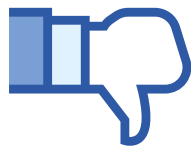


**OFSTED UNFOLLOWS THE SOCIAL MEDIA SNOOPING TREND**



page 3

**ROBERT HALFON: DID YOU HEAR ABOUT HIS LADDER YET?**



pages 14-16

**BOOK REVIEW: CHALLENGING GOVERNORS**



page 20

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2018 | EDITION 128



## HOW GOVE'S TWISTED ARM LED TO UTCs

PAGE 4

Exclusive

# SENCOs STRUGGLE AFTER DFE DELETES 'VITAL' TOOL

- > 'Invaluable' forum for special needs co-ordinators suddenly went offline in November
- > Civil servants are trying to get the 22-year-old resource back up and running
- > 'No one is recognising the extent of the damage this is causing', says SEND professor

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA\_AK

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PAGE 3

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## Edition 128



### Bright Tribe removes its spotlights from four northern schools

Page 6



### Controversial new home education laws have '60% chance' of passing

Page 6



### Obituaries: Cyril Taylor and David Whitbread

Page 11

## Experts



**THOMAS BYRNE**

Page 18



**LEORA CRUDDAS**

Page 18



**LORD KENNETH BAKER**

Page 19



**TOP BLOGS OF THE WEEK**

Page 20

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## NEWS

## Ofsted 'unlikes' social media intervention plans

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

Exclusive

Ofsted will not use information posted on social media by pupils and parents to identify schools in need of intervention, to the relief of opponents of the plans.

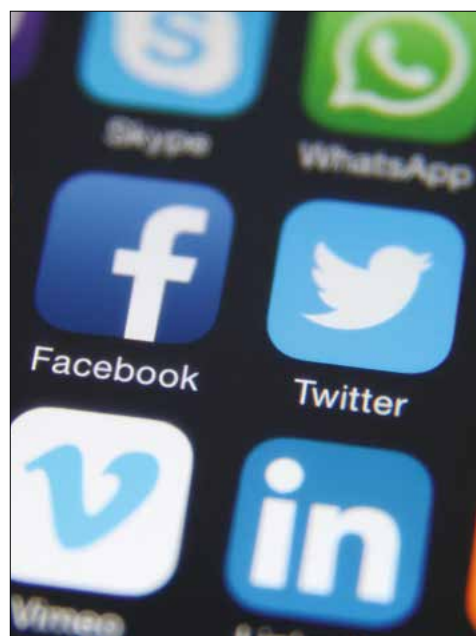
The approach was floated in the watchdog's 'Innovation and regulation plan', published in March, but a spokesperson has now told *Schools Week* that the strategy "was not taken forward".

Ofsted claimed at the time to be engaging with the Department for Education in a data science project to "explore the possibility of using near-realtime data and information from social media and other sources to predict and prevent decline in school performance".

Experts however warned that data from platforms such as Facebook and Twitter is "unreliable", and Russell Hobby, then general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, cautioned that because social media was not "audited or verified", its use would "call into question [Ofsted's] commitment to evidence-based practice".

Although the proposal has been abandoned, Ofsted said it could potentially be picked up again in the future, as data science progresses.

"We did some preliminary scoping into the use of social media information last year



but this was not taken forward and did not feed into informing our risk assessment arrangements," a spokesperson said.

Ofsted intends to "keep under review developments in data science and the availability of big data to help us target inspection in a proportionate way".

The move away has been welcomed. Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, told *Schools Week* that while social media is a useful way for a school to talk to parents about news and events, and respond to queries and concerns,

his organisation does not see "any scope for using it to monitor a school from afar".

"We are pleased that Ofsted is not taking forward that idea," he said. "Comments made on social media can sometimes be misinformed and unfair, and it is difficult to see how they could be used to guide interventions in a way which is consistent and proportionate."

Former inspector Colin Richards said the watchdog was "wise not to pursue this idea", adding: "It would have been very contentious and very problematic to use data from social media in this way."

"I would have been very, very wary of Ofsted using it in any substantive fashion to try to form an opinion or to monitor schools," said Mark Lehair, director of the Parents and Teachers for Excellence campaign and former head of Bedford Free School.

"They would have had to do so much work trawling through the data, trying to take into account the kind of school, the context of the school, the make-up of the parental community."

Lehair said time spent on analysing and filtering social media could be better used speaking to people in the local area, such as estate agents or shopkeepers.

"That often tells you more about how schools are doing than what you see on Twitter," he said.

## 'INVALUABLE' SENCO WEBSITE OFFLINE FOR THREE MONTHS

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

Exclusive

An "invaluable" online forum that supports thousands of special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) has been unavailable for months because of an IT error at the Department for Education.

The National SENCO Forum normally gives SENCOs access to help from colleagues around the country through an email chain. The forum has been going since 1995, and now has 2,500 members, processing around 400 messages a month.

It has been hosted by the DfE since 2010, but during work to upgrade the department's online platforms on November 18 the forum was suddenly and without notice taken offline, with all its functions disabled.

The home page, which is still visible, says the forum was created "with the aim of providing an opportunity to discuss issues and share practical advice of help to SENCOs in carrying out their roles".

Although forum co-founder Professor Klaus Wedell said he believed it was a genuine mistake on the part of the government's IT team, he complained that the DfE had not shown "enough commitment or sense of urgency" in fixing the system over the last two months.

