olympian within" to pupils in the state and independent schools that she is now visiting.

Speaking to *Schools Week*, she said: "Kids particularly are susceptible to feeling insecure and reacting extremely to what people say about them.

"I'm going to a lot of schools at the moment to take an assembly and talk to them about finding the Olympian within. A lot of the messages I'm sure are what their teachers are telling them, but it helps if somebody outside comes in and says 'don't be afraid to fail, and don't be afraid to be different'."

Balding – a former jockey and now a presenter on BBC Sport and BT Sport – drew upon her observations from the sporting world when she wrote her book, referencing how strong women are

Northampton school for girls headmistress Dr Helen Stringer, left, with Clare Balding



Hundreds of pupils gathered to hear the talk



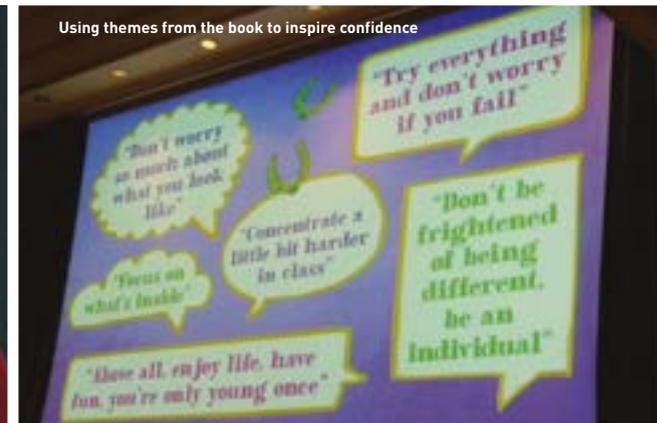
described physically.

"There's a big speech that Charlie's [the book's protagonist] mother gives her about

having big, powerful legs, and talks about Beyoncé, Serena Williams, Angela Merkel and Hillary Clinton, who are all women with powerful legs.

"A lot of it is what I've observed in the world of sports – I see a lot of very successful, very strong women who all have a fragility about them."

Using themes from the book to inspire confidence



One of her most recent visits was to Northampton school for girls where pupils from three local primaries were among those gathered to hear her speak.

Balding gave two talks during her visit, one for the junior pupils and another for seniors, which included students from the school's sixth-form.

Speaking of how the talk influenced the pupils, the school's headmistress, Dr Helen Stringer, said: "She reached every person in this building. Everyone took something away. She was able to connect with all age groups – even the staff, who were really buzzing about it afterwards."



A week in Westminster

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

It has been an eerily quiet Christmas at Westminster Palace. If there's one thing Theresa May's government is good at, it's taking a holiday. If that sounds facetious, it shouldn't. Swathes of journalists across the land are glad that May's team seem pretty intent on having their down time. We certainly are.

However, it leaves Week in Westminster in a bit of a pickle over what to write.

Never fear, though. It's the start of 2017. That means it's basically compulsory to make a column about things we are looking forward to covering this year and which the government cannot wriggle out of because we are going to keep asking questions. After all, you haven't read enough compilation columns about the year ahead yet, right?

THINGS WE KNOW WILL BE AN ISSUE THIS YEAR

1. The sugar tax levy What the heck is this, we hear you cry! Has-bean counter

George Osborne announced this 5 per cent surcharge on sugary drinks last year, and it has two consequences for schools. One: it should reduce the number of pupils turning up with energy drink cans the size of their heads. Two: the proceeds are supposed to be going towards paying for extra-curricular out-of-hours activities (and childcare) at school. Whether this money will actually ever get into schools, and what the rules will be for its use, are yet to be seen. We haven't forgotten about the tax, though, even if we have forgotten what Osborne looks like.

2. The apprentice levy Yes, another levy! From April, schools will be hit by an extra tax to cover the cost of apprentices. To recoup the cash they will have to train some people each year. One way to do this might be to create lots of teacher apprenticeships – including the sorts of routes we have previously reported. An alternative is to use other apprenticeships, particularly in business and management, which are the most lucrative. Keep an eye

out for "assistant head" relabelled as "school management apprentice".

