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Switchers: the year 11 exodus

- Pupils are moving between academies and UTCs in the same trust
- 'The advantage? Schools can offload more challenging pupils'

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ **Exclusive**

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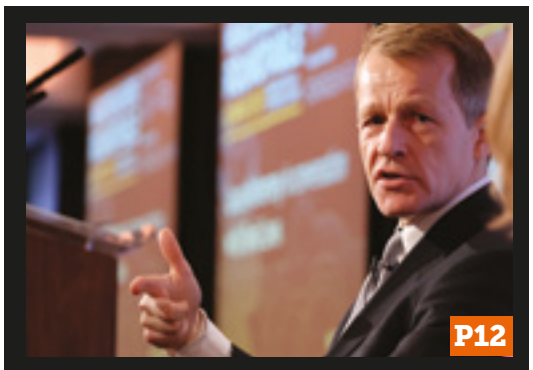

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DAVID LAWS

What I did when I was schools minister - and what I'd do next time

EDITION 94

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NEWS

Ofsted's 'double-inspection' report due this month

JESS STAUFENBERG
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A long-awaited Ofsted report on the "reliability" of inspections – tested through sending two inspectors to a school to see if they give the same judgment – will finally be delivered this month.

Joanna Hall, director for schools at the inspectorate, told *Schools Week* a report on the results of its "double inspections" would be published "this side of March".

Since April last year *Schools Week* has been pushing to see Ofsted's interim evaluation of the inspections, first revealed by the paper in January 2015.

Thirty-five schools were double-inspected, although 60 were "approached", said Hall.

Double inspections were introduced to demonstrate the objectivity of individual inspectors, following Ofsted's admission that not enough had been done in the past to ensure the reliability of judgments. They were carried out only in schools previously rated "good".

About 90 per cent of these inspections resulted in the two inspectors independently coming to the same judgment, Hall told delegates at the Headteachers' Roundtable Summit in London last week.

But Becky Allen, the director of Education Datalab, said she was "surprised" 10 per cent of inspectors came to different conclusions given they "went on the same day" with the same "bias".

"The assumption is the school is good, so there is the same anchoring bias in each inspector before they go.

"The fact they're even making different judgments surprises me, given they're there on the same day, the same moment in time."

In a largely critical speech about Ofsted's use of data, Allen told summit delegates that "consistency of judgment" was not the same as an accurate judgment.

"Making the same judgment doesn't mean that the whole system is valid. We can consistently make invalid judgments."

Her criticisms included the inspectorate nearly always rating affluent schools as good while disadvantaged schools were more likely to be graded less than good, according to data.

Education Datalab analysis also showed that Ofsted judgments could not predict whether a school was about to decline or improve.

"Do Ofsted currently manage to identify schools on the cusp of deterioration? No, they don't. And they also don't spot those schools about to go on an upward trajectory."

The system was "not dysfunctional" but with such "short inspections" and an increasing reliance on data, Ofsted judgments should not have the powerful impact they currently have, said Allen.

"We have to lower the stakes. We have to recognise that we don't want forced academisation and a human being fired on the basis of wrong data and a few hours of another human being walking around a school."

Schools Week made a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to Ofsted in April last year asking for the report that evaluated the double inspections. Ofsted had said in 2015 that it would publish the evaluation.

It said it had an "interim summary evaluation", but it could not be disclosed as publication might damage the effects of the on-going study.

The FOI request followed concerns that inspectors in the double inspections checked their judgments were the same before submitting them.

Schools Week then learnt that the interim report would not be published, but a "final" report would be disclosed instead. This is the report that Hall said will be published this month.

More stories from the summit, page 8
Expert, page 14

RSC resignation sparks conflict of interest worries

JOHN DICKENS
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Exclusive

The fourth resignation of a regional schools commissioner in the past 19 months illustrates how the government is doing little more than using "sticking plasters" to deal with conflicts of interest, says a union official.

Vicky Beer, the schools commissioner for Lancashire and West Yorkshire, earlier this week announced that she was stepping down to lead a new multi-academy trust.

She will become executive head of the Greater Manchester Learning Trust in May, an offer she said was "too tempting to turn down". She is the third commissioner to move back into the academy sector.

But it is a move that has prompted fresh concerns over a lack of rules governing commissioner conflict of interests.

Beer approved the academy conversion of her new trust's only school – Parrs Wood, in Manchester – less than ten months ago, despite vocal opposition from parents and teachers.

She insists she will work with national schools commissioner David Carter to ensure any conflicts are handled "appropriately and transparently".

The government has had to draw up conflict rules in a separate commissioner case.

Paul Richards was an interim academy board (IAB) member at Baverstock academy in Birmingham when his wife, Christine Quinn, was appointed the region's schools commissioner in October.

The academy thought it would be saved from closure, but Quinn told parents in January the school would shut because no sponsor wanted to take it over.

Teachers at Baverstock told *Schools Week* the conflict had not been declared. But the government insisted procedures were in place, including that Richards could not be at IAB meetings if Quinn was in attendance.

However, Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said the government "seems to be reacting by just using a sticking plaster for each case".

"It's indicative of a wider problem – the schools commissioner network is inadequate. The government is still picking up the pieces from the system being hurriedly introduced without thought for any revolving doors."

There doesn't appear to be any guidance or framework over commissioner conflict of interests.

A detailed online register of interests for commissioners and their headteacher board members appears on the Department for Education website, listing every school or academy trust they have been associated with in the past five years.

However, the spreadsheet is out of date. Pank Patel is still listed as the commissioner for the West Midlands. He quit in September last year, and was replaced by Quinn. Her conflict over Baverstock is not registered.

The government said Quinn's husband was no longer involved in making decisions about the future of the school, which were now made at ministerial level.

Beer said any RSC decisions about her new trust would be made by a different commissioner to protect all parties from "allegations of conflict".

Jonathan Simons, director of policy at the Varkey Foundation, said a revolving door between commissioners and academy chains was not surprising, but safeguards needed to be put in place.

He suggested one solution was a temporary break between jobs – similar to those issued by the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA) for moves between senior civil servants and businesses linked to their sector.

But he added: "This is less a question about propriety and lobbying, but more about transparency of process in a regulated sector."

Carter said Beer's move was "exactly what RSCs should do and take experience back to schools".

NEWS

Pupils switch to UTCs – and back again

JESS STAUFENBERG
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CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Exclusive

Schools that lose high proportions of pupils to university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools often have to "reintegrate" youngsters a year later because institutions close or pupils "don't enjoy" them.

Data obtained exclusively by *Schools Week* has revealed the ten schools with the largest percentage of pupils that left to join 14-19 institutions. The numbers do not show if pupils were encouraged to move by their school or went of their own volition.

The figures, supplied by Education Datalab as part of its 'Who's Left' study, found all ten of the schools would have had lower GCSE results if the grades of their former pupils had been included.

But as well as UTCs and studio schools having poorer outcomes for pupils, a *Schools Week* investigation has revealed two schools' plans to switch pupils were thwarted when nearby 14-19 institutions closed.

Another school said pupils often came back because UTCs and studio schools did not suit their needs.

The findings come in the week that Greater Manchester UTC became the seventh to close or announce closure since their launch in 2010.

The government is consulting on plans to force councils to tell pupils about all the 14-19 institutions in their region.

Janet Downs, a former secondary teacher and campaigner for the Local Schools Network, which supports maintained schools, said: "I can't see any advantage apart from schools being able to offload more challenging pupils. It could be disruptive."

Datalab's study found that Hewens college in west London had a 16.4 percentage point drop for pupils gaining five GCSEs at A* to C, including English and maths and equivalents, when former pupils were included in its 2014 results.

This was the largest difference for any of about 3,000 schools included in the data.

Nearly a quarter (23.8) of pupils who left Hewens between 2011 to 2015 headed to UTCs or studio schools.

The school is run by Rosedale Hewens Academy Trust. A third of the pupils that left another of the trust's schools, Rosedale college, also moved to 14-19 institutions.

The trust said pupils moved "simply due to their choice of options", and were able to study at two studio schools it ran – Parkside studio college, which is rated Ofsted "good", and De Salis studio college, yet to be inspected.

In Yorkshire, nearly 30 per cent of pupils who left Goole academy, operated by Wakefield City Academy Trust (WCAT), also joined a studio school or UTC.

WCAT said some pupils went to the trust's Create studio school before it closed in August 2015.

But pupils had to be "reintegrated" back into Goole, the spokesperson said. "Now only a small proportion of our students leave for an alternative UTC."

Stockwood Park academy and Chalk Hills academy, both in Bedfordshire and both run by the Shared Learning Trust, also had large numbers of pupils move to the Studio School Luton, but dwindling pupil numbers forced its closure in March last year.

A trust spokesperson said studio school pupils were moved back to other academies within the trust.

Meanwhile, Queen Elizabeth's grammar school, in Derbyshire, which is non-selective, said between five and 10 pupils left every year in year 9 to join the JCB engineering academy, which is a UTC – but "about half tend to come back, because they don't enjoy it".

However, Jim Wade, principal of JCB, said that of the 198 pupils who started in September 2016, 194 were still on roll. He disputed that half had returned to their original school.

Wade added that the UTC was "always delighted by the positive response that we receive from parents and students" and that he recently received an email from two parents saying "how brilliant all the staff have been at the academy and how everyone is going above and beyond to help their son".

Downs said these institutions seemed to be "a kind of alternative to alternative provision schools for less academically able pupils.

"There's a nagging pattern here. Taking kids out of a school where they've been for three years to send them to another school at 14 – isn't that too young to choose your specialism?"

But Charles Parker, chief executive of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust, which helped to found UTCs, insisted the institutions offered "high-quality technical education.

"It's a big decision to change school at 14 and come to a UTC, and it will only suit a minority who want to relate their schooling to real life."

A spokesperson for the Department for Education (DfE) said the "best UTCs are providing excellent technical and professional education", adding that the UTC programme was being "strengthened through a number of reforms".

They confirmed the DfE was consulting local authorities over plans they should write to parents of pupils "at the appropriate age about such schools in their area", adding it was considering the responses.

PARKER E-ACT ACADEMY, DAVENTRY: THE SCHOOL WITH THE SECOND-HIGHEST PERCENTAGE DROP IN RESULTS

When GCSE results were reweighted to include former pupils who had left, Parker E-ACT Academy saw an 8.3 percentage point drop. This was the second highest drop of the top ten schools with pupils leaving to UTCs and studio schools after Hewens college.
Daventry UTC is immediately next door to the school, while the Sir Frank Whittle studio school is a 25-minute drive.

A spokesperson for E-ACT said: "Students join and leave for various reasons. Our only focus is to provide our students with the best possible education."

KEY FACTS

UTCS CLOSED OR DUE TO CLOSE SINCE 2010 **7**

UTCS CURRENTLY OPEN **48**

STUDIO SCHOOLS CLOSED SINCE 2010 **7**

STUDIO SCHOOLS CURRENTLY OPEN **36**

OAK ACADEMY, BOURNEMOUTH: THE SCHOOL WITH THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS WHO LEAVE FOR UTCS OR STUDIO SCHOOLS

Out of 292 pupils at Oak academy who left between 2011 and 2015, nearly half (47.6 per cent; 139 pupils) went to a UTC or studio school.