Wedell, who was the first professor of special needs at the Institute of Education in 1979 and now works as a SENCO following

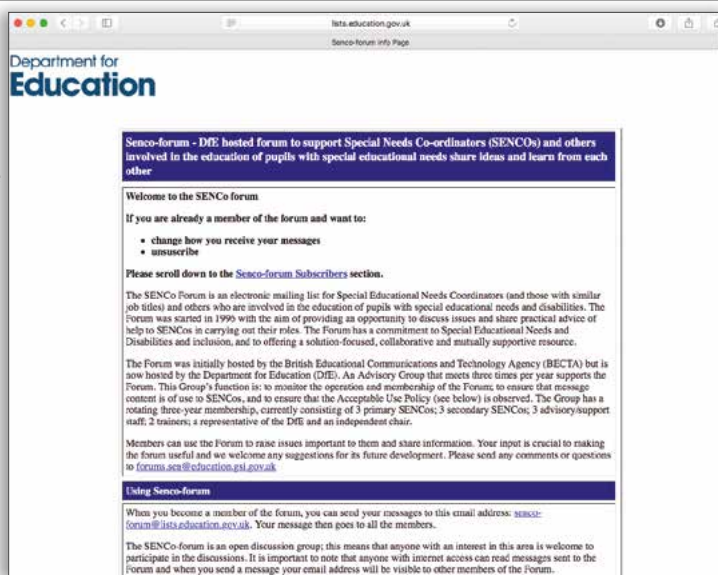
his retirement, said the forum is "vital" in helping SENCOs share their experiences and relate to others in similar positions.

He described the situation as "ghastly", as forum leaders are unable to get in touch with users to explain what has happened to the resource, which he describes as a "lifeline" for those who use it.

"There just doesn't seem to be an acknowledgement of the extent of the damage that is happening as a result of this, and of the unfairness and the feeling that it cannot possibly be right that a SENCO should not get the support they need just because the IT department can't solve a problem," he said.

"They are not, or appear not to be, able to generate a practical solution and my feeling is that it cannot be right that all this work on behalf of these kids and their families should be held up by a technical problem."

A spokesperson for the DfE said the SENCO Forum is a "valuable online resource", and that officials were "working closely with members of the forum



to get it up and running again as quickly as possible".

Gareth Morewood, the forum's vice-chair, said members had been left feeling "abandoned" by the loss "invaluable resource".

"The SENCO role can be a very isolated one. Having a network of colleagues and professionals to ask for support and get immediate responses is hugely powerful," he continued.

"The loss of the forum has been a significant blow for many colleagues who are unable to seek accurate advice and support at a time when special educational needs provision is constantly under threat."

## SPIELMAN WANTS MORE OVERSIGHT OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Church of England schools must support the inspection of Sunday schools to protect their pupils from extremism, the chief inspector of schools has said.

Amanda Spielman said a move by the Church of England in 2016 to block proposals to allow Ofsted to inspect out-of-school educational provision like Sunday schools was "a matter of regret".

Her warning to church school leaders was accompanied by a hint that Ofsted would back a school which banned pupils from wearing hijabs if the move was "in pupils' interests".

Speaking at the Church of England's Foundation for Educational Leadership annual conference on Thursday, Spielman took aim at the church, warning leaders they risk undermining the Church's own tenets of love and tolerance by allowing Sunday schools to go unscrutinised.

The plan to require all groups caring for children for more than six hours a week to submit to inspection was dropped in 2016, following an intervention from the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and a group of crossparty MPs, who labelled the proposals "bewildering".

Although she acknowledged that many faith activity groups provide language training and extracurricular opportunities, Spielman warned some were "less benign" and must be tackled.

"This is not about infringing religious freedom. Nobody is proposing a troop of inspectors turning up at Sunday schools," she said.

Instead, Ofsted wants to ensure that "the small minority of settings that promote extremism are not able to evade scrutiny."

Nigel Genders, the Church of England's chief education officer, said church schools "must not and will not shy away from challenging fundamentalist practice in the name of promoting tolerance.

"We did have concerns over proposals which, at the time, could have ensured that everything down to village Sunday schools might have to be registered. We have worked closely with the government since then, and are happy to go on working them on any proposal that would target areas of concern rather than imposing a new burden of bureaucracy across the board."

During her speech, Spielman also expressed support for the headteacher of a school at the centre of a row over its decision to ban younger pupils from wearing the hijab.

Ofsted this week began an impromptu inspection at St Stephen's primary school in east London. The school was rated 'outstanding' at its last inspection, and under Ofsted rules was not due a routine inspection.

Spielman gave her "full support" to Neena Lall, the school's head, and condemned the social media abuse against her.

"Ofsted will always back heads who take tough decision in the interests of their pupils," she said. The inspectorate will publish the full findings from their visit in due course.

But a spokesperson for the Muslim Council of Britain said Spielman was strengthening "negative perceptions" of Ofsted amongst many Muslim parents by making a "disproportionate" number of statements which linked Islam to extremism.

"We hope she will consult before issuing further unjustifiable policies," they said.



## NEWS

## David Laws: 'Michael Gove was forced to establish UTCs'

PAUL OFFORD &amp; FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@SCHOOLSWEEK

Exclusive

As education secretary, Michael Gove was forced to create university technology colleges by George Osborne and David Cameron, a former senior minister has revealed.

David Laws, a Liberal Democrat who served as schools minister in the coalition government from 2012 to 2015, told *Schools Week* that Gove "never liked" the policy, but had it "imposed" on him by the ex-chancellor and former prime minister.

Laws, whose think-tank the Education Policy Institute is currently investigating the UTC project after several have closed after failing to recruit enough pupils, even suggested that it should be scrapped and its model replicated within the existing system of schools and colleges.

Speaking this week, Laws claimed Gove, who last February admitted in a *Times* column that the programme had failed, did not support the UTC policy, but Lord Baker, another former education secretary, had persuaded those above him that it had merit.

"It was a very rare example during his time as secretary of state of a policy being imposed on him, as a consequence of the prime minister and the chancellor who were persuaded by Lord Baker," said Laws.



David Laws



Michael Gove and George Osborne

"There are not many people who managed to do that during his time in education."

Laws' own his concerns about UTCs relate to their age range; most have struggled to recruit pupils at 14, and eight have closed as a result.

"My concern about this is you're trying to inject a 14-to-18 solution into a system which isn't 14-to-18, and is not one the government wishes to be 14-to-18," he said.

"I think the difficulties of that are very obvious, and I would far rather we embedded some of the principles Lord Baker is trying to lead us towards,

that seem to be on the whole sensible, in the existing system, and redesign that, which is far more likely to succeed, rather than creating lots of expensive institutions that don't fit the rest of the education system."