3. The national reference test This will be the first year that 16,000 pupils will sit tests before the GCSEs so the exams' regulator can work out what GCSE grades to give everyone. That's right. Tests in order to take tests. The mind boggles.

Still, the maths wizards tell us it's a Very Good Idea. And who are we to question magic, eh? Either way, watch out for social media lighting up when 16,000 pupils come out of the exam crying because no one prepared them for the questions. (HEY, if seven-year-olds can't cope with it during SATs, then stroppy teenagers are going to be unbearable...)

4. A-level madness This will be the first year that universities have to work out how they are going to give out offers without any AS-grade indicators and without knowing how the scrapping of modules will affect the number of top grades. Fun times!

5. GCSE madness The world will be baffled in August when children bring home their grades and tell their parents that they received a one, a two and three Cs. "Why are you showing me roman numerals," their parents will say. Well, that's because maths and English will, for the first time, be graded using numbers via letters. And on a new scale. That's sort of like the old scale. But then isn't. Still, it could be worse. Wait until next year when half the grades will be in old money and half in new money and no one has any idea at all how to report on it. FUN TIMES!

6. Grammar schools Apparently this is going to be a big policy this year (motions self-strangulation).

Right, that's us for this week. Next week we plan to give you actual news. Imagine that! Tatty-bye until then.

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SCHOOLS WEEK

CELEBRATING THE NEW YEAR

FREDDIE WHITTAKER, JESS STAUFENBERG
AND SAMANTHA KING
@SCHOOLSWEEK

Dozens in the schools community have been honoured in the new year's honours list.

Those recognised include members of the government's influential headteacher boards: of the 20 people who will become Commanders of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) or Officers of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2017, five are former or current board members.

Eleven academy trust bosses and executive heads have been honoured, compared with eight last year.

And 11 honours have been given specifically for services to children with special educational needs, a slight fall on last year, when 14 were SEND-related.

DAMES

Helen Fraser, the former head of the Girls' Day School Trust, was the only member of the schools community to receive the highest honour this year when she was made a dame. Four leaders in education were at the top of last year's list.

The former Penguin UK managing director, who worked in publishing for 40 years before joining the trust in 2010, said she was "surprised and delighted on a personal level", but said the honour also recognised the work of the trust to "make girls more confident and resilient".

A spokesperson for the trust said Fraser had been "tireless throughout her career, both in private and in public, in promoting women and equality.

"She has never been afraid to put her head above the parapet to challenge stereotypes



Helen Fraser

and promote diversity and especially to champion women's contribution and encourage other organisations to do the same."

The government also announced that the

philosopher and crossbench peer Baroness Warnock, who chaired a groundbreaking inquiry into special education in 1974, has been made a member of the Order of the Companions of Honour for her services to education and charity.

Warnock began her career as a fellow and tutor in philosophy at St Hugh's College, Oxford, before going on to serve as headteacher at Oxford high school.

She later became a research fellow and lecturer at Oxford colleges Balliol, Somerville, Lady Margaret Hall and Christ Church, and was later mistress at Girton College, Cambridge.

The Order of the Companions of Honour has no more than 66 members, including the Queen. Membership is awarded to those who have given a "major contribution to the arts, science, medicine, or government lasting over a long period of time".

CBE

Two academy trust bosses and headteacher board members and a senior civil servant at the Department for Education have been awarded the CBE.

Among them is Seamus Oates, chief executive of London's Tri-Borough alternative provision (TBAP) multi-academy trust, who was recently appointed to advise north west London and south central England commissioner Martin Post.

Oates told *Schools Week* the honour was a "privilege".

"I am grateful to have the support and encouragement of all the TBAP staff and learners. This award honours their enthusiasm, dedication and

determination to succeed."