The academy's trust, the Learning and Achievement Federation (LeAF), has its own studio school, the LeAF studio school.
It delivers the EBacc, national curriculum and "CREATE framework of skills" that assesses pupils on communication, emotional intelligence, applied learning and more.

Whereas 706 pupils were on roll at Oak academy in year 7 over the period looked at, just 597 were left by year 11.

Ministers looking at replacement 11-plus, say grammar heads

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
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Ministers are considering a new "national selection test" to replace the 11-plus, according to notes released by the Grammar School Heads' Association (GHSA).

Notes from a meeting between ministers and the association, revealed by the latter in its newsletter, also state the government expects new grammar schools to recruit the top 10 per cent of pupils.

The details emerged after the GSHA released a list of "key points" from meetings held with ministers "just after the consultation closed".

The meetings included representatives from the Department for Education's selective education team – led by Nick Timothy, the former New Schools Network boss who is now Theresa May's chief of staff.

Education secretary Justine Greening also attended and reportedly told the heads the responses to the government's consultation on plans to expand selection, which ended in December, were not "an overwhelming flood of negativity".

The notes state the government would continue working to develop "coaching-resistant tests" and was considering a national selection test to tackle "test tourism", in which parents enter children in neighbouring areas' tests if they are considered easier.

Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary, said it was "unbelievable" that grammar school heads "have been given the inside track on the government's plans, while our state schools and academies are left out in the cold".

The association also claims that ministers and officials talked of people who are "philosophically opposed to selection" who "keep saying it damages the education of other pupils but present little or no evidence to support this claim".

This is despite an analysis of the government's own figures that show that the education of young people in non-selective schools can suffer in selective areas.

According to the GSHA, ministers reportedly still want to see pupils from the top 25 per cent of achievers attend comprehensive schools, but expect new selective schools to have a "narrower ability range" – closer to 10 per cent.

In the short term it is expected that new selective places will be provided either within multi-academy trusts, or by "onsite and annex expansion of existing selective schools".

The GSHA is encouraging its members to bid for some of the £50 million annual funding allocated last year to expand grammars, and says it expects the first new schools to open in September 2020.

NEWS: REBROKERING ACADEMIES

The high cost of switching sponsors

JOHN DICKENS
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Exclusive

More than 100 schools are now rebrokered every year as the booming academy transfer market pushes costs to a potential £30 million.

Figures obtained by *Schools Week* have revealed 235 academies were handed to new trusts in the past two calendar years, up from just 26 in 2014.

Rebrokering costs are not routinely published, but previous figures showed the average cost of the transfers made between 2013-14 was £131,000.

If this was rolled out across the past two years, the total cost would amount to more than £30 million.

However, the true figure is likely to be lower after last year's Education and Adoption Act smoothed the way for the government to intervene quickly to strip under-performing trusts of academies.

Education leaders want the government to pull back on such "disruptive" transfers, which often include a name change, new uniform and an overhaul of leadership.

Malcolm Trobe, interim general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: "The process has to be well thought out, and enacted quickly to ensure the rebrokered academy is rapidly able to be given the required level of support."

But the process can still be drawn out.

In December 2015 the government told the Sandhill Multi-Academy Trust that it did not have the capacity to improve its two schools and that it would be wound up. The schools were finally transferred in October last year.


Malcolm Trobe

Rebrokering costs are often made up of sweeteners to entice new trusts, including funds to cover budget deficits and school improvement.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, suggested "more careful growth at the start" and for schools to be given the right to leave a trust if they felt it was not performing – a similar proposal to the "parental trigger" proposed by the New Schools Network when it was headed by Nick Timothy, now joint chief of staff at No 10.

"This would remove some of the bureaucracy around it, and encourage partnerships that truly work for schools."

The Department for Education (DfE) said rebrokerage was not always an indication of poor performance and could include academies moving into a multi-academy trust.

The Navigate Academies Trust lost nine schools over two years – the most of any trust. It is one of at least 11 trusts that have been wound up (see page 5).

Three of its schools left in September 2015 to set up their own trust, while the remaining six joined other trusts in May last year.

Academies Enterprise Trust, the country's largest chain, offloaded seven schools in 2015 after concerns that it had expanded too quickly.

The figures also reveal an emerging "MAT merger" market – something that the national schools commissioner Sir David Carter expects to see more often.

Three schools belonging to the Castle Partnership Academy Trust were transferred to the Samuel Ward trust, both in West Sussex, in December last year. But the merger has cut local choice; most schools in Haverhill are now run by Samuel Ward.


Russell Hobby

A DfE spokesperson said most academies were improving outcomes, some after "years of stagnation".

"But we do not tolerate failure and the strength of the academy programme is that it allows us to intervene swiftly, including replacing sponsors where it is in the best interests of children."

The number of transfers is also expected to rise as the number of academies increases.

2016

TRUST NAME	SCHOOLS REBROKERED
Navigate Academies Trust	6
Phoenix Multi-Academy Trust	4
Stanway Federation	4
Erudition Schools Trust	3
CfBT Education Trust	3
Learning Schools Trust	3
Castle Partnership Academy Trust	3

2015

TRUST NAME	SCHOOLS REBROKERED
Academies Enterprise Trust	7
Navigate Academies Trust	3
Telford Co-operative Academy Trust	3

NUMBER OF TRANSFERS PER YEAR

YEAR	NUMBER OF REBROKERS
2012	3
2013	4
2014	26
2015	101
2016	134

For-profit providers back out of academies

Two academy trusts set up by for-profit providers that have made millions running schools across the globe have ended their sponsorship of English academies.

The Erudition Schools Trust is in liquidation after its three schools in the Midlands were rebrokered to new trusts last year.

Erudition was sponsored by K12, a firm founded by a former Goldman Sachs executive, Ron Packard, and a former US education secretary, William Bennett. It sells virtual schooling in the US.

The trust's collapse follows that of the Learning Schools Trust, which relinquished control of its four schools in 2015-16 and is also being wound-up.

The Learning trust was sponsored by Kunskapsskolan, a private firm that runs schools in Sweden. It listed former education secretary Michael Gove as a "huge admirer".

Critics say that the downfall of two of the largest for-profit education firms sponsoring academies marks the death knell for such companies in the English state system.

But Matthew Bennett, a teacher who writes about the firms for the Local School Network website, said: "As with charter schools in America, the for-profits have been temporarily eclipsed by the non-profit chains with heavy philanthropic backing."

He said many of the for-profit companies were "busy experimenting" with models such as "personalised learning" and did not rule out their re-emergence in UK state schools.

Two of the Erudition schools were transferred to the Academy Transformation Trust and one to the Castle Phoenix Trust.

K12 declined to comment. A statement posted on the website of one of its schools, Kingsbury, said Erudition's withdrawal was "unexpected".

During an interview with *Academy Today* in 2015, Karen Mackay, managing director of the trust, revealed plans to take over up to six more schools over the next five years.

Set up in 2011, Erudition pledged to bring the "best in innovative, technology-based education" to the UK. That included an online "personalised learning" platform where pupils could work through subject-specific tasks and receive real-time support via a virtual tutor.

As revealed by *Schools Week* last year, the Learning trust handed its academies to local multi-academy trusts. The trust employed KED – a personalised education programme used through Kunskapsskolan's schools.

Other for-profit sponsors have also had a mixed impact.

IES International English Schools UK has a 10-year contract to run the IES Breckland free school in Suffolk. The school spent two years in special measures before it was rated as requires improvement in 2015.

Ofsted also criticised underperformance at the Collaborative Academies Trust, set up by the US for-profit school improvement company Edison Learning. However, the trust said it had the right measures in place to make improvements.

LAST RITES FOR 11 CHAINS

JOHN DICKENS
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Eleven multi-academy trusts handed at least £770,000 of government start-up funding are set to fold after their schools were transferred to other chains.

An analysis of figures detailing every academy rebrokering in the past two years, obtained by *Schools Week*, shows an increasing number of trusts have been wound-up.

The largest is Navigate Academies Trust, which ran nine schools across the north-east of England and South Yorkshire.

The trust's academies were rebrokered across the past two years, before it was dissolved last month.

It is one of at least 11 trusts that have been, or are in the process of being dissolved.

The government hands out grants of between £70,000 and £150,000 for new academy sponsors to set up a trust, as well as covering running costs until its first school opens.

Using the lower level of funding, it means these trusts would have been given at least £770,000 before they folded.

The increasing number of dissolved trusts also comes after *Schools Week* last month revealed a growing need for sponsors.

In 2014-15, four of the eight regional school commissioner areas faced sponsor shortages.

Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said this could mean commissioners taking schools out of local authority control and placing them in trusts that "won't make a difference".

Navigate had to pull out of sponsoring three large secondaries after due diligence uncovered "irreconcilable" funding issues, including private finance initiative costs and unaffordable utility costs.

Annual accounts for the trust, sponsored by the education consultancy and leadership recruitment firm Navigate Group, show this scuppered its vision to run up to 19 academy hubs.

The closure was agreed with the academies minister Lord Nash.

Three academies formed their own trust, Tees Valley Education. Four were handed to REAch4, and two to Outwood Grange.

Two schools belonging to the Sandhill Multi-Academy Trust were rebrokered to the Wickersley Partnership Trust last year.

Sandhill was previously told by the regional schools commissioner for East Midlands and the Humber, Jennifer Bexon-Smith, that it lacked capacity to improve its schools after it "misled" parents over government intervention in SATs. It is due to be wound up.

The Phoenix Multi-Academy Trust handed its four schools to the Boston Witham Academies Federation last year. It is expected Phoenix will be wound up this year.

Four trusts – The Priory Academy Trust, Ashwood Multi Academy Trust, Lynn Grove Academies Trust and Telford Co-operative – are all in the process of being struck off.

The Prospects Academies Trust is currently in liquidation, after the final two of its six schools were rebrokered in March 2015.

Accounts show that £43,000 of remaining cash will be transferred back to the Education Funding Agency.

The HTI Education Trust, chaired by former education minister Jim Knight, folded in December 2015.

NEWS

ACCOUNTS WATCH

BY JOHN DICKENS

The Great Academies Education Trust, set up by a housing group, has paid £200,000 severance to a former employee – one of the largest exit payments recorded by an academy.

The trust was not named when the Department for Education (DfE) revealed the bumper pay-off in its first academy sector finance report published in November last year.

Great Academies runs three schools in the north-west of England. It was set up by the New Charter Group, a social landlord that owns more than 19,500 homes.

The £200,000 payment was made during the 2014-15 school year, and is the highest severance pay recorded by an academy trust since 2012.

A spokesperson for the trust said the settlement was a "long and complex employment tribunal case" that was "ultimately suspended to enable the parties to engage in a judicial mediation process.

"The payment was made without the trust accepting liability but on the basis that, upon legal advice, the settlement offered the most economic advantageous outcome for the academy and for the preservation of public funds."

The Education Funding Agency has strict rules on such deals. Trusts must write a business case for each one, which the agency can demand to see so that it can check value for money.

Trusts must also get approval from the secretary of state for deals of more than £50,000.

Great Academies, which would not reveal the name of the staff member involved, said the settlement was agreed by the government.

Academies, with the DfE and its agencies, spent £58 million on exit packages in 2015-16, a sharp rise on the £49 million in 2014-15.

Schools Week has previously revealed some trusts have spent more than £250,000 on severance payments.

Ark, which runs 35 schools, spent £291,618 in 2015-16 – up from £82,037 in the previous year, with the **Greenwood Dale Foundation**, which sponsors 31 schools, spending £256,000.