Baker, who heads UTC advocacy charity the Baker Dearing Trust, said he was "surprised" Laws had come out against the colleges and their age range, and argued that UTCs have "become an established part of the English education system and ministers accept their unique contribution".

He accepted recruitment at 14 had initially been difficult, but said numbers increased by 21 per cent last year after councils were forced to write to parents of year 9 pupils to inform

them of the existence of UTCs.

A new duty for schools to give alternative providers access to their pupils, dubbed the Baker Clause, will also help, he claimed, and UTC principals are already preparing visits.

He cautioned Laws against "writing off UTCs", and invited him to visit one of the institutions "so that he can appreciate the way that the life chances of thousands of students have been significantly improved".

An investigation last month by *Schools Week's* sister paper *FE Week* revealed that almost all UTCs missed recruitment targets and were overpaid last year, leaving combined debts of over £11 million. The Education and Skills Funding Agency is trying to retrieve cash from 39 of 44 UTCs still open in 2016/17.

The EPI's review will seek to "disentangle" problems surrounding UTCs.

"We plan to investigate the impact of UTCs with the aim of publishing a report in the summer," it said "At this stage the work is in its very early stages and we haven't yet finalised its scope."

Last year, UTCs were described by Gove as "the biggest institutional innovation in vocational education made by David Cameron's government", but he admitted that "twice as many UTCs are 'inadequate' as 'outstanding', according to Ofsted".

"UTC pupils have lower GCSE scores, make less progress academically and acquire fewer qualifications than their contemporaries in comprehensives," he added.

## OGAT TO ADOPT SIX WCAT SCHOOLS

The Department for Education has confirmed that Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) will take on six schools given up by the troubled Wakefield City Academies Trust.

But two more academies that had been earmarked to join OGAT have been found alternative sponsors after feedback from parents and staff.

To date, sponsors have been confirmed for 17 of the 21 schools run by WCAT.

This week's announcement confirmed that Bell Lane Academy, The Freeston Academy, Havercroft Academy, Heath View Academy, Hemsworth Academy and Wakefield City Academy will all join OGAT as planned.

But the government now intends to rebroker Kinsley Academy and West End Academy to the Waterton Academy Trust.

WCAT announced in September 2017 that it was giving up all 21 of its schools, claiming it lacked the capacity to facilitate the "rapid improvement our academies need and our students deserve".

In October, it was announced that OGAT would take on eight of the former WCAT schools, including Kinsley and West End.

However, although the two schools have been supported by OGAT in recent months, feedback from staff and parents said the Waterton Academy Trust would be "best suited" to take them on. A two-week consultation will now take place to gather views on having Waterton as sponsor of both.

Sponsors for the first 11 WCAT schools were confirmed earlier this month.

## It's curtains for the 18th failed studio school

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

A struggling studio school with low pupil numbers and "significant financial challenges" will close this summer, it has been confirmed.

Manchester Creative Studio in Ancoats (pictured), which specialises in the digital and creative industries and currently teaches around 40 pupils, will close at the end of the academic year, becoming the 18th studio school to shut since the project began.

The closure will go ahead despite an injection of roughly £400,000 in emergency funding, and Manchester MPs now want a full investigation, claiming the collapse belies wider problems in the free schools programme.

Opened in 2014 by former charity boss Raja Miah, and focusing on vocational education, the 14-to-19 institution has faced a turbulent few years. It received a financial notice to improve in June 2016 after misjudging pupil numbers, and announced it would be rebrokered to a new sponsor in January last year.

A consultation on the school's future started in December, and pupils have this week been informed of the planned closure.

The school entered special measures last year after it was rated 'inadequate' in every category by Ofsted in March. Inspectors criticised "serious and widespread failures"



in safeguarding, poor leadership, inadequate attendance and behaviour, poor teaching and low pupil achievement.

They also noted the school was in the lowest one per cent nationally for pupils' progress in maths and English in 2016.

The Laurus Trust, which stepped in to help the school after the Ofsted inspection, was praised in October for leaving "no stone unturned in its quest to improve provision".

The school was one of 29 schools "in danger of imminent failure" that received emergency government funding last year, with three grants totalling £403,875 channelled to the nearby Cheadle Hulme High School – part of the Laurus Trust – to support it.

Martin Shevill, the chair of the school's trustees, said the board agreed with the Department for Education that "it is right for the school to close" as the long-term help

that it needs "is not realistic or viable".

The school, which employs 14 staff, did not take on new pupils last September, and Shevill said all pupils will finish their GCSEs or level three qualifications before the school closes.

"All concerned will continue to ensure that the students who are at the school get the best possible education for the remainder of their studies," he said.

Lucy Powell, the MP for Manchester Central and a member of the parliamentary education committee, told the *Manchester Evening News* said the school's closure was the "expected and right decision", but that it also raised serious questions.

"Given that it was only opened four years ago by the Department for Education at great cost and in the face of local opposition, questions must now turn directly to the DfE about their free school programme," she told the paper.

Despite significant government investment, many studio schools have struggled to attract enough pupils to be financially viable. Just 34 will be left open when Manchester Creative School closes this summer.

The school's sister institution, the Collective Spirit free school in Oldham, closed last summer after being placed in special measures. Both free schools were founded by Miah, who won an MBE for his social integration work in 2004.



## NEWS

## The schools where poorer pupils outshine their peers

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

## Investigates

The poorest pupils have made more progress than their better-off peers at just three per cent of secondary schools, new analysis shows.

About 100 schools posted a positive Progress 8 score for their pupils on free school meals that beat the positive score of more affluent pupils – and nearly a third are selective.

Researchers at Impetus, an education consultancy, said “very few schools” are ensuring their poorest pupils make enough progress to catch up with their peers.

Andy Ratcliffe, its chief executive, said the school system should want to “bottle up” the work of these schools and emulate it, pointing to “brilliant leadership” and “constant focus on success”.

But experts in value-added measures insist that Progress 8 is fundamentally flawed, and said the data could favour grammars.