Roger Pope, who has been seconded part-time as the chair of the National College of Teaching and Leadership since 2015, has also been made a CBE.

Pope, who is chief executive of Academies South West and executive principal at Kingsbridge community college in Devon, previously served on the headteacher board for the south west of England.

"I am lucky to enjoy my job immensely," said Pope, who is a national leader of education and has worked in schools in Oxfordshire, Somerset, Wiltshire and Hong Kong. "To gain an honour as well is just a joy."



Roger Pope

Hardip Begol, the DfE's director for independent education, safeguarding in schools and counter-extremism, will also



Seamus Oates

be made a CBE. He was involved in the government's investigation into extremism in Birmingham schools.

OBE

Angela Cox, director of education for the Diocese of Leeds, was awarded an OBE in recognition of her services to education in her current job, as well as in her previous role in the education team at Leeds city council.

She said it was a "privilege" to work in the diocese. "It is the nature of the awards that they are given to an individual but this is recognition of the team of colleagues in the diocese and in our schools and colleges who do so much to benefit Catholic education and the children in their care."

Marcus Stock, the Bishop of Leeds, said Cox had given "outstanding service to the diocese and continues to provide excellent advice on all matters relating to our Catholic schools".

Three members of the government's headteacher boards also received OBEs.

Jane Acklam, chief executive of the Moor End academies trust, continues to serve on the Lancashire and West Yorkshire headteacher board, having been one of its founder members in 2014.

Brian Hooper, the former boss of Ambitions trust, is a member of the south west England headteacher board and Alison Beane, executive head of several schools in the Solent academies trust, was recently appointed to the board covering south-east England and south London.

Civil servant Michael Foy will also be made an OBE. He is a regional director in the Education Funding Agency's free schools capital division.



Angela Cox

YEAR'S HONOURS



MBE

School governors have once again taken a large share of this year's honours.

Of the 36 people made members of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for schools services, 12 are either current or previous members or chairs of governing boards.

Mohammed Aikhlaq, chair at Leigh primary school in Birmingham, has overseen the implementation of booster classes for pupils for whom English is not their first language.

He told *Schools Week* his biggest achievement was developing a relationship with parents and "making the right appointments staff-wise" to further boost teaching and learning. He added: "It was a joint effort and everyone deserves an MBE, not just me."

Aikhlaq claims his passion for education



Mohammed Aikhlaq



Anthony Bayon

developed after he visited Pakistan in 1991.

"I saw about 25 children reading under the shadow of a tree and I just couldn't believe my eyes. I spoke to my dad and I said look, I want to build a school for these kids, so I did. When I returned, I wanted to get involved with education."

Anthony Bayon, who chairs Harris academies in Merton and Morden, south London, said he was "honoured" to receive his "unexpected" recognition. He also serves on the Harris Federation's central board.

BEM

A volunteer who has spent more than 26 years in primary schools in Scarborough and Bradford has been awarded a British Empire Medal.

Singapore-born Habidah Glass began volunteering when her daughter started school. She spent 10 years as a volunteer at Gladstone Road primary in Scarborough, before moving to Bradford, taking up a role at Clayton Village primary when her grandson started school there.

Sixteen years on and Glass is still volunteering – and enjoying it.

"It's the love of the children that really inspires me," she told *Schools Week*. "When you teach them, or help them with their work and you see their faces light up – that makes me happy."

Carmen Patel, a maths and English teacher and "family leader" who supports pupils in



Habidah Glass

their GCSE year at Oasis academy Coulsdon, Surrey, has also been recognised with a BEM.

Patel said working with young people was a "great experience that I have embraced".

"I have tried to embed in them a love of learning that will serve them throughout their lives.

"Teaching has always been both my passion and my challenge. Making a difference to the lives and the opportunities for the young people in my care has driven my passion."

NEW YEAR'S HONOURS LIST - 2017

DAME

HELEN JEAN SUTHERLAND FRASER, CBE

Lately chief executive, The Girls' Day School Trust.