DfE accounts originally stated two trusts had made exit payments in the £150,000 to £200,000 bracket.

However, the **Elliot Foundation Academies Trust** had recorded a payment in this bracket "by mistake". Its highest severance payment for that year was £74,000.

Seventh UTC bites the dust

The Greater Manchester university technical college (UTC), which cost £9 million to build, will close at the end of this year.

It is the seventh UTC to close because of recruitment problems. About 40 remain open.

School leaders told students on Tuesday that it had been unable to recruit enough pupils to make it financially viable. Government figures show it had 127 pupils on its roll last January, despite a capacity for 600.

Daventry UTC announced last month it will shut this summer and the Royal Greenwich UTC will become a mainstream school this year. Four UTCs have already closed.

Principal Lee Kilgour said year 11 and 13 pupils would complete their studies this academic year and he would work with Oldham council to bring about a "smooth transition" for pupils in years 10 and 12.

Superhead allowed back in the classroom

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Exclusive

A superhead who was banned from teaching for life can return to the classroom after a government disciplinary panel ruled that a prohibition order against her be set aside.

Jo Shuter was banned in May 2014 after a misconduct hearing into expenses claimed at Quintin Kynaston school in north London, but was allowed to appeal after two years following a November 2014 decision to reverse the lifetime nature of the order.

Her appeal was upheld by a panel from the Department for Education's National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL).

The government confirmed that after considering further evidence, including findings from the original panel, third-party references and evidence from Shuter, the panel decided the prohibition order "should be set aside".

Shuter, a former Teaching Awards headteacher of the year once named as Tony Blair's favourite head, is now technically allowed to teach and hold school leadership positions again. It is not known if she plans to return to the profession.

Her case drew attention to a lack of financial expertise among academy leaders who have come up through the school system, as well as a grey area about which roles fall under the NCTL's disciplinary process.

Shuter's ban came after she admitted

PA/WIRE

Jo Shuter

claiming about £7,000 from Quintin Kynaston for her 50th birthday party and charging the school for furniture worth £1,500 delivered to her home.

Speaking after a government investigation revealed the expenses claims several years ago, Shuter told London's *Evening Standard* she had made "really stupid mistakes".

But she said the findings were mostly about her strategic responsibility as the accounting officer for the academy.

"Nobody ever spelled out my financial responsibilities. When I was interviewed for the job in 2001 I told the governors that financial management was not my strength. The nature of headship has changed and now requires a thorough understanding of financial and HR management systems," she told the newspaper.

Sir Bruce Liddington resigned as director-general of the E-ACT academy chain in April 2013 shortly before a government investigation found a "culture of extravagant expenses" at the trust.

He previously told *Schools Week* it was "all too rare that executive heads or chief executives to have working job and person specifications".

The government has also confirmed that academy chief executives do not fall under the NCTL's disciplinary remit, and that it is up to schools to decide whether banned teachers could work as academy chief executives.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said last year that this was "an anomaly and perhaps one for chief executives themselves to reflect on".

It follows a decision by the High Court to overturn a two-year prohibition given to Greg Wallace, a superhead who was banned last June over allegations of financial misconduct following an investigation into IT contracts.

The court found the public interest in Wallace remaining in work outweighed the government's argument that his behaviour amounted to unacceptable professional conduct. It also criticised the "intrusive" sanction imposed by the Department for Education.

DfE ditches plan for phonics rechecks in year 3

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The government will not extend its phonics screening check retakes to year 3 pupils following a pilot in which 51 per cent of pupils achieved the government's "expected standard".

Pupils will continue to be assessed in years 1 and 2.

The decision comes after 62 per cent of teachers surveyed alongside the pilot reported an increase in workload.

More than a third also claimed the check had had no impact on the teaching of phonics to pupils who had fallen behind.

The check was introduced in 2012 to boost reading skills. Pupils are currently subjected to teacher assessment in year 1, and those who fail to reach the expected standard are then tested again in year 2.

Last year, 81 per cent of year 1 pupils nationally achieved the government's expected standard, but the figures were questioned after mark distribution data showed a steep rise around the pass mark of 32.

Officials commissioned the pilot, carried out last June by the National Foundation for Educational Research, as part of an investigation into whether a further check was needed in year 3.

Russell Hobby, the general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said the government should be "commended for following the evidence.

"Pilots are a good way to test policy, and it's sensible to act on what they tell you. The government is often attracted to retakes and resits, when in fact a different approach to teaching is needed."

Data from the trial shows that more than half the 1,625 pupils who took part had special educational needs, well above the national average of less than 15 per cent.

Of those with SEND who took part, 39 per cent reached the expected standard, while 65 per cent of those without SEND reached it.

Figures also show 28 per cent of the pupils were eligible for free school meals, almost double the primary school national average of 14.5 per cent.

A Department for Education spokesperson said ensuring all children could read fluently by the time they left primary school was "fundamental" to its ambition to make the country "work for everyone".

"Thanks to the hard work of teachers, our continued focus on raising standards and our increased emphasis on phonics, there are now an additional 147,000 six-year-olds on track to becoming fluent readers.

"While this is a huge achievement, we know there is more to do. We will work with schools and local authorities to ensure even more young people have the knowledge and skills they need to get on in life."

James Bowen, from the middle leaders' union NAHT Edge, described the phonics screening check as a "poor use of staff time" and said it should be optional, rather than compulsory for all children.

NEWS

New citizenship teacher numbers slump to 54

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Investigates

The number of new citizenship teachers in England has plummeted since 2010, prompting calls for a more "robust" approach to preparing pupils for the modern world.

Figures released by the schools minister Nick Gibb show that just 54 citizenship teachers have been trained this academic year, compared with 112 in 2014-15 and 243 in 2010-11.

Stephen Timms, the Labour MP who requested the data, told *Schools Week* he was "startled by the dramatic fall", while subject leaders warned of a lack of data about what was taught in classrooms.

Citizenship is still a national curriculum subject at key stages 3 and 4, and therefore has to be taught in all local authority-maintained secondary schools, but not in academies, which do not have to follow the curriculum.

The subject has been described as "key" to the government's British values agenda and the Prevent strategy. It is also mentioned in Home Office guidance on preventing radicalisation, which says that citizenship helps to provide pupils with "the knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society".

Chris Waller, professional officer at the Association for Citizenship Teaching, said the decline was "catastrophic" and warned there was a "paucity of data about what is happening in schools in terms of citizenship teaching.

"It's a wake-up call ... if you want to have a society that truly knows how to ask deep, critical questions about what is happening in the world, you can't rely on that to happen by chance. It has to be planned and coherent.

"You have to ask why we are not being more robust in thinking about preparing young people for life in modern Britain, and the complex world we live in. If you want planned, high-quality teaching and learning around these issues, you have to have teachers who know how to handle these debates, and room in the curriculum."

Waller, who also called for better data on the number of citizenship teachers training through school-based routes rather than universities, said it was "particularly pertinent" to highlight the decline in the context of debates around Brexit and the election of US president Donald Trump.

"When you look at everything that's come up about Mr Trump, you have issues around racism, homophobia, sexism and gender-stereotyping," he said.

"We want young people to be able to ask complex questions about it, and that's not going to just happen in maths, history or geography lessons."

A government spokesperson said citizenship helped "to provide pupils with the knowledge and understanding to play a full and active part in society" and every teacher "has a part to play in ensuring children learn the importance of respect and tolerance for all cultures.

"We trust heads to make the right decisions on recruitment and skills for their staff," she added.

Ministers are planning a large expansion of the government's flagship National Citizen Service, but the programme, which combines residential trips and voluntary work during the school holidays for 16 and 17-year-olds, was not designed as a replacement for proper citizenship teaching.

More on NCS, page 9

Teach First switches targets to low-performing areas

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Investigates

Teach First plans to shift its focus away from London to six of the government's 12 "opportunity areas".

Brett Wigdortz, the charity's founder and outgoing chief executive, made the announcement during a school visit to Derby with the education secretary Justine Greening last week.

He said the move would shift 40 per cent more graduate trainees towards the first six social mobility areas – Blackpool, Derby, Norwich, Oldham, Scarborough, and West Somerset.

Greening also announced a cash injection of £72 million for six other social mobility "coldspots" – Bradford, Doncaster, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, Hastings, Ipswich, and Stoke-on-Trent.

Teach First is concentrating on the first six areas initially, but a spokesperson for the charity said it planned to increase its support in the other areas.

Wigdortz said he was "proud" of the change, and Greening said it was "great" to have the training provider "stepping up" its recruitment.

Last November the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission called on the charity to move away from London and place its top graduates into schools in the country's ten lowest-performing local authorities.

Brett Wigdortz

When it was set up in 2002, Teach First exclusively sent its trainees to schools in London, but from 2006 they were placed in Manchester and later in Birmingham, Newcastle and eventually across England and Wales.

Although the training provider still has firm roots in the capital, the overall percentage of Teach First graduates in London fell from 44 per cent in 2013, to 37.5 per cent (541 participants) in 2016.

And while many aspiring teachers still see London as the most desirable place to work, Teach First is confident its move will not put off potential applicants.

Wigdortz said they should be "fully aware they will be placed into schools serving low income communities" when they join the programme.

"Our participants are motivated by being able to make the greatest impact possible on the pupils who need it the most.

"Since Teach First was founded we have always played a unique role in recruiting teachers to be placed into areas in greatest need.

"In recent years we have shifted our focus to areas outside major cities where education and social inequality remains a persistent challenge."

In an attempt to encourage graduates to deprived areas, the Ormiston trust offers incentives such as cheaper rent.

A spokesperson from Ormiston said: "We have used subsidised housing in areas of need, such as Grimsby, to attract and retain young teachers, including those on the Teach First programme.

"With the support of Ormiston trust this has been a huge success, and we are looking to expand this into new areas in partnership with housing associations and other providers."

Greening said Teach First was playing a "key role" in the government's push to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils by "recruiting top graduates with the potential to become excellent teachers – and future school leaders – in some of the most challenging schools across England".

MEET MR ROBOT, YOUR NEW SCHOOL RECEPTIONIST

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Robots could replace school administrators, receptionists and hundreds of workers at the Department for Education, says the think tank Reform in its new report *Work in Progress*.

The report, released this week, suggests that schools "become the next Uber", using "gig economy" platforms to find supply teachers and cut agency fees.

But civil servants are blocking these "necessary changes" that could cut 250,000 public-sector jobs, say the report's authors.

Emilie Sundorph told *Schools Week* the Department for Education had "too many layers of management" that had created a "frozen middle" of managers "unable to take decisions and see things through properly".

She said "small, agile teams" focused on cross-cutting issues – such as social mobility in opportunity areas – were a possible solution.

The report used research by academics Carl Frey and Michael Osborne, who in 2013 produced "the future of employment" report and predicted how artificial intelligence and online apps could replace workers.

Reform said that artificially intelligent "chat bots" would remove the need for more than 90 per cent of Whitehall's 154,000 administrators by 2030, saving £2.6 billion a year.

Sundorph said this meant "96 per cent" of administrators would become defunct.

But Jon Richards, national secretary of Unison, said Reform's proposal was an "ill thought-out idea, based on an old-fashioned view of what 'receptionists' do. Of course we should utilise technology to help to support learning and to ensure efficiency, but the idea that receptionists just sit there opening doors for visitors is ridiculous."