Just 102 schools out of the 3,526 secondary schools for which data was available posted a Progress 8 score that was better for free school meal pupils than non-free school meal pupils, and in which both groups also scored above 0.

The figure, from government performance data released last week, is a slight drop on last year, when 107 schools improved the poorest pupils the most. Overall this year 687 schools posted positive progress scores for both FSM and non-FSM pupils, but the majority, bar the

magic 102, still recorded better progress scores for wealthier pupils.

Headteachers have pointed to a culture of “high expectations” for achieving top scores.

Dixons Trinity Academy in Bradford came top for the progress of its poorest pupils, with a score of 1.35 for free school meal pupils compared with 1.16 for the rest.

Luke Sparkes, the executive principal, said the result was due to the “whole school being designed around our most vulnerable student”, with strategies such as morning and afternoon feedback sessions every day, and double-staffing core subjects so one teacher could always give dedicated support.

An “achievement-oriented culture” and a “razor-sharp focus on data” is also vital, he said.

His words were echoed by Ed Vainker, principal at Reach Academy Feltham in west London, which came third with a score of 1.24 for free school meal pupils compared with 0.95 for other pupils. Both schools opened in 2012 and had their first GCSE cohort last year.

“Starting from scratch” allowed the school to focus on “powerful relationships” between teachers, pupils and their families. Home visits before the start of term and using teachers’ first names, as well as a team of counsellors available daily for mental health issues, also helped.

The pupils with top scores were “those with rich relationships with staff”, he said.

A spokesperson for Harris Academy

## TOP 10 SCHOOLS WITH HIGHER FSM THAN NON-FSM PROGRESS 8 SCORES

Name of school	Progress 8 score FSM pupils	Non-FSM pupils	Admissions policy
Dixons Trinity Academy	1.35	1.16	COMP
Westcliff High School for Boys Academy	1.34	0.7	SEL
Reach Academy Feltham	1.24	0.95	COMP
Brampton Manor Academy	1.23	1.07	COMP
Wallington County Grammar School	1.22	0.94	SEL
Wallington High School for Girls	1.19	1.03	SEL
Westcliff High School for Girls	1.13	0.69	SEL
Herschel Grammar School	1.08	0.67	SEL
Aylesbury High School	1.04	0.82	SEL
King Edward VI Grammar School, Chelmsford	1.01	0.89	SEL

Chafford Hundred in east London, which posted a 0.99 score for free school meal pupils and 0.8 for non-free school meal pupils, said the higher score was down to the school’s intervention strategies “tending to benefit” the poorest pupils most.

But the data also showed many grammar schools made better progress with free school meal pupils than non-free school meal pupils. *Schools Week* analysis revealed 27 per cent of the 102 schools are selective, and 29 per cent are single-sex.

Professor Stephen Gorard of Durham University, who has studied value-added measures, said grammar schools tend to have more pupils who are only temporarily classed as free school meals and so could be disproportionately shown to improve

their outcomes.

Instead, the data shouldn’t measure pupils “currently” eligible for free school meals, but those who had been eligible at any point in the last six years, because this would get a better snapshot of the schools’ disadvantage intake.

He claimed Progress 8 is a “flawed” measure because it relies on “error-prone” assessments of pupil attainment, and so tends to produce “unstable” results over time. This is backed by *Schools Week* analysis which shows 15 schools cropped up in last year’s data set as this year’s. All other schools were new.

The data should be run for at least five years before the schools which work best with pupils on free school meals can be determined, said Gorard.



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## NEWS

## GEORGE OSBORNE WANTS SCHOOLS MEASURED ON EX-PUPILS' SUCCESS AT 25

FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools should be measured on the "employability and success" of their pupils when they reach the age of 25, according to the Northern Powerhouse Partnership.

The organisation, set up and chaired by the former chancellor George Osborne, has released a report entitled 'Educating the North', which wants schools, colleges and universities to be measured on the "employability and eventual success" of their pupils in their 20s, compared to their previous attainment.

This approach would "shift the focus to long-term achievement rather than short-term measures of success", he claims.

The government already collects "destination data" on what happens to pupils after they leave school, but does not continue to track them into their mid-20s.

In his introduction to the report, Osborne described education as "perhaps the greatest challenge" faced in the north, and wants the region to emulate the success of the London Challenge in improving educational outcomes in deprived communities.

Alongside its demand for new accountability measures for schools, the report suggests reforms to pupil premium funding so it can "better target funding for disadvantage" by allocating more to pupils eligible for free school meals "throughout their schooling", and the establishment of a Northern Powerhouse Schools Improvement Board.

This would "draw together existing funding with a dedicated 10-year fund to allow for further "opportunity areas". There is no opportunity area in the north-east at present, a fact the report says should be "urgently addressed".

Areas covered by the government's regional schools commissioners should also be shaken up, with three new areas created to cover the north-west, Yorkshire, and the north-east and Cumbria.

Currently, the region is split differently between three existing areas: the north of England, Lancashire and west Yorkshire, and the east midlands and the Humber. Under the current system, Yorkshire is split across two regions, and there is confusion because one of the areas is called "the north" when it only covers part of the region.

The commissioners for the new regions would work "within frameworks and plans set by the Northern Powerhouse Schools Improvement Board" and alongside their work to challenge poor performance in multi-academy trusts, would get powers to make decisions on "regional funding streams" for school improvement.

Collette Roche, the chief of staff at Manchester Airports, who leads the Northern Powerhouse Partnership's education and skills board, said the report "should act as a wake-up call to everyone involved in education and skills in realising how far the north is behind the rest of the UK and where we need to get to".

Elsewhere, the report recommends the establishment of government-supported "locally-led clusters for school improvement", to share services more effectively, and a northern "centre of excellence" that provides research and evidence on how to turn around failing schools, funded by the £42 million teacher development premium

## Bright Tribe relinquishes all but one northern school

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS  
@PIPPA\_AK

The troubled Bright Tribe academy trust is pulling out of all but one of its five northern schools because it doesn't have an "established northern hub", even though it raked in £1 million in northern hub funding less than three years ago.