MEMBERS OF THE ORDER OF THE COMPANIONS OF HONOUR

LADY HELEN MARY WARNOCK, DBE

CBE

HARDIP SINGH BEGOL

Director, independent education, safeguarding in schools and counter extremism, Department for Education

SEAMUS MICHAEL OATES

Chief executive officer and executive head, Tri-borough alternative provision multi-academy trust

ROGER JOHN POPE

Chief executive officer, Academies South West multi-academy trust and executive principal, Kingsbridge community college, Devon

OBE

JANE ACKLAM

Executive principal and chief executive officer, Moor End academies trust

ALISON LINDA BEANE

Executive head, Mary Rose academy, Cliffdale primary academy and Redwood Park academy, Portsmouth and director, Solent academies trust

SUSAN MARGARET BENNETT

Head, St Thomas Centre nursery school, Birmingham

JULIE BEVERLEY BULLOUS

Lately executive head, Federation of Mary Howard and St Andrew's primary school, Tamworth

JOANNA BRIANT BURGESS

Principal and founder, Blossom House school, London

DR JONATHAN CLARK

Executive head, Beckmead family of schools, Croydon

DONNA ALISON CORNWELL

Associate head, Swaffham Bulbeck CofE primary school, Cambridge

ANGELA MARY COX

Diocesan director for education, Diocese of Leeds.

MICHAEL JOHN FOY

Regional head for West Midlands and North West, Free Schools Capital Division, Education Funding Agency

PROFESSOR JOHN FURLONG

Emeritus professor of education, University of Oxford, and expert initial teacher education adviser for Wales

BRIAN JOHN RUSSELL GALE

Director of policy and campaigns, National Deaf Children's Society

DAVID RALPH GOULD

Lately executive principal, ARK Boulton academy, Birmingham, and regional director (secondary), ARK

BRIAN RICHARD HOOPER

Lately chief executive officer, Ambitions academy trust

DR BRINDER SINGH MAHON

Chief executive officer, Nishkam school trust

PHILOMENA MARGARET MARSHALL

Education director and trustee, Laidlaw schools Philomena Abrahams trust and lately executive principal, Excelsior academy, Newcastle upon Tyne

CAROL NORMAN

Head, Welbeck primary school, Nottingham

MARVA ROLLINS

Head, Raynham primary school, Edmonton, London

MBE

COUNCILLOR MOHAMMED AIKHLAQ

Chair of governors, Leigh primary school, Birmingham

WALTER BALMFORD

ANTHONY PETER BAYON

Chair of governors, Harris academy Merton and Harris academy Morden; member, Harris federation board

TRACEY BOOTH

Chair of governors, Churchill community college, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear

GUY STEPHEN BRIGG

Deputy head, Dr Radcliffe's Church of England school, Oxfordshire

KAREN LESLEY BROCK

Founder, Tower Hamlets arts and music education service

CANDY PHILLIPA BURGESS

Head of pupil services, Islington, north London

JOSEPH CAHILL

Constable, West Midlands police and chair of governors, Broadway academy, Birmingham

KEITH GEORGE CAULKIN

Lately physics teacher, The Blue Coat school, Liverpool

PENELOPE SARAH COX

Head, Holy Trinity Church of England primary school, Richmond

PETER ROGER DAVIES

Chair of governors, Kingsdown school, Southend on Sea, Essex, and chair of the interim executive board, Leigh North Street Juniors

HELEN KAY DICKER

Chair of governors, Tarleton academy and lately chair of governors, Tarleton community primary, Lancashire

BETTY DIXON

Chair of governors, Jacksdale primary school and Selston high school, Nottinghamshire

YVONNE EDWARDS

Lately governor, Northampton School for Boys

PATRICIA FELLOWS

School meal adviser

TONY FENWICK

Co-Chair, School's Out

STEPHEN DALE FRAMPTON

Principal, Portsmouth sixth form college

JACQUELINE GENT

Head, Bishop Barrington school

PATRICIA ANN GOULD

Chair, High View school, Plymouth

SUSAN JANE GREEN

Project lead, Seashell trust and co-chair, National Network of Parent Carer Forums