Louis Coiffait, head of education at Reform, said advancements in technology could reduce the wages bill and so improve school services.

"These changes are already starting to happen, with many schools allowing visitors to sign in and out with tablet computers, rather than through a receptionist.

"Many of the 89,700 administrative and reception roles currently in schools will soon be automated. We're already seeing how new apps help to communicate with parents and handle appointments.

"Teachers can also use smarter MIS systems to analyse data and inform their decisions, which can help to save time and allow them to focus on the key things only they can do – like teach."

However, Richards said receptionists were "part of multidisciplinary teams" and could not be easily replaced.

"Reform see support staff as an easy target. Frankly they should do their homework."

Expert, page 15

NEWS: HEADTEACHERS' ROUNDTABLE SUMMIT

On Thursday February 2, the first Headteachers' Roundtable Summit was held in central London, with Schools Week the exclusive media partner. More than 200 delegates heard from a range of speakers on the future of schooling and how to influence policymakers to make the best decisions. Jess Staufenberg reports

'SAFEGUARDING NEEDS SPECIALIST STAFF'

A specialist body of safeguarding officers should be set up within or separately from Ofsted because inspections are "too short" to cover the issue properly, says a multi-academy (MAT) trust executive.

Stephen Tierney, chief executive of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic MAT in Blackpool, said that safeguarding pupils was "too important" to be assessed as part of a wider inspection every few years.

Instead, a special team of "chartered safeguarding experts" should be visiting schools every term with a quick follow-up "just so headteachers can sleep at night".

Speaking to delegates at the Headteachers' Roundtable Summit in London last week, Tierney said safeguarding should be treated as an auditing rather than an inspection issue.

"We should establish chartered safeguarding officers who are outside of schools, who audit you every single term, and who come back and say it's still not strong enough until you've got it right. Our kids are worth it."

He said it was impossible for Ofsted to do a thorough job of checking safeguarding issues in short inspections.

A headteacher from Islington, north London, "totally agreed", adding: "It may be helpful for Ofsted to shift safeguarding somewhere else. I don't think what's being done at the moment is sufficient." The head also questioned how much safeguarding training Ofsted inspectors received.

Joanna Hall, deputy director for schools at Ofsted, said: "The training is ongoing. It's not just two days, but goes on throughout an inspector's time in their role. Safeguarding permeates everything we do in every region."

Dr Becky Allen, director of Education Datalab, also said she wanted every inspector to undergo a "quality assurance" test – such as watching videos of schools – before being allowed to make public judgments.

"I am concerned there's no basic test to see that inspectors are making the kind of judgment they should make.

"I want to force every single inspector to watch a video and prove they can make the right judgment before they go out."

The updated Ofsted guidance from August last year defined safeguarding as protecting children from any "maltreatment" or negative effects on their "health or development".

It includes "ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care" and "taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes".

The guidance said schools may need to protect pupils from issues such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as bullying, domestic violence, and substance misuse.

Sexting, pornography, teenage relationship abuse, "poor parenting, particularly among young children", and "fabricated or induced illness" are also listed.

Ofsted has previously placed schools in special measures over safeguarding failings.

Saville House, an independent school in Nottinghamshire, was rated as good in an Ofsted inspection for pupil achievement and quality of teaching more than two years ago.

But it was judged inadequate and placed in special measures overall because staff had not had "the required safeguarding training" and did not know what "procedures to follow in the case of a disclosure". Its risk assessments were also criticised.

A follow-up inspection in 2015 showed these requirements had been met.


Stephen Tierney

College promises chartered status – but who will qualify?

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

A programme for "chartered teacher status" will open next year, promises the Chartered College of Teaching.

But critics question how "proven expertise" will be measured.

Lucy Crehan, an education consultant and former teacher, told the Roundtable that chartered status would bring a "mark of quality" amid unregulated career progression.

A college spokesperson confirmed the programme would go ahead and that a "number of different pathways to achieve the status" were being consulted on.

Full details of the programme – known as CTeach – will be released in September to allow teachers to submit "early registration" of interest. It is intended to offer a level of membership above qualified teacher status.

A pathway called the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), is expected to start in January. To complete this route, teachers will need to submit evidence of skills, experience and career development "to demonstrate they meet the criteria for chartered teacher status".

But Professor Samantha Twiselton, director of the Sheffield Institute for Education, said some teachers objected to different levels of college membership.


Lucy Crehan

"Some people are objecting to a higher level of membership, saying 'I shouldn't have to prove myself, I'm already a teacher'."

Tom Bennett, founder of ResearchED and behaviour adviser to the government, said the college needed to be clear what chartered teacher status would represent.

"If it represents a proven expertise of some form, then it could be very useful to employers and the profession.

"But there is a real danger that the organisation focuses too much on building membership before clearly explaining what entitles one to be a member."

The proposed programme would be "explicitly focused on pupil outcomes" and "a set of professional principles that exemplify excellent teaching", according to the college's website.

In 2004, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) criticised a Chartered London Teacher Status that allowed staff to submit evidence in return for a pay hike. The union said it made money available for teachers "in one part of the country that is not available to teachers elsewhere".

Some subject associations also award a licensed "charter status", including the Science Council, the Association for Science Education (ASE) and the English


antha Twiselton

Association.

The college is currently consulting on whether to have a "general or a subject-specific" chartered teacher status.

A spokesperson for the ASE, which awards a chartered science teacher status called CSciTeach for £95, said: "The college is looking at making the chartered status applicable for those associations that can't give out chartered status yet."

Since setting up the award in 2006, ASE has awarded chartered status to 260 science teachers.

A new chartered status could "raise the whole concept" as currently the award was "not always recognised by senior management", the ASE spokesperson said.


Emma Knights, chair of the National Governance Association


Stephen Morales, chief executive of the National Associaton of School Business Managers

Cameron's citizenship plan fails to inspire teenagers

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Investigates

An extra-curricular project that schools were told they had to promote in assemblies is in financial disarray yet will still be given a budget of £420 million a year by 2020.

However, the plans to force schools to promote the National Citizen Service (NCS) for 16 and 17- year-olds have been abandoned.

Established in 2011, the NCS was a key part of the "big society" agenda of the former prime minister David Cameron, who now chairs the company. It uses government funding to pay private companies to provide residential trips, volunteering and work experiences to teenagers.

But the government has confirmed that plans announced in last year's Queens Speech to force schools to promote it will no longer go ahead, and non-statutory guidance will be issued instead.

Originally the government said 360,000 young people a year would take part in the NCS by 2020, at which point the service would receive annual funding of £424 million.

However, the government spending watchdog, the National Audit Office (NAO), is concerned the target cannot be reached without forced promotion in schools.


David Cameron meets pupils during a visit last year to the Reach academy in west London

NCS held events in about 3,500 schools last year, but just 55 per cent of young people surveyed last July were aware of its work and only 25 per cent expressed an interest in its activities.

Participation in the programme has risen from 8,434 pupils in its first year to almost 93,000 in 2016, but it has missed its own recruitment targets three years in a row and would need to more than triple the numbers in the next three years to meet the target.

Meanwhile, MPs and the NAO have raised concerns about the NCS's readiness for expansion, given a "remarkably untransparent" set of accounts, plus the amount it pays sub-contractors to deliver the programme, but which fail to recruit young people.

According to the NAO, the NCS Trust paid an estimated £10 million for places not filled last year, and has only now commissioned an audit of its five providers to recover "some of the amounts paid". It is not known how much was written off in previous years for unfilled places.

Michael Lynas, chief executive of the trust, admitted to MPs during a public accounts committee hearing on Monday that private providers kept 50 per cent of the funding, even when places were unfilled, as half their costs were paid upfront to cover things such as accommodation.

He also admitted the trust did not audit how much of its funding was spent on marketing, and that pro-bono support was not accounted-for.

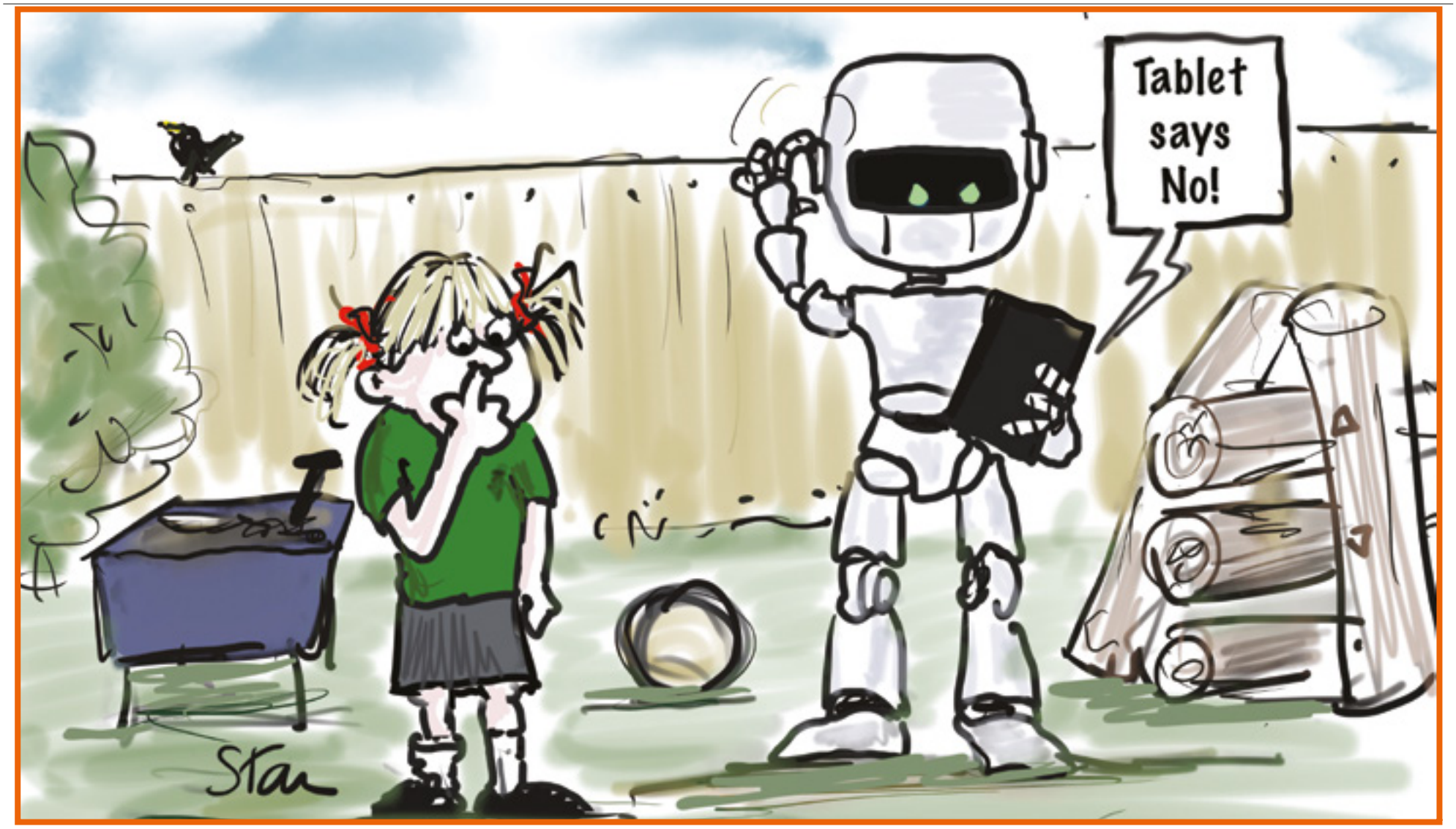
Meg Hillier, the Labour MP who chairs the committee, said she recognised the "great aims" of the organisation, but said she was concerned that it was "not tightly financially managed".