The MAT, which also runs five schools in the south, will continue to run Werneth Primary School in Oldham, Greater Manchester, but will give up all of its other northern schools.

The chain received the cash to expand and set up a northern hub in late 2015, but only took on three schools, all of which it will now pass to other sponsors. Campaigners now want the money returned, but the academies minister Lord Agnew said the "majority" of the grant has already been spent on senior staff.

Matters involving the trust came to a head last November, when Bright Tribe's chief executive officer, Mary McKeeman, resigned after just six months, and the chain announced plans to give up the struggling Whitehaven Academy in Cumbria, following a protracted battle with parents and staff over the future of the secondary school.

The news came just a few days after the trust announced it was backing out of a deal to sponsor Haydon Bridge High



School in Northumberland, where it had been working since 2015, and which it had planned to convert into an academy in 2016.

In December, the trust announced it would also give up Grindon Hall Christian School in Sunderland and Haltwhistle Community Campus lower and upper schools in Northumberland "in light of the difficulties in providing school-to-school support and delivering rapid improvement without the presence of an established northern hub".

Last year, the national schools commissioner Sir David Carter told MPs that "conversations about Bright Tribe moving out of the north" had begun in September 2017. However, it appears that those discussions did not include Werneth, which is located in the Lancashire and west Yorkshire region controlled by regional commissioner Vicky Beer, rather than in Janet Renou's North of England region.

The Department for Education this week refused to comment on Bright Tribe's decision to keep Werneth, which is at least 200 miles away from its five other

remaining schools in Suffolk and Essex, but confirmed it is still searching for sponsors for the five schools relinquished by the trust.

"The department is working closely with Bright Tribe Trust on its withdrawal from the RSC north region. Timescales are dependent on due diligence which covers all elements of an academy's functions, including educational, buildings and finances," a spokesperson said.

Werneth Primary School joined Bright Tribe Trust in February 2014. It was rated 'requires improvement' at an Ofsted inspection in January last year, which noted that, since the school became an academy, it had gone through three permanent principals and three interim principals.

"The many changes to leadership and staffing have hindered the pace of school improvement," Ofsted said.

Bright Tribe's latest accounts, published this week, show the trust paid over £681,000 to firms owned or controlled by board member Dr Mike Dwan in the year to August 31, down from £3.9 million the year before.

The trust insists services provided by Dwan's companies – North Consulting, Blue Support Services, The Knowledge Network and North & Partners Technical – were all provided "at cost or less".

"These relationships will not continue moving forwards," it added.

## HOME-SCHOOLERS FEAR NEW BILL TO MONITOR CHILDREN

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A bill to introduce greater monitoring for home-schooled children is in a "good position" to pass into law, according to its sponsor Lord Soley, despite warnings from home-schoolers it will be an "unmitigated disaster" and could "cost lives".

The Home Education (Duty of Local Authorities) Bill demands local authorities monitor the "educational development" of children receiving home education through annual assessments, and requires parents to register all home-schooled children.

The law does not currently require a parent to register a child as home-schooled, although they must alert a school if they are withdrawing their child.

Soley, a Labour peer, said he is "in favour of home education" but has concerns about the lack of help available for parents, and wants to crack down on the "small minority" who use home education for "abuse of one sort of another".

"The minority – where they are abusing or trafficking or radicalising – really do need to have some oversight," he said. "Society can't just forget these kids."

However, Mike Wood, a former home educator and owner of the website Home Education UK, insisted there is no evidence of home-schooled children suffering from abuse or radicalisation who were not already known to social services, and said



time would be better spent training local authorities to "understand the law".

If the bill succeeds, home-educators would receive an annual visit from the local authority to check on the progress and wellbeing of the child, and more regular visits if any concerns were raised. The assessment could include interviews with parents and children, or seeing examples of their work, which must include "supervised instruction in reading, writing and numeracy".

Wood said that this shows a "misunderstanding" about home-schooling, and that making parents adopt a formal educational structure or risk breaking the law would cause so many difficulties that some children would be forced to return to school.

He warned the bill would "cost lives",

leaving some children suicidal, and said parents who cannot face sending their children back to school but are unable to meet its "impossible" requirements will end up in jail.

"There are a lot of parents who are doing the best for their children but cannot meet these demands. Parents of children with special needs, all sorts of issues," he said. "It's a nightmare. If it goes through, it will be an unmitigated disaster. It's a huge deal."

Soley insisted his bill was "tight-touch regulation" and a better option than any "panic legislation" down the line if it emerged home-schooled children were being abused or radicalised. He believes there is a "60-per-cent" chance that the bill becomes law.

During a House of Lords debate on school attendance on January 24, academies minister Lord Agnew said the government was updating its guidance on home education for local authorities as their powers "often go further than appreciated".

He said he was keeping an "open mind" about Lord Soley's bill and would be working with him "collaboratively" on it.

A spokesperson for the DfE said the government had changed the law to make schools inform local authorities if a pupil is taken off their register, and councils already have a "duty to intervene" if they have safeguarding concerns or reason to believe children are "not receiving a safe and suitable education".



## NEWS

## LOW-PAID WOMEN GIVE PRIMARIES GIANT GENDER PAY GAPS

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

Investigates

Primary school academy trusts have the largest pay gaps between men and women according to new national data – and senior figures are pointing to the high numbers of female staff in low paid roles as the main reason.

The government announced in April 2016 that academy trusts and schools with more than 250 workers would have one year to publish their gender pay gap statistics.

Reports are published online and show the median and mean gender pay gap, as well as the proportion of men and women in each quartile of the pay structure.

Women's pay is lower across all of the multi-academy trusts which so far have published their data and two in five pay their male staff at least 25 per cent more on average than women overall.

But the trusts with the largest gaps say the figures are skewed by the proportion of women in lower-paid jobs, a situation most common in trusts dominated by primary schools. In fact, three of the top five trusts with the largest gender pay gaps were all primary.

Ocean Learning Trust had the largest gap: women earn 35.9 per cent less than men on average. The trust, an all-primary MAT in Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset, declined to comment on the figures.