PETER GIRVAN HILTON, JP

Volunteer and lately chair of governors, St Andrew's and St Mark's junior school, Surrey

CHRISTOPHER JOHN MACCORMAC

Chair of governors, Banbridge high school, Co Down

MAX BERTRAM MILLS

School volunteer, St John Fisher Catholic high school, Harrogate

CATHERINE MONICA PARLETT

Chair, Lighthouse Trust, Leeds

KATHRYN PARSONS

Co-founder and co-chief executive officer, Decoded

GORDON ERROL PHILLIPS

Lately principal, The Meadows sports college, Oldbury, West Midlands

ERIC THOMAS PROTHEROE

MARY ELIZABETH QUINN

Education consultant and lately executive principal, Stourport high school and sixth form college, Stourport-on-Severn

SUSAN MARY SHARRATT

Lately head of speech and language unit and SENCO, Bexton school, Knutsford

MICHAEL PETER SPENCE

Teaching assistant and lately governor, Manorbrook primary school and trustee, Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby

GILLIAN WALTON

Lately deputy head, St Martin's Catholic primary school, Cheshire

NICOLA MARIE WETHERALL

SUSAN ANN WILKINSON

Chief executive officer, Association for Physical Education

BEM

ELIZABETH WELLS BLACKBURN

Support worker, The William Henry Smith school, West Yorkshire

JEANETTE JAMIE COURTMAN

After school club chair, pre-school chair and breakfast club chair, Holbeton school, Devon

DIANE CROSTON

Chair of governors, Morgans primary school and nursery, Hertfordshire

BEVERLEY DARLISON

Chair, parent-teachers association and organiser, school summer playscheme, Fitzwaryn school, Oxfordshire

MICHAEL CHARLES FILLENHAM

Founder and chair, Western Area Clerks Association

HABIDAH GLASS

School volunteer, Clayton Village primary school, Bradford and Gladstone Road primary school, Scarborough

GERALD GRANSTON

MAUREEN OLIVE NUNN

Middy assistant, cleaner and school volunteer, Lubbins Park primary school, Essex

CARMEN KAMINI PATEL

Lately head of year 11, Oasis academy Coulsdon, Croydon

FIONA ANNE SINFIELD

Lately music teacher, Linton Mead primary school, Thamesmead, London

ROSALIND TAYLOR

Volunteer assessor, Eco-Schools green flag award

THE EXPLAINER

We make it simple: how the new 16-19 league tables are

HEADLINE MEASURES

The 16-19 accountability measures are changing. Some will be published for the first time this month with others following in March. While changes to measures for secondary schools have garnered lots of attention (including from us), the 16-19 changes have been less thoroughly reported. This guide, first published by us in 2014, is now updated with the latest guidance to redress the balance.

STUDENT PROGRESS

+0.5

Students average this many more grades per academic qualification compared to the national average

ATTAINMENT

B

Students average this grade in their academic qualifications

ENGLISH AND MATHS GCSE

+0.2

Students average this many more grades in **maths** compared to others with the same results at 16 who had also not achieved A*-C at 16

RETENTION

93%

% of all students retained to the end of their studies

DESTINATIONS

80%

% of all students going on to sustained education, employment, or training at the end of their course

* Not an official measure, yet

WHAT'S CHANGING?

The new accountability measures give a significant refresh to the performance tables published for school sixth forms and colleges.

Clear headline measures will display key indicators of a school or college's performance.

Additionally, new indicators will be published, about retention and student destinations.

WHY IS THIS CHANGING?

There are a number of aims of the new accountability measures, including informing student choice and helping schools and colleges better assess their performance.

The government has also said that the new data will help Ofsted in its judgments.