"That is a risk for your organisation because you are solely funded by the taxpayer."

The government is currently passing laws through parliament that will give the organisation chartered status and more accountability to parliament, which will have to sign-off future accounts.

However, there is no planned law to promote the NCS's work.

NEWS



Tablet-based tests for year 1 pupils on the agenda

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

The government is considering taking part in a pilot of tablet-based tests for some of the youngest children in England's primary schools.

Department for Education officials are understood to have expressed an interest in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) international early learning and child well-being study (IELS) next year.

A final decision is yet to be made.

Schools Week understands the pilot will use digital software to test the social, emotional and cognitive skills of year 1 pupils.

A source said the tests would be done on a one-on-one basis and would use tablets to assess early self-regulation and attention, numeracy and maths, emergent literacy, and empathy and trust.

Results will be used to map pupils' early capabilities to their education performance at age 15 through the international PISA tables.

The schools minister Nick Gibb, a fan of PISA, has recently argued in favour of more teacher-led instruction, but school leaders have warned against using "limited" international studies to inform assessment policy.

James Bowen, the director of the middle leaders union NAHT Edge, also said there was a "real need for caution" around any form of early years' assessment.

"There is a lot of resistance to the idea of any formalised testing at such a young age. Any assessment during the early years should be based on observation as opposed to tablet-based tests."

He also warned the government against making policy decisions based on the outcomes of such tests.

The pilot has also been criticised by Jan Dubiel, the national director of Early Excellence, the main provider of the baseline assessments for young children.

The government abandoned baseline as a performance measure last year after fears that the different providers' assessments were not comparable.

Dubiel warned that while the introduction of tablet-based testing of five-year olds "may appear attractive and innovative", the IELC study would "fail to identify the rich variety of characteristics that indicate a child's knowledge, skills and point of development".

"Computers can't replace the human interaction and understanding that an early years' teacher develops of their pupils, with an average teacher having thousands of interactions with their children every day.

"Rather than using five-year-olds as guinea pigs, the government should continue to listen to the thousands of schools, headteachers and teachers that support a non-test based approach . . . that takes into account all the critical learning behaviours that a child requires to have the best start in life."

It is unclear how many countries have signed-up for the pilot, but there is doubt whether Scandinavian countries will take part. The OECD hopes to involve between three and six countries.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

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

We're off for two weeks but we're back on March 3

February is a divisive time of year.

Not only is there the usual push and pull between those who hate Valentine's Day and those who love it (snarf), it's also the only time of year when the school holiday calendar goes into total flux as no one knows when we are supposed to take half-term.

Other times of year have clear marking points. Christmas and New Year must be accommodated. Easter happens during Easter. And in October, the unspoken rule is that half-term must never, ever, break into November. It must only ever glide tantalisingly close.

February has no rules. In many areas half the schools are off for one week, the other half the following week, causing all manner of headaches.

It has also caused a pickle for us at *Schools Week*, as we don't publish during holidays. So, we decided to take both off!

But there's more than shirking work to our decision. We publish 37 editions a year, with our last edition at the start of July. Given that the past two changes of education secretary happened in the second week of July, this is pretty inconvenient.

Hence, we've decided to have two weeks' break now – given that all schools are out for at least one of them – in favour of an extra edition in July when all schools are in session.

It's a decision we may regret as the temperatures soar in July.

But, for now, our next edition is out on March 3, though news junkies can still get their fix on schoolsweek.co.uk

ASDAN

ASDAN is a part of the Skills and Education Group

Skills & Education Group

Education Director

Salary: circa £60,000

Hours of work: Monday – Friday, 37 hours a week

Pension: Scottish Widows: Employer contribution up to 6%

Leave entitlement: 25 days, plus 5 discretionary days, in addition to statutory bank holidays

Location: Wainbrook House, Hudds Vale Road, St George, Bristol BS5 7HY

ASDAN is seeking to appoint an Education Director to lead the development and sustainable growth of our programmes, qualifications and professional development business.

ASDAN is a successful national educational charity and awarding organisation for a range of qualifications, programmes and curriculum resources used by more than 3,000 schools, colleges and other education providers in the UK and internationally. ASDAN is proud to be part of the expanding Skills and Education Group (SEG), a group comprised of like-minded organisations including ASDAN, ABC Awards and emfec. As a founding member of SEG, ASDAN is ambitious to grow its services to support young people to develop skills for learning, work and life.

This is a new post based at ASDAN's office in St George, Bristol. As a member of the SEG Executive Team and ASDAN Senior Leadership Team, the Education Director will play a key role in further developing and positioning ASDAN's education solutions in schools in liaison with Headteachers, practitioners and other key decision makers in education.

For full details including role description, person specification and terms and conditions, please visit the ASDAN website: **http://www.asdan.org.uk/vacancies**

For an informal discussion about this post please contact **Jenny Williams** Group Deputy CEO/Managing Director, ASDAN: **0117 954 3980**

Closing date: Friday 24th February (**interviews** will be held in Bristol on Thursday 9th March)

To apply for this position, please email a cover letter outlining your suitability for the post (you may also attach a CV if you wish) and a completed application form to **personnel@asdan.org.uk**. Within your application please outline your relevant skills and experience, referring to the person specification as appropriate, and provide a clear outline of your suitability for the role.

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Closing date: 12th February

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Closing date: 12th February

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Closing date: 19th February

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£41,328 – £57,191

Location: Cambridge with a minimum of one day per week in Coventry

This is an opportunity to join or be promoted within the Human Resources team. This role supports OCR, which is one of three business units within Cambridge Assessment. It is an exciting time for Human Resources within Cambridge Assessment, as we work closely with the business to build an organisation capable of meeting the challenges of change, engagement and growth while not losing sight of our underlying values. You can be part of that and have an opportunity to influence the future here.

Closing date: 12th February

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Closing date: 13th February

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National Governors' Association

Chairs' Development Manager

Location: Birmingham
Salary: £28,000 to £32,000

An exciting opportunity has arisen for the appointment of a Chairs' Development Manager at National Governors' Association (NGA). NGA is the only national membership organisation for school governors, trustees and clerks of state funded schools in England. We work to improve the effectiveness of governing boards in both maintained schools and academies by providing information, advice, guidance and training.

This new role is part of the Inspiring Governance programme led by our partner Education and Employers. The programme commenced in September 2016.

The post holder will be responsible for delivering the chairs recruitment and development element of the programme. This will include promoting the service to aspiring chairs and ensuring that they have access to e-learning and training.

The post holder will be based at NGA's Birmingham City Centre office but some travel in England should be expected.

The job description, person specification and application form can be downloaded from:
http://www.nga.org.uk/About-Us/Recruitment.aspx

READERS' REPLY

EMAIL TWEET FACEBOOK WEBSITE

Primary pupils kept in the dark to save money

@Nic_TM
We're all going to have to get used to being even more super-efficient in schools. Lights and photocopying are just two of such measures.

@NickiiMesser
This is nothing new. There is too much wastage in schools. In any case "better to enlighten a child, than light a classroom".

Two-year teachers are helping to ease recruitment crisis

@TillyTeacher
This was the norm in my last school: department of eleven with five Canadians on two-year visas. Note: they were qualified in Canada, but paid as if unqualified.

'Poor communication' blamed for DfE accounting hiccup

@CornwallMaths
Poor communication is the patsy in so many situations – it's actually because people don't pay attention to what they should do!

@meolscop1978
A man who claims school funding cuts are "doable" can't even get his own house in order.

Sponsored school rolls slump after takeovers

@WMnaht
This is what happens when a policy is forced on a profession, decided by civil servants and politicians from distorted international evidence.

@HopeStreetBlues
More evidence that education is losing its moral purpose as academies exclude challenging pupils

Feeder primaries at head of queue for academy places

Janet Downs, Bourne
Aspirations is wrong to suggest that parents can choose a school when their child is three and not have to worry again. The schools admission code says priority can only be given to children who attend a school-based nursery if they attract the pupil premium. Schools also have to make it clear to parents that they need to apply for places in reception, even if their child attends a school-based nursery. It is not automatic.

@Benedick1
Hate the phrase "feeder primaries" as it devalues the work that primaries do. Language matters.

@stannesfulshaw
This was always going to happen once the system became more fragmented. Another strategy to accelerate the process?

Education is more important than ideological battles

@Glostermeteor
I'll stop bashing religious schools when they don't exclude my own children from going to them.

@MrsJaneRace
Bashing any school is unhelpful; be they Catholic, grammar, private. No wonder teachers are leaving the profession

Beware the Red rebel who now has great influence

@HeadDurham
Think tank appoints man who thinks what they think and will keep thinking that way.

Profile of Mike Kane

@willhaywood
Great to hear a politician talking sense about teaching – those in government should listen to their right honourable friend @ MikeKaneMP

Accounts watch: Through the £200,000 pay wall...

SARAH THURLBY, ADDRESS SUPPLIED

These are double and three times the salaries of many directors of children's services who are responsible for several hundred schools on top of running children's social care. Many of these local authorities have 90 per cent-plus of their children in good or outstanding schools. How is this value for public money? It's a scandalous waste of money with no measurable benefit.

REPLY OF THE WEEK RECEIVES A *SCHOOLS WEEK* MUG!

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Please include the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is.

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

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INTERVIEW

‘THE REALITY OFTEN IS VERY DIFFERENT’

Would the former schools minister David Laws do anything differently if he were to hold political power again? And how can those without power influence those who have it? The deputy editor of the *New Statesman*, Helen Lewis, has an idea or two. Both spoke at last week’s first Headteachers’ Roundtable Summit, as *Schools Week* editor Laura McInerney reports


David Laws and Laura McInerney


Helen Lewis and Laura McInerney

DAVID LAWS

A few years ago I received a text from an education journalist after a high-profile school leader left her job under a cloud. “Do you have [person’s name’s] number? If she’s about to lob any bombs over her shoulder I want to be there to catch them.”

The statement is crude but it reveals a truth. Most education leaders are dull when they hold their position of responsibility. A former headteacher, union leader or schools minister, freed from their career-shackles, is a joy to interview, however.

David Laws, the former schools minister who worked under Michael Gove, had no reason to keep his bombs back when he addressed the Headteachers Roundtable Summit in London last week. Losing his seat in the 2015 general election, he is now chair of the Education Policy Institute, a newly launched centrist think tank, churning out top-notch research at a rate of knots.

Answering a question that was meant genuinely but raised a giggle, Laws tackled what it is that a schools minister does with his time.

“Like any leader, you have to prioritise. What you should do is have three priorities that you want to achieve and then fill your diary around those.” However, he admitted that very often his diary would become filled with other meetings “to the point that it no longer resembles anything that is your own priority”.

If he had his time again in office, he said he would spend more time in schools and academy trusts in challenging and economically disadvantaged areas.

“The problem is that people don’t want to show you that,” he said, but without seeing those schools there was a danger that politicians believed things were being implemented well on the ground, when the reality was very different.