In Cornwall, the Peninsula Learning Trust, which has seven primaries and one secondary, had the second-largest gender pay

## TOP FIVE MATS FOR GENDER PAY GAP AND PAY ROLL GENDER SPLIT

EMPLOYER NAME	DIFFERENCE IN MEAN HOURLY PAY %	BOTTOM QUARTILE OF PAYROLL		TOP QUARTILE OF PAYROLL	
		MEN %	WOMEN %	MEN %	WOMEN %
Ocean Learning Trust	35.9	10.6	89.4	27.9	72.1
Peninsula Learning Trust	35.2	8.6	91.4	32.9	67.1
The First Federation Trust	33.4	7.3	92.7	15.7	84.3
Eastern Multi-Academy Trust	33	12	88	40	60
Step Academy Trust	31	6	94	23	77

gap at 35.2 per cent.

A spokesperson told *Schools Week* the gap was a result of "the structure of the workforce" and that "no discrimination takes place between men and women at Peninsula Learning Trust".

The First Federation Trust, one of England's first primary federations, had the third-highest pay gap at 33.4 per cent. The trust has 10 primary church schools and four secular schools across Devon.

Its CEO Paul Walker said that "nationally there are usually more male employees in senior positions".

He claimed that First Federation has equal pay for men and women in "all similar posts", but the majority of the trust's workforce are in lower-paid teaching and support posts held by women.

This is often because of a choice to "work around having and caring for children", he said.

"Men hold under 10 per cent of the roles in the lower quartile; the directors have noted that there are very few male applicants for these roles."

Eastern Multi-Academy Trust, which has 12 primary schools and two secondaries, ranked just below First Federation with a gap of 33 per cent.

It acknowledged that career progression is "particularly affecting the gender pay gap within the trust".

"The trust is also looking to implement leadership development programmes for those aspiring to middle and senior leadership to enable equal access to all staff," it said.

Vivienne Porritt, the co-founder of campaign group WomenEd, said *Schools Week's* findings were "not a surprise".

"Education is supposed to be a profession about equity, inclusion and fairness. This data will ensure education institutions can be held to account," she said.

She advised trusts not to "wait for somebody else to say you need to do it".

"Use this data to say we can do targeted programmes for women leaders, we can offer them coaching, we can be asking the women themselves about this, and drawing on organisations such as WomenEd for support."

## NAHT: Mental health proposals shouldn't be a 'stick to beat schools'

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

New proposals to improve mental health support for pupils risk becoming "another stick to beat schools leaders with", according to the leader of a headteachers' union.

Paul Whiteman, the NAHT's general secretary, told MPs on Tuesday that although heads welcomed the recognition of the role schools could play in improving pupil wellbeing, some leaders are worried about the "evaluation and accountability" of new plans announced in a government green paper last year.

The proposals out for consultation include having senior mental health leads in schools and mental health support teams. Mental health discussions and treatments like cognitive behavioural therapy will also take place in classrooms.

Heads already "suffer terribly" at the hands of the existing "high-stakes" school accountability system, Whiteman warned MPs at a joint hearing for the parliamentary education and health committees.

"We worry that this is just another stick to beat school leaders and teachers with, rather than it being a serious and positive intervention to look after children's mental health," he said.

Announcements in the green paper included £95 million for schools to appoint and train designated senior leads for mental



Dr Pooky Knightsmith

health from 2019, and £215 million for new mental health support teams, which will work with the NHS to offer support and treatments in schools.

But Whiteman cautioned against overburdening schools with the responsibility to resolve children's mental health challenges on their own.

"We understand that we have a unique position in identifying emerging mental health needs of children in the care of our members," he said.

"But where we begin to worry is that the green paper gives a nod towards diagnosis and treatment from the leads that are to be identified, and we don't think there's a place for education professionals to do that."

Speaking alongside him was Tamsin Ford, a professor of child and adolescent psychiatry at the University of Exeter, who highlighted the importance of providing mental health support for vulnerable young people who are not accessing school regularly.

She explained that while "the focus on schools is very welcome", disadvantaged

children, who are particularly likely to have mental health problems, are much less likely to be in school in the first place.

"I worry that they could be missing out without something extra," she said.

Young people with special educational needs and disabilities also require particular attention when it comes to mental health provision, pointed out Dr Pooky Knightsmith, vice chair of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition.

They can face "specific challenges", especially when moving from child to adult mental health services, she said, adding that this had not been properly addressed in the government's green paper.

Rowan Munson, a former member of the Youth Select Committee, warned that education is "a real cause of anxiety" for pupils who are under stress from the "fear of failure", and teachers who struggle with the "constant focus on exam grades and league tables".

Children's commissioner Anne Longfield said that while "the will to make this work is enormous", it remains unclear whether the commitments in the green paper will be backed up with resources.

We don't know what is spent already, it isn't clear about any new funding that is going to be introduced," she said.

A National Audit Office survey on the level of spending on children's mental health would be "very helpful", she concluded.

## IN brief

## EDUCATION SERVICES GRANT CUT WILL COST ACADEMIES £353M

Academies stand to lose £353 million by 2020 as a result of cuts to the education services grant, official government estimates reveal.

A technical note on schools' costs published this week sets out how the decision to scrap the grant will affect academies over the next three years.

This year, academies have lost £105 million as a result of the cut, but their losses will rise by a further £172 million next year and by £75 million in 2019-20.

Academies and councils stopped receiving the grant last September after the government decided to scrap it in order to save £600 million.

The government's costs document also reveals that the new apprenticeship levy, a 0.5-per-cent charge faced by all schools and academy trusts with a payroll bill of over £3 million, will affect 16,000 schools at a cost of £110 million.

## NEW ADVICE SERVICE FOR SCHOOLS THAT WANT TO START OUTSOURCING

The government has launched a new advice service for schools to help them get value for money when buying in services.

Pilots of the scheme have started this week in the north-west and south-west of England, with free advice and guidance on buying services like catering, cleaning or technology support on offer.

According to the government, the service provides expert advice, template documentation, help with "complex contracts" and market intelligence.