Although not explicitly stated in the guidance, it should also make it easier to compare school sixth forms and colleges, by broadening the range of performance indicators reported.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

The biggest change under the new system is the introduction of headline measures published for every school and college. These provide a snapshot of performance, that make it easy to absorb the key indicators of a sixth form or college's performance. Five headline measures are being brought in: **progress**, **attainment**, **progress in English and maths**, **retention** and **destinations**.

A separate score will be published for each type of qualification offered by a school or college: academic programmes, Applied General programmes, Applied General programmes and Tech Level programmes at level 3, and Substantial Vocational Qualification programmes at level 2.

Alongside these headline measures, national averages will be published.

And the DfE has said that additional measures and underlying data on performance will also be available to students, parents and other interested parties.

Additional measures will provide details of specifics such as attainment in qualifications below level 3 and A-level attainment.

PROGRESS MEASURE

The progress measure will form the basis for new minimum standards among 16 to 19 providers.

Separate values will be given for each type of qualification offered: academic, general, tech levels and level 2 certificates.

Academic and applied general certificates will be calculated using a value-added measure. This is the one most school sixth forms will need to know.

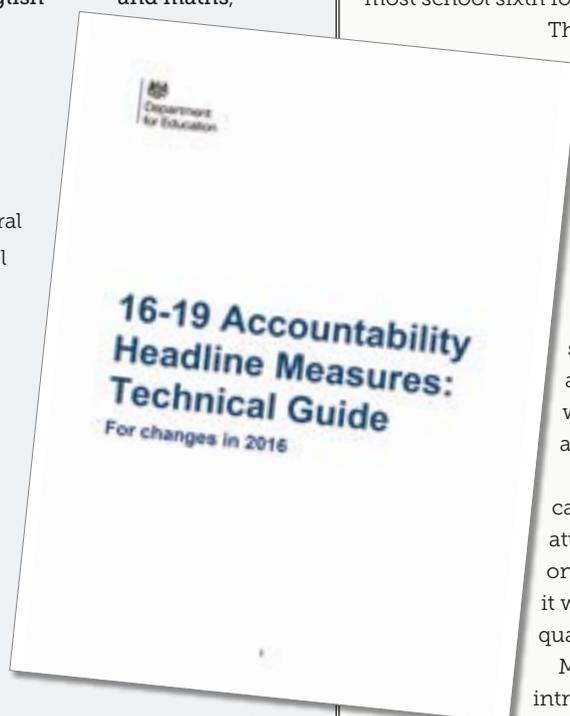
The progress measure is based on the progress each student made between their key stage 4 results and their level 3 qualification when compared with the progress made by students with the same prior attainment at key stage 4.

Students will be compared with other students studying the same qualification nationally before their scores are added together to give an overall score for the sixth form. It will be expressed as a proportion of a grade.

The academic value added will be calculated using a students' average attainment in their full GCSE courses only; for applied general qualifications it will take into account all key stage 4 qualifications.

Minimum standards will be introduced for sixth forms and is likely to be set at around -0.6 although the exact level is yet to be finalised.

Results will all be shown with confidence intervals, as per the new Progress 8 scores.



The government's are calculated

ATTAINMENT

ATTAINMENT
B

Unsurprisingly, a simple attainment measure will feature among the five headline indicators – though there will be changes from how this features in the current performance tables.

The DfE says that this will be something “which parents can easily understand and use to compare providers”.

For academic subjects (for the purposes of this explainer, the focus will be on this type of qualification), the headline measure will give an overall “A-level style” grade, ranging from A*-U, albeit with plus and minus grades available (e.g. B-).

As with other elements of the new accountability measures, however, more detailed underlying information will be available to those who want it, including attainment in academic qualifications below level 3, and in A-levels alone.

The calculation of the headline attainment measure will come from averaging out the grade achieved in all qualifications completed.

Withdrawals will not be counted as fails

in the calculation.

Compared to attainment measures published currently, however, there will be a change, with different weighting being given to grades achieved (see table right).

This has the effect of removing the “cliff edge” at the pass/fail boundary.