School leader opinion did make a difference, however. Laws described how a dinner with Dame Sally Coates shaped the pupil premium after she pointed out that secondary schools were already better funded than primaries, yet if money was spent earlier in a child’s education then the evidence showed that it was more effective in addressing disadvantage.

“And that led to me going back to the department and asking them to look into more heavily weighting the funding towards primary, which is what we later did.”

On academies, however, he was less positive, believing that the government ended up “creating a half-baked system” in which there was no clarity around the roles of Ofsted and commissioners, and which has caused confusion on the ground.

> “THERE IS A WIDE OPEN SPACE FOR NEW THINKING”

Nevertheless, he believes the solutions to education’s “four biggest problems” – early years, school structures, teacher professional development and post-16 pathways – almost all lie with teachers, governors and headteachers.

“Probably the only one where you need some help from government is with the post-16 technical pathways and careers education, otherwise there is a wide open space for new thinking from you, particularly as many of the best policy brains in education have been taken over to work in the department on Brexit”.

So how would Laws recommend interested parties get their ideas to politicians or other policy influencers if, unlike Sally Coates, they don’t find themselves invited to dinner with the minister?

“Never underestimate the power of asking to be listened to. How many people write to their MP and ask to see them?

“MPs spend a lot of time listening to people in their constituency each week. Most of the time people are bringing problems for which they have no other solution. But I don’t think I ever had someone turn up and say ‘I want to talk to you about education policy’. . . don’t underestimate the extent to which politicians are looking for solutions to problems.”

At the back of the room Stephen Tierney, chair of the Heads Roundtable, was shaking his head. Last year he wrote a letter to Justine Greening asking for a meeting. He has yet to hear back.

HELEN LEWIS

On surveys of trust, the only professionals holding journalists from sitting alongside politicians at the bottom of the chart are estate agents.

But Helen Lewis, deputy editor of the New Statesman and regular presenter on Sunday Politics, didn’t let this sway her from giving the room sound advice on how to influence people in power: “You have to watch what the doctors do. Everyone trusts them and they shape their narrative about how things are affecting patients. That’s why they are so successful.”

She urged school leaders concerned about budgets to find ways to make the issue about the impact on children.

“I always say that the easiest way to think about this is horses. A newspaper is never going to write a story about an average-sized horse. It will write a story about a small horse. Or a really, really large horse. But no one is interested in a medium horse.

“So you either have to come up with a big scary number. The billions of pounds that schools need to cover their costs. Or you have to come up with the one emblematic story that is going to get everyone thinking about how terrible the budget cuts are.”

If faced with the choice of either a small horse or a large horse to put on the front of a paper, which would she choose? “A small horse, every time. Because they’re cute. And – this is important – you should realise that you serve some of the cutest constituents in the country. The next generation? No one wants that to go badly. Use that to get people on side.”

More summit reports, pages 2 and 8
Expert, page 14


Alison Peacock, chief executive of the College of Teaching


Tim Leunig, chief scientific adviser at the DfE

David Weston, CEO of Teacher Development Trust, speaking in the Chapel at Festival of Education 2016.

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OPINION

REBECCA ALLEN

Director of Education Datalab

Inspectors are human – and that's the problem

How can we know which schools are good if inspectors are inconsistent and biased and the data is wrong, asks Becky Allen

We want school inspection to be able to tell us where the quality of curriculum and instruction is good. If we could show the psychologists Daniel Kahneman and (the late) Amos Tversky how we do this, I suspect they would express concern about the reliability of inspector judgment.

The author Michael Lewis introduces us to their work in his brilliant book, *The Undoing Project*. In an early chapter we meet Daryl Morey, manager of the Houston Rockets and self-confessed nerd, who is trying to understand why scouts make poor choices when picking players for the National Basketball Association draft. He might as well have been talking about why inspectors cannot spot the best schools, because all the same arguments apply.

It seems self-evident that if you want to know how well a school is doing, you visit it rather than rely on performance data alone.

But just as Lewis argues that watching a prospective hire play a single game might be worse than not doing so, it is possible that a short inspection leads to worse judgments than having no inspection at all. As he says, if the data on a player says he was a great free-throw shooter in college, it is worse than useless if the scout sees him miss a free throw a few times during a workout match. It is worse because, once a scout has seen something happen, he finds it almost impossible to discount it, even in the face of data that suggests it is not generally true.

As it happens, we currently have a system where the Ofsted judgment rarely diverges much from a data judgment. By the time you finish this article you may think this is something of a relief. In past research we showed that where Ofsted inspectors made judgments that were misaligned with the data that would have been available to them at the time, these judgments did not act as leading indicators for future exam performance. They did not spot the schools on the cusp of a material improvement in their performance, nor those where exam outcomes were about to significantly decline.

Kahneman and Tversky would say that the problem is not simply that the inspection (or the basketball match) is short. It is rather that the inspector is a human.

Like all of us, they use mental shortcuts (called heuristics) to make sense of the new information they encounter, constantly trying to associate it with existing patterns of information to make models of the world. The way we compile these patterns can create systematic biases that undermine the validity of the opinions we form.

> **The human mind finds it too hard to see things it didn't expect to see, and too easy to see what it wants to see**

For example, these theories suggest that a human would form a near instant impression as he or she walks into a school, around which all other observations tends to organise themselves (anchoring bias). That the human mind finds it too hard to see things it didn't expect to see, and too easy to see what it wants to see (confirmation bias).

That we humans place too much importance on one aspect of an event, such as observing one student swear at another in a classroom (focusing effect). That inspectors unconsciously might favour heads and teachers who remind them of how they used to run a school, and will construct entirely unrelated arguments as to why they like them (mere familiarity effect).

They may also prefer heads or schools that visually look like those that are known to be great (halo effect). And finally, that inspection team opinions will quickly and unconsciously converge to minimise conflict (a bandwagon or false consensus effect).

These mental shortcuts are thought to be adaptive, leading humans to make faster decisions when timeliness is more valuable than accuracy. Because they are "built-in" mechanisms it is almost impossible for individuals to be aware that they are invoking them, and thus to safeguard against any illogical interpretations or inaccurate judgments that may arise.

I know of no research that determines how and when these well-established heuristics are employed by inspectors in a way that undermines the validity of the judgments they make. If we are to continue to use humans to make high-stakes judgments on schools then we should probably figure this out.

If humans are unreliable, does this mean that data inspection wins? Not so fast. We know that data is currently used naively to make poor judgments on schools. This is why junior schools are less favourably judged than infant schools because, unlike all-through primary schools, they are unable to depress the key stage 1 baseline from which they are measured.

I worry about our primary school performance metrics because I regularly hear of material inconsistencies in the way that 11-year-olds are "supported" during SATs.

We reward schools that enter native speakers for exams designed for second language speakers and those using the European Computer Driving Licence for reasons other than its value to the student. We hail schools for fantastic results, neglecting to ask what happened to the pupils who disappeared from the roll before the year 11 spring census.

We have a duty to address these issues to create more reliable statutory assessments and performance metrics.

It is perfectly possible that inspectors are human (that is, unreliable and biased) and the data is wrong. What then?

In the book, Morey says of his earlier career in management consultancy: "*the consultant's job is to feign total certainty about uncertain things*". Such is the job of the Ofsted inspector.

Morey couldn't hack it as a consultant because he was a nerd – a person who knows his own mind well enough to mistrust it. Morey says that basketball scouts are not nerds. Neither, I fear, are school inspectors.

We need to stop pretending we know for certain which schools are doing a good job and lower the stakes associated with inspection judgment. No more forced academisation and pushing out headteachers based on flawed data and a few hours of some humans walking around a school.

As Lucy Crehan said at the Headteachers' Roundtable summit last week, most high-performing school systems manage just fine with an accountability system that promotes responsibility and answerability, rather than culpability and liability.

This is not to say that school inspection should not have a role in our system. It is possible that the threat of inspection, day-in-day-out, leads to better practice in schools that outweighs the obvious dysfunctional behaviours it creates. This alone would be a good argument for universal inspection, where every school has a non-zero chance of being visited each week, and where data is used to weight the probability of inspection at a school by the risk it needs support to improve.

We really do need to know where best practice lies in our system so that we can share good practice and identify where support is needed.

We should be using human inspections and inhuman data to set up the best process we can for working out whether a school is truly well-functioning or not.

We should keep trying to do this better, knowing that we will never be able to answer this question with any certainty.

Thanks to Nick Rose of Teach First for his input

LOUIS COIFFAIT

Head of education, Reform

It's Uber, but not as you know it

New technology is changing the public sector workforce for the better, says Louis Coiffait. There may even come a day when an app will find that last-minute supply teacher...

Reform this week publishes a report on the public sector workforce, *Work in Progress*. It describes how the workforce is changing, but also how these changes must accelerate to meet the demands and expectations of modern citizens. It has clear insights for education, in Whitehall and schools.

First, the report highlights just how the workforce matters more than anything else in public services.

Ensuring that people with the right skills and behaviours are in the right roles, is central to the success of students and the satisfaction of staff. The school workforce, which is the second largest in the public sector, cost £29.4 billion in 2014-15 – 70.2 per cent of the total schools' budget.

If there's one thing to get right, then the workforce must be it.

If school leaders and governors can't find the right people to fill their vacancies, or the budget to pay their salaries, it can be hard for them to think creatively and long term about their staff. But I've seen how some are already managing to do exactly that.

New technologies, sustained investment in professional development, and regularly updated processes offer an opportunity to increase the "productivity" of all staff.

For instance, routine tasks such as arranging appointments, can be largely automated – with some schools already offering self-service calendars online and tablet computer check-in onsite.

This probably won't mean every receptionist and administrator is replaced overnight, rather that more of their core tasks are automated – resulting in lower staff numbers and a changing job. It also explains why most of us now bank online or use automated terminals.

Digitised administration also reduces or eliminates paper communication that require costly printing, postage and manual data entry. Schools are increasingly communicating via digital apps with parents, which can be more effective and less time-consuming than phone calls and letters.

Complex tasks can be augmented, allowing staff to focus on the things that only they can do and that really make a difference – like teaching. We're already seeing how next-generation MIS systems can rapidly analyse data, spot patterns and make predictions to save staff time, allocate resources, and inform decisions.

We also predict that soon the education system will see a new generation of "contingent-labour" or "gig economy" platforms – think Uber or Deliveroo, but for directly employing supply teachers or exam invigilators.

> **There could be a rating and review system, for teachers and schools**

In practice this might mean agency staff are largely replaced by an online platform that allows schools and supply teachers to connect directly and immediately through an intuitive app. Schools could quickly refine their search by subject, experience level or different feedback measures. Likewise, the supply teachers might be able to filter opportunities by working pattern, hourly rate, travel time or feedback. It could feature an appropriate rating and review system, for both teachers and schools. A simple version of this currently allows Uber drivers or Airbnb hosts to rate their customer and so encourage good behaviour. To deal with any data and tax issues, a national platform might be government-owned, with elements then contracted out. This would also ensure the same standard information was available to everybody.

This will be controversial and rightly raises questions about the quality of both delivery and jobs. But it also offers a chance for more flexible and focused work – all at a lower cost, with far smaller agency profit margins. It should also suit those people who prioritise flexible, portfolio work. The social care sector has trialled such approaches and found benefits compared with traditional agency models. Such platforms might also create new entry routes to careers in education, diversifying the workforce and its skills further.