The service also promotes local collaboration, where there is an "opportunity to reduce costs on areas such as learning resources"

Lord Agnew, the academies minister, said: "We know that how schools use their money is important in delivering the best outcomes for pupils and this new service will help school business professionals to make better financial decisions."

The service is free for schools in the chosen regions to join immediately.

## 49,000+ CHILDREN 'MISSING' FROM EDUCATION IN 16/17

Almost 50,000 children were recorded as "missing" from education last year, according to new research by the National Children's Bureau.

Data obtained by the NCB under the Freedom of Information Act shows 49,187 children were recorded as missing from education at some point during 2016/17, meaning they were not registered at a school or receiving suitable education elsewhere.

Of those recorded missing, 15 per cent were known to social services. The national average for children known to social workers is 5.5 per cent.

The NCB wants the government to collect and publish a report on national data, as well as to review the variation in figures across local authorities. To make this easier, a single identifier for missing pupils should be introduced across all agencies, so they can be more easily traced.

A spokesperson for the DfE said councils already have a "duty to intervene" if there are safeguarding concerns, or they believe children are "not receiving a safe and suitable education", and said schools must inform local authorities if a pupil is taken off their register.

## NEWS

## The DfE's teacher retention efforts are 'sluggish and incoherent'

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The government's "sluggish and incoherent" response to the teacher recruitment and retention crisis is putting schools under increasing pressure, a powerful crossparty committee of MPs has warned.

A report by the parliamentary public accounts committee, 'Retaining and developing the teaching workforce', found that schools already grappling with rising pupil numbers are facing additional

pressure as a result of the government's failure to "get to grips" with the number of teachers leaving the profession.

Labour MP Meg Hillier, who chairs the committee, said that without action from the Department for Education, teacher supply would become an "intractable threat to children's education", and admonished DfE officials for failing to foresee and address the crisis, which is largely attributed to problems with workload and a lack of progression and development opportunities.

"It should have been clear to senior civil servants that growing demand for school places, combined with a drive for schools to make efficiency savings, would only build pressure in the system," she said. "Instead they seem to have watched on, scratching their heads, as more and more teachers quit the profession.

"The government must get a grip on teacher retention and we expect it to set out a targeted, measurable plan to support struggling schools as a matter of urgency."

## PACs 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1 CREATE A 'COHERENT PLAN' BY APRIL



The committee said the Department for Education has "failed to get a grip on teacher retention", pointing to a 4.9-per-cent drop in the number of secondary school teachers between 2010 and 2016.

With a 19.4-per-cent increase in secondary school pupil numbers expected between 2017 and 2025, the committee has warned that the department "does not understand why more teachers are leaving the profession, and does not have a coherent plan to tackle teacher retention and development".

According to the committee, the DfE should, by April 2018, "set out and communicate a coherent plan for how it will support schools to retain and develop the teaching workforce". The plan should include "what the department is aiming to achieve and by when", the interventions it will use to achieve its aims, and how it will measure success.

## 2 SET OUT WHAT REPRESENTS AN 'ACCEPTABLE' WORKLOAD



Even though workload is "the main reason why teachers leave the profession", the government has not set out what impact it hopes to achieve from its interventions, the committee found.

The DfE's own research found that classroom teachers and "middle leaders" worked 54.4 hours on average during the reference week, and that heads are "concerned about increasing workload which has a detrimental effect on the quality of teaching and teachers' wellbeing".

Tools published by the DfE in 2015 to help schools reduce workload have had "very limited impact". Only half of schools have used the tools, only a third of which managed to reduce workload.

The government should therefore work with the schools community to "set out what is an acceptable level of teacher workload, monitor through its periodic surveys of teachers the impact of its actions to reduce unnecessary workload, and identify possible further interventions".

## 3 SAY MORE ABOUT THE TEACHER VACANCY SERVICE



MPs warned that schools are struggling to recruit teachers of the right quality, and are also concerned about the "high cost for schools of recruitment".

In particular, schools are struggling to recruit teachers in science, maths and modern foreign languages, and these

subjects "are expected to be most affected by the UK leaving the European Union", the committee said.

A trial of the government's new national teacher vacancy service is planned for this spring. It will allow schools to advertise their teacher vacancies for free.

But the committee wants to know more, and has demanded that the government set out its plans for the roll-out of the website, including the "scope, timetable and budget", and report back by June 2018 on the results of the pilot.

The DfE should also write to MPs to set out the action it has taken to control teacher recruitment agency fees.

## 4 TAKE A MORE 'STRATEGIC' ROLE OVER TEACHER HOUSING



The cost of living in some parts of the country is making it more difficult for schools to recruit and retain teachers. The issue is second only to workload among recruitment barriers identified by school leaders in a recent National Audit Office survey.

MPs from Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire are among those to have raised concerns. In 2015 the highest proportions of secondary schools reporting at least one vacancy were in outer London and the south-east, where house prices are high.

According to the committee, although department says it is willing to talk to any schools with proposals to support teachers with housing, it "does not have any particular initiatives to address cost of living issues".

Therefore, the DfE should set out "how it will take account" of the housing requirements of teachers, particularly in high-cost areas, and take a "more strategic role" among other government departments when considering initiatives to support teachers, to ensure "real impact".

## 5 ADDRESS REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN TEACHER QUALITY



According to the public accounts committee, the DfE has not been able to explain why the quality of teaching varies "so much" across the country.

For example, in five of the nine English regions, all in the north or midlands, more than 20 per cent of pupils are in secondary schools where teaching is rated 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' by Ofsted. In total, 88,000 pupils are in schools where teaching is 'inadequate'.

MPs pressed the DfE on why there were such regional differences in teaching quality and what it is doing to address

them, but "it could not provide any satisfactory explanation".

The committee wants the department to carry out more work to understand why there are regional differences in teaching quality, including by engaging more with school leaders in affected regions, and set out "how it proposes to improve the quality of teaching in the midlands and the north of England specifically".

## 6 EXPLAIN HOW CPD WILL IMPROVE



Teachers are not getting enough "good-quality" continuing professional development, which has implications for teacher retention and quality.