The removal of the cliff edge, the DfE says, means the failure of a single student no longer has a disproportionate effect on a sixth form or college’s score.

Despite these changes, the DfE says that it expects the impact on sixth forms and colleges to be smaller than the annual fluctuations generally seen in performance tables.

“We do not expect that the new point score will create wholesale changes in how schools and colleges perform on attainment measures in performance tables,” guidance on the changes says.

“The impact is expected to be smaller than the year-on-year variation in institution performance that is typically demonstrated in performance tables.”

CALCULATION OF AN INSTITUTION'S ATTAINMENT SCORE

In this fictitious example, Sanctuary Sixth Form has nine students, who each take one A-level. The sixth form's attainment under the existing, and the new system, are as follows

Point scores under the existing and new systems

	Fail	E	D	C	B	A	A*
Existing system	0	150	180	210	240	270	300
New system	0	10	20	30	40	50	60

Calculation of an institution's attainment score

Existing system

Student	Grade	Point score
Nicky	A	270
Michael	C	210
Ed	A*	300
Alan	B	240
Ruth	B	240
Charles	U	0
Estelle	D	180
David	Withdrawn	
Gillian	U	0
Total		1,440
Average =		1,440/8
		= 180

GRADE D

New system

Student	Grade	Point score
Nicky	A	50
Michael	C	30
Ed	A*	60
Alan	B	40
Ruth	B	40
Charles	U	0
Estelle	D	20
David	Withdrawn	
Gillian	U	0
Total		240
Average =		240/8
		= 30

GRADE C

Withdrawn students do not count for attainment measures under either the existing or the new systems

RETENTION

This represents an entirely new metric that will be published in performance tables for sixth forms and colleges, and reflects the importance being put on retention as the school participation age rises to 18.

It is, however, in line with the way that funding is provided.

Calculation of this measure is done on a whole student basis, rather than at the level of individual qualifications.

That means students need to stick to their core aim to be recorded as retained in this indicator – so for a two year A-level programme, a student needs to complete both years of only one A-level, for example. (Core aims are the ‘substantive’ qualification being undertaken in a student’s programme. In the case of academic qualifications one A-level would be designated as such by their sixth form or college.)

Calculation of an institution's retention score

210
students
begin
courses

186 students complete their course

14 fail to complete their course

10 drop out within the first 6 weeks

186
out of

200
are counted
as retained

93%
retention

Similarly, if a student were taking an AS-level only programme, they would only need to complete the one-year course for one of the subjects studied to count as retained. Where a student studies AS-levels followed by A-levels, the DfE has said they would only be counted for the purposes of the retention measure at the end of their A-level course.

The measure also feature what is effectively a six week “cooling off” period – any withdrawals from a course during this time will not affect the measure.

As with other headline measures, supporting information will also be available – among them, the number of level 3 students who are retained but not assessed, meaning it should be clear if sixth forms are attempting to game the system by getting them to complete a course of study but then not entering students for the final exam.

RETENTION
93%

DESTINATIONS

DESTINATIONS
80%

Of the five new headline measures, destinations is the trickiest and will not be included as a National Statistic (or ‘official’ measure) until further evaluations can show its robustness.

The aim is to show how many students go on to “sustained education, employment or training” at the end of their course.

The difficulty arises because – inevitably – the measure relies on information about students some months after they have left college or sixth form. Specifically, the period that matters is the six month period from October to March following completion of a course.

To qualify as being in sustained education, employment or training, a young person must spend at

least five of these six months in employment or training, or complete the first two terms of that academic year in education.

The government has published data on this measure as an “experimental statistic” for the past few years but the latest guidance says that “high percentages of activity are not captured” in the measure.

Although the data for the measure comes from matching National Pupil Database records to records held by other government departments, it is a difficult process and some learners are inevitably missed out.

Hence the latest guidance says the data will be evaluated going forward to establish its quality. Only once it hits the required level will it become an official statistic.

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SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference to WIN a *Schools Week* mug



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