Some of these changes can be challenging, but this isn't about robot-teachers – it's about making sure all public-sector workers, especially in education, are empowered to use the latest tools and thinking.

This public-sector workforce report allows observations and lessons to be drawn from across different services. Reform will next look in more depth at how these high-level recommendations can be translated into leaner, smarter police, NHS and education workforces. Watch this space.

MIKE CAMERON

Governor and former teacher

So what about the £368m set aside for academisation?

The DfE should bat for the funding the school system needs, not bow down as soon as the Treasury comes calling, says Mike Cameron

A couple of weeks ago I was involved in the selection of a new headteacher for the school where I am a governor. We had a field of six excellent candidates from diverse schools, but there was one common thread: they were all having to cut their budgets.

They were increasing class sizes, reviewing curriculum provision, cutting non-teaching posts, etc – all the things that you would expect because you've seen them in your own schools.

So how close are we to getting general agreement that there is a problem with school funding? (Obviously with those outside schools – pretty much everyone working in a school understands the situation well enough.)

Anyone watching Nick Gibb at last week's education select committee would surely have been struck by the weariness in his mantra: "We have protected the amount we are spending in schools per pupil in cash terms." At one point he said it twice within 30 seconds and each time you could see him die a little.

This is why the appearance at the public accounts committee a couple of weeks ago of Jonathan Slater, the Department of Education's permanent secretary, was quite important. This is what he said: "As the National Audit Office rightly points out, the government has protected funding of schools overall in real terms, but not per pupil."

A little different to the Gibb mantra, recognising that the rise in student numbers will have a huge impact. He went on to say: "You can carry on having the same teachers and staff. But that would be a missed opportunity. There are opportunities across the system, to be saving in excess of £1 billion in non-staffing costs. That is an additional £1 billion that can be invested to spend on more teachers."

Slater effectively admitted such savings (cuts, for this is what they are) will be necessary for schools to stay inside the cash envelop set for the parliament. Indeed he later discussed the "savings" to be made on staffing costs: "Staff savings will require more curriculum planning, a review of supply arrangements; it's the management of senior leadership teams."

The permanent secretary is making these comments because he knows cuts will have to be made. He has seen the projections that show we can expect at least a 10 per cent increase in numbers in secondary schools before the end of this parliament. Interestingly, he also spoke about efficiencies that have already been made in primary schools to cope with increased pupil numbers, so it is not unreasonable to assume the cuts will have to come largely from the secondary sector.

Which brings us nicely on to the national funding formula.

A national funding formula that removes unnecessary and indefensible anomalies is a good thing. What is not a good thing, in a time when schools will have to make unprecedented "efficiency savings", is that 40 per cent are having to also undergo funding reductions. If we look at just secondary schools, the 1,566 who, according to DfE consultation figures, are losing funding, will have to find an additional £150 million of "efficiency" savings. That's an extra 2.2 per cent of their existing budgets.

This could have been avoided. I'm talking about the £368 million that the DfE gave back to the Treasury that was set aside for the "forced academisation" policy, since dropped.

> **Slater has seen the projections. He knows cuts have to be made**

This would have enabled the department to go a long way towards not having to cut the budget of any school.

And, yes, I do understand the difference between a one-off lump of cash and an annual revenue requirement. But that's the job of the DfE: to go to bat for the funding the school system needs, not to bow down as soon as the Treasury comes calling.

I don't want to tell Jonathan Slater how he should do his job, but having been a budget holder in many different environments, I can tell him rule one of holding a budget. It's a rule all those prospective heads would know; indeed, one any budget holder in any school could tell you:

Keep a tight grip, and never give anything back.

REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS OF THE WEEK

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

Our blog reviewer of the week is Jill Berry, a former head, now educational consultant, author and Twitter addict @jillberry102

#TalkingHeads
@chrishildrew

First up this week is one of the Talking Heads series, an initiative started by new head Hannah Wilson that features serving heads whose advice and example may well inspire the next generation of school leaders. The heads reflect on questions such as: "What are the values that shape you as a leader?"; "What myths would you like to debunk?" I find all the contributions interesting, but this, by Chris Hildrew, had a particularly strong impact, especially his insistence that "You don't have to choose headship or a life – you can have both." He explains how he did it.

Why would a headteacher blog?
@judeenright

In the same vein, Jude Enright reflects on her journey to headship and her early months in post, challenging the fact that strong role expectations can put off aspiring heads who feel they do not fit the mould. It reminded me of the experienced head I know who said: "There is only one way to be a head, and that is your way."

On #BAMEed
@jonnywalker_edu

Jonny Walker talks of the recently launched #BAMEed initiative that works along the lines of #WomenEd to encourage potential and serving BAME teachers and leaders. Through building a network of those who can champion, advise, motivate and model, offering practical guidance and emotional support, #BAMEed can help to ensure that those who teach and lead in our schools are better representative of the communities we serve. In Walker's words: "Until pupils are able to pass through professional and educational life without needing to contemplate being disadvantaged by their skin colour, their culture or their religion, there is a pressing need for #BAMEed."

New Year's Q: Would I like to be taught by me?
@stephanootis

Stephanie Keenan uses her experience of learning Pilates to think about which aspects of her teacher's practice she finds particularly effective. She relates this to her own teaching style and explores how she can use these insights in her own teaching, especially given that she opts to attend her Pilates class – her students have no such choice. "I have found that being a student again is a great way to reassess my own teaching style and methods."

My final two choices this week are from @staffrm, a blogging platform that is well worth exploring if you are considering writing a blog but are not yet ready to commit to launching one of your own.

So what? Now what?
@brogan_mr

Tim Brogan references the 2015 TED talk by Linda Cliatt-Wayman, a high school teacher in Philadelphia, in which she explains the principles that underpin her leadership and her commitment to ensuring that her school offers the best provision to students who face deprivation and serious challenges. Brogan focuses on the "slogan" "So what? Now what?" and discusses how it is possible to face up to the reality of the situation, but then to explore the agency we have, and how best to use it. As he asserts: "By asking these questions, the focus is placed on solutions ... actively sought to improve the outcomes for pupils."

We did it
@Lisa7Pettifer

Signing up as a member of the Chartered College of Teaching was a "watershed moment" for Lisa Pettifer. She reflects on the past two years, her involvement in the Claim Your College campaign, the people she has met and the debates she has been part of. And now?

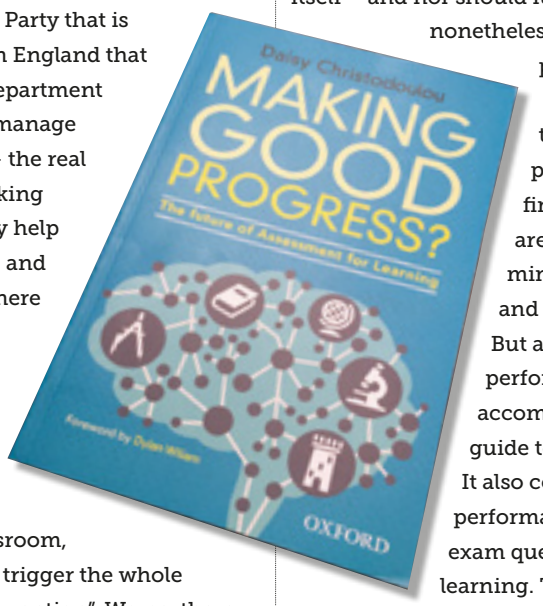
"We have a CEO, an expanded board of trustees and a number of employees in crucial supporting roles. We have consultations, launch events, benefits and a sense of a growing movement, a debate that we can shape, a voice that can be heard. "Most importantly, we now have membership."

BOOK REVIEW

Making Good Progress?: The future of Assessment for Learning
By Daisy Christodoulou
Publisher OUP
Reviewed by Christine Counsell, director of education, The Inspiration Trust

★★★★★

A phrase much heard among impressive heads of history that I have worked with is "kicking rubbish data upstairs to SLT". This is not unprofessionalism; it is the desperate necessity of those determined to preserve academic integrity and to help students properly. It is a sign of the Mad Hatter's Tea Party that is school assessment in England that scholarly heads of department should be forced to manage two parallel worlds – the real world of quietly working out what will actually help students to improve, and the phoney world where it is assumed that repeated summative assessments, quite unfit for formative use, should take over the language of the classroom, distort teaching and trigger the whole bureaucracy of "intervention". Worse, there is only so much Orwellian "double-think" a sound mind can take, and it is driving some of the finest minds out of the profession.



How does one take on a whole generation of school assessment that has fallen down a rabbit hole? Daisy Christodoulou's bravery and determination in doing just that deserve as much credit as her intellectual clarity. It takes courage to expose practices that have been well-intentioned and, where baselines were low, have secured improvement. For this book is no tactful tinkering with the problems; it is a devastating assault on the status quo and a call for a paradigm shift.

At its heart is an explication of the proper relationship between formative and summative assessment, and the damage caused by that relationship going horribly wrong. Underlying this is an account of means and ends in learning. If our aim is for pupils to write analyses of Shakespeare, build historical arguments, solve mathematical problems or play in a Beethoven quartet, then the last thing strugglers need is endless practice of those things in that final form. Most of the time, the final accomplishment does not resemble the means of its nurture. Just as footballers and athletes do numerous drills that look nothing like playing a game of football or running a marathon, so the building blocks of final academic or creative performance are small, painstaking and deliberate.

Total fluency, whether in muscle memory, factual memory or harmonic memory, is necessary if adequate memory space is freed to create and construe, to spot relationships or to build fresh argument. A pupil's ability to infer or interpret, even to comprehend, is dependent on a broad range of knowledge and practice, most of which is not named or looked for in the final test itself – and nor should it be – but which is nonetheless critical to its fluent performance.

This is not to say that exposure to and participation in that final accomplishment are not vital, never mind inspiring and motivating. But attempted performance of that final accomplishment is a poor guide to what needs fixing. It also confuses one-off performance (eg, on an exam question) with secure learning. The progression model that will move pupils from their current state to secure performance will not be found by turning every lesson into an exam and doing a gap analysis. Christodoulou explains exactly why summative tests are not designed for those kinds of inferences. Neither GCSE mark schemes nor level descriptions were intended to shape learning, and nor can they. This is why seeing schools finally abandon the long misuse of level descriptions as formative tools only to replace this with exactly the same mistake but worse, namely tracking back to year 7 with GCSE grades, is enough to make one weep.

My feelings on completing the book were admiration and relief. My admiration is at Christodoulou's patience in painstakingly explaining the underlying problems with unstinting thoroughness. Her style is disciplined and austere. She avoids parenthesis, never mind self-indulgence. As for my relief, well, that is ineffable. If this book gets the attention it deserves, it will roll back over two decades of madness. There is life beyond the rabbit hole.

THE PAST WILL MAKE YOU SMARTER

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OLD TECHNICAL SCHOOLS?

LAURA MCINERNEY

The 1944 Education Act famously created three types of schools: academically selective grammars, selective technical schools, and secondary moderns for the hoi polloi.

Grammars and secondary moderns charged ahead. But what happened to the selective technical schools? Few opened and of those that did, several became mainstream grammars before the end of the 1960s. The others quickly became comprehensive after Labour started moves to get rid of selection.

So what went wrong? An interesting place to start is the Norwood report of 1943. Commissioned in 1941, famous educationists of the period spent two years considering how secondary education ought to work in England. Grammars provided a passage to university, but it was increasingly obvious the country needed to replace the engineers and scientists who had died in the Second World War. Buildings and machinery also had to be replenished. Hence, a route was needed to get smart people into science.