Although the DfE does not keep track of CPD, research by the Educational Policy Institute found that teachers in England spent on average only four days a year on CPD in 2013 compared with an average of 10.5 days across the 36 countries covered by the analysis.

Headteachers stressed to the public accounts committee "how vital it is for teachers to undertake good-quality CPD at all stages of their career", and highlighted time and cost as the main barriers to teachers undertaking CPD.

The DfE has been told to write to the committee by April this year, setting out its plans for improving the quality of CPD for teachers, its "expectations for how much CPD teachers should undertake", and how improvements in CPD will be paid for.

## 7 GIVE MORE DETAIL ON THE OPPORTUNITY AREAS



The opportunity areas programme, a flagship government scheme that will see £72 million distributed across 12 areas of England to boost social mobility, focused heavily on improving teachers.

The government has commissioned a process evaluation, which will report by this summer, and plans a further study to "examine the impact of the opportunity areas".

But the DfE "has not defined measures of success for the programme", and says that it is relying on local areas to define their own priorities, MPs warned.

The department also failed to explain how the opportunity areas fit with "other government programmes focusing on particular geographical areas", such as the Northern Powerhouse.

As a result, the committee has asked the DfE to write to its members by April this year to "explain in more detail its aims for the opportunity areas over both the short term and long term".



## NEWS

## TWO THIRDS OF TRUSTS CAN'T JUSTIFY CEO PAY

FREDDIE WHITTAKER & PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS  
@SCHOOLSWEET

### MPs grilled the government's top education officials over the state of academy finances

The parliamentary public accounts committee held a session on Monday with Jonathan Slater, the Department for Education's permanent secretary, Mike Pettifer, its acting director of academies and maintained schools, and Eileen Milner, the chief executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The hearing was held in response to the consolidated annual report and accounts for the academies sector, which were published last autumn for the first time.

#### 1. Two thirds of small trusts couldn't justify salaries over £150,000

The MPs heard that the ESFA had already written to 29 small trusts paying staff over £150,000 asking them to justify the salaries – and that two thirds had not been able to give a reasonable explanation.

Slater also said the ESFA would take direct action to reduce pay if it was found to be causing financial difficulties in trusts.

#### 2. More academies will go into deficit

The government expects the number of academies in deficit to increase, Slater said.

He told MPs that the number of maintained



Jonathan Slater

schools in surplus had dropped between 2015/16 and 2016/17, and that he "wouldn't be surprised at all" to see a similar change in academies.

Slater said some academy trusts "have not been managing their resources properly", and that he would "expect to see an increase in the number of trusts in deficit" in 2016/17.

#### 3. No trust is 'too big to fail'

Despite concerns about some academy trusts having expanded too quickly, none are "too big to fail", according to Slater.

Responding to a question from MP Gillian Keegan, he did admit that in the past some trusts "grew too big too quickly".

#### 4. Related-party transactions can be 'jolly good'

According to Slater, related-party transactions (payments by academy trusts to private companies with links to people involved in the trust) can be "a jolly good thing", as long as there is "transparency".

Around 40 per cent of academy trusts hire firms with links to their people, but those companies are only allowed to provide the work "at cost", so they cannot make a profit.

"Any related-party transaction for profit is not allowed and we will take action," Slater said, agreeing to take back MPs' concerns about such transactions and "reflect on it".

#### 5. Almost 40 trusts have been ordered to improve their finances

According to Milner, there are currently 39 academy trusts that are subject to financial notices to improve.

Such notices are issued by the government when trusts are found to have breached funding rules. Spending powers are restricted, and it can ultimately lead to academies being rebrokered to other sponsors.

Milner said the number of financial notices to improve was reducing "as trusts ask for help earlier" and because the DfE steps in earlier.

#### 6. There was due diligence over Whitehaven Academy, but 'things go wrong'

Slater and his colleagues faced a lot of questions over the problems facing schools in the north of England run by the Bright Tribe

academy trust.

The trust's issues came to a head last autumn when it announced it would walk away from Whitehaven Academy, a secondary school with buildings in a terrible state, and a dubious quality of education.

When asked by public accounts committee chair Meg Hillier what due diligence had been carried out when Bright Tribe took on Whitehaven, Slater said procedures were followed "but sometimes things go wrong".

#### 7. Academy land valuations taking 'longer than hoped'

The government won't be able to publish the next set of academy accounts before the summer recess this year because it is taking so long to verify land valuations.

The 2015/16 academy accounts were criticised by the National Audit Office last year, in part because the DfE was unable to provide "adequate evidence" about the £45 billion of academy land and buildings included in the accounts.

Today Slater admitted that efforts by the DfE to establish how much all the land on which academies operate is worth is taking "longer than hoped". Officials have had to go over 13,000 documents, he told MPs.

It had been hoped that the accounts would this year be published before Parliament goes into recess in July, but they look unlikely to be out before October.

## Hinds still agnostic on 50% faith cap

FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

The new education secretary is "carefully considering" scrapping the 50-per-cent cap on faith-based admissions to free schools.

Damian Hinds told MPs on Monday that he still hasn't decided whether to allow free schools to select more than 50 per cent of their pupils using their religion, a move first proposed in the 'Schools that work for everyone' white paper in 2016 and his party's 2017 election manifesto.

The government did not press ahead with its proposal after its poor showing in the election, but Hinds' appointment as education secretary led to speculation that the policy could resurface on his watch.

He has previously spoken out against the cap, though his predecessor Justine Greening was understood to be more supportive.

During his first education questions in the House of Commons, Hinds said the cap, along with other proposals set out in the consultation, is still being "carefully considered".

"I value greatly the contribution that church and faith schools make to our education system; they are consistently generally high-performing and popular schools," he said.



Damian Hinds

"Every child deserves a good school place, which is why the 'Schools that work for everyone' consultation set out proposals to enable a wider group of providers, including the Catholic Church, for example, to set up new schools. I am carefully considering the proposal."

Under the existing cap, oversubscribed free schools are not allowed to select more than 50 per cent of pupils based on their faith. The white