The Norwood report recommended the three school types – grammar, moderns and technical – but also, importantly, that children in all three schools should study the same curriculum until 13, that transfer between schools should keep happening and that entry into schools should be on the basis of teacher judgment and parents' and pupils' wishes, with tests only a "supplement if desired".

There was a problem, however. School stock was depleted and most local authorities didn't have the money to build a school with the equipment or classroom types for a technical education. Meanwhile, local authorities didn't have to pay to build most grammars. Many were private schools that converted to become state-funded as long as they could maintain a selective intake which, previously, had been done on entrance tests. And so the trend was continued.

Of the few selective technical schools that did open, there were some quirks that made them a target for redevelopment in the 1960s. In Bournville for example, a girls' grammar was accompanied by the opening of a boys' technical school, where pupils had links to industry and were given skills to become foremen. (Presumably the girls were taught how to make tea for the foremen.)

The increasingly awkward single-sex separation, plus the growing trend for comprehensivisation, meant that by the late 1960s the schools merged and abandoned their specialism.

In Kent, Dartford technical college increasingly swapped its technical specialism for a straightforward grammar approach. Having started with a focus on agriculture – much in vogue, post-war – the need for farmers was reducing by the 1960s and so was swapped in favour of a more traditional academic curriculum. A trend echoed today in the university technical colleges with science specialisms that have swapped to become mainstream schools over the past year or so.

A third problem plagued the technical schools. Although they were seen as selective, children who did well at the 11-plus tended to pick grammars first. In any particular area there are usually only a small number of pupils whose achievement is very high; once they are taken out, the next layer of "selectives" are largely going to take in quite average pupils. Hence, the technical schools did not have as prestigious intakes as expected.

It will be interesting to see if the government takes note of these historical issues when it releases its expected white paper on new forms of selective schools. It would be nice to make some new mistakes, at least, rather than simply repeating the old ones.

A week in Westminster

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

MONDAY:

Greening and Gibb may sound like a couple of Dickensian funeral directors, but they make a formidable pair in the fight to save the new national funding formula from the sparks of Tory rebellion.

Conservative MPs joined the pile-on during education questions on Monday, demonstrating growing unrest over a system that seeks to redistribute existing inadequate funding.

Ten Tory MPs criticised the funding proposals. Many are from rural constituencies and seem shocked that small schools probably won't do as well out of the new deal as they had hoped.

All that Labour had to do was watch from the touchlines as the Tories tied themselves in knots, while occasionally reminding ministers that economists predict an 8 per cent funding cut for most schools in the coming years.

If only opposition was this simple the rest of the time.

Meanwhile, the schools community could barely contain its surprise when Vicky Beer became the third regional schools commissioner to resign to spend more time with the academies she currently oversees (full story page 2).

Beer, who has only been in post as the Lancashire and West Yorkshire commissioner for 18 months, follows her predecessor Paul Smith and former colleague Pank Patel back through the growing revolving door between commissioners and academy trusts.

However, Beer will continue to operate under the watchful eye of the former shadow education secretary Lucy Powell, a former pupil of Parrs Wood academy, the school Beer will lead when she joins the Greater Manchester Learning Trust.

TUESDAY:

The Department for Education may want to clean up its act when it comes to its facilities management contracts.

Ministers have admitted that cleaning staff employed to work in DfE buildings are paid between £8.25 and £9.40 per hour, a fair amount less than the London living wage of £9.75.

In an answer to a parliamentary question, minister Caroline Dinenage told the Liberal Democrat leader and friend to all cleaners Tim Farron that DfE suppliers were "responsible for setting rates of pay for their staff and rates for cleaners vary dependent on location and market rates".

It could be worse. They could be apprentices, for whom the minimum wage set by the DfE is currently £3.40.

WEDNESDAY:

It's official. The government has won the argument over the EBacc and its "stifling" of creative subjects. At least, that's what Week in Westminster favourite Nick Gibb thinks.

Under massive pressure from the schools community and flurries of headlines about academy trusts pulling creative subjects in response to the reforms, ministers went in search of evidence that their policies were, in fact, very good.

It seems they needed to look no further than the New Schools Network, a body set up by the government, funded by the government, and led by a key ally of the government, Toby Young.

A network report found that the number of pupils taking at least one arts subject at GCSE had risen under the EBacc, but that the number of teachers and contact hours dedicated to those subjects had fallen.

According to the Gibbster, who co-wrote a glowing foreword to the report, the findings "put to rest" arguments that EBacc is "stifling cultural education".

That's the end of that, then.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEEKLIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS

School Bulletin with Sam King

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

UTC helps amputees with 3D prosthetics

FEATURED

A school in Leeds is using the latest technology to make prosthetic hands for amputees across the world.

Students at UTC Leeds, a specialist school focusing on engineering and manufacturing, print and assemble the hands during bi-weekly workshops in which they have access to the school's ten 3D printers.

Once completed, the hands – which take about two weeks to make – are sent to amputees identified through Enabling the Future, a website that matches amputees with people who can make them prosthetics.

Bradley Mellor, head of engineering at Leeds UTC, said: "People from around the world can go on the site, and then we will be contacted and told what colour they want and what size they need.

"All parts of the hand are made in the printer . . . they even have fingernails, and some of the girls have put varnish on them."

Once printed, students fit elastic and fishing line through the various grooves and channels of the hands, which allow for grabbing and releasing.

Mellor already has plans to expand to prosthetics suitable for amputations just below the elbow.

"This is a fantastic way for students to learn how to use the printers, learn aspects of mechanical engineering and for them to give something back to the community" he says.

The service is free, which releases the school from liability if anything were to go wrong with the hands because of misuse or technical error.

Mark Kennedy, UTC Leeds principal, said: "Recipients are often born with missing fingers, or have lost them due to war, disease or natural disaster. These 3D hands and arms can make once impossible tasks possible. Simple things like holding a ball, tying a shoelace or riding a bike suddenly become possible."

CHARITY HOSTS CONFERENCE ON TACKLING EXTREMISM

Lord Nash at the Birmingham event

Academies minister Lord Nash was one of the many political and education leaders at a recent conference in Birmingham to debate how extremism can be tackled.

Hosted by the educational charity SINCE 9/11, the event looked at ways to build a cohesive and tolerant society, and the important role that teachers can play.

The event coincided with the charity's launch of a free Prevent classroom resource for secondary schools, which includes lesson plans and presentation slides, with a particular focus on the 9/11 attacks.

Lord Nash said: "Extremism is more likely to happen in a society that is divided. We need a revival of cultural confidence in Britain – we will only win a battle of ideas if we have bigger and stronger ideas."

The SINCE 9/11 charity was set up to teach pupils about the events, causes and consequences of 9/11 in the hopes of preventing similar atrocities. You can access the resources at since911.com/resources-schools


Gareth Gates


Francesca Martinez

Gareth Gates to host speech therapy awards

The singer Gareth Gates will host the fifth annual Shine a Light awards that recognise teachers, teams and other individuals who support children and young people with speech, language and communication difficulties

Gates, who rose to fame on the TV show *Pop Idol*, has spoken publicly about living with a stutter. He is now also a qualified speech coach and course instructor.

In 2011, he filmed *Stop my Stutter*, a documentary in which he was shown helping young people to overcome their stammer using breathing techniques mainly favoured by opera singers.

The awards, which take place on March 23, will feature ten categories, including primary and secondary school of the year, SEN school of the year – a new category for 2017 – as well as young person of the year.

Gates says: "In the past I found my stutter crippling, affecting my confidence greatly, but I have learnt ways to manage my difficulties with the support of others.

"The fantastic work that helps children and young people communicate can go unnoticed, but what they achieve represents a lifeline to many. I am very much looking forward to hosting the awards and know it will be a humbling experience."

The Shine a Light Awards features a 28-strong judging panel, including Francesca Martinez, an international comedian, writer and speaker who has cerebral palsy.

For further information about the Shine a Light Awards visit www.shinealightawards.co.uk


(L-R) Aspiring writers Brandon Lee, Amelia Ward and Abigail Carr

Young writer makes contest's longlist

A year 7 pupil's short story will be read by award-winning authors, including Mark Haddon, as part of a national writing competition.

Abigail Carr, a pupil at East Point academy in Suffolk, impressed judges in the First Story National Writing competition with her short story *The Girl and the Footprints*.

Carr is one of 24 students in the key stage 3 category who have been selected to go through to the next round in which authors Haddon (*The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time*), Juno Dawson (*All of the Above*) and Salena Godden (*Springfield Road, The Good Immigrant*) will read the longlisted pupils' work.

A shortlist will then be announced, with the successful writers invited to an awards ceremony in London. Prizes will include a creative writing residential course and publication in a professional anthology.

The contest asked secondary pupils to write a poem or short story around the theme of "footprints".

East Point's literacy co-ordinator, Mary-Jane King, said: "I was very impressed with the quality, imagination, and range of stories associated with the theme.

"Choosing the best ones from so many creative pieces was tough, but Abigail's moving story stood out."

MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

Matthew Little

Rob Reed

Gemma Rothenburg

The multi-academy trust Aldridge Education has made two senior appointments in Lancashire and the south-east.

Matthew Little has been appointed principal of Darwen Vale high school.

The co-educational Lancashire secondary, one of four trust schools in the Darwen area, was founded in 1894.

Little will join in June from his current position as vice-principal of South Shore academy in Blackpool, where he has played a key role in record GCSE results.

Before South Shore, he was vice-principal of Kearsley academy in Bolton and a deputy head at both George Tomlinson high school, Bolton, and Harrop Fold high school, Salford.

Little says he is "excited by the emphasis on high aspirations for students" at Darwen Vale, and is looking forward to "working with the school community and, with the support of Aldridge Education, ensuring that students at the school experience an outstanding and enjoyable education".

Rob Reed has been appointed executive principal for Aldridge's cluster of schools in the south east.

He will take the helm at Brighton and Portslade Aldridge Community Academies and UTC@harbourside, a university technical college in Newhaven that is co-sponsored by the University of Brighton.

He will work closely with the principals of the cluster schools, including helping them to develop joint working, share specialist resources, grow the regional cluster and strengthen relationships with the local authority, business community and other key stakeholders.

Reed was head of Hove Park, a mixed secondary school and sixth-form centre in East Sussex. Before joining Hove Park he was head of Chessington community college in south London, led the Hillsyde Federation in south London and held deputy and assistant head posts in the London borough of Tower Hamlets.

Reed says: "As a local head I have observed first-hand the superb work of the trust in Brighton and Hove. I am tremendously excited at the prospect of contributing to its impressive record of providing excellent education that gives young people the skills and qualifications they need."

Aldridge Education was established in 2016 and has ten schools across the north west, London and the south east.

Gemma Rothenburg has been appointed interim principal at Oasis Academy Immingham, a member of the Oasis trust.

The trust has 47 schools, 14 in the north of England.

Rothenburg, who is a former student at the Lincolnshire comprehensive, has been working at the school for ten years, most recently as deputy and associate principal.

Speaking of her new role, she says: "I have been a massive part of the school's leadership team for the past four years and I am passionate about the school and the community."

She plans no "massive changes" under her tenure. It will largely be "business as usual", but she intends to make it her mission "to make sure students make great progress".

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

SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

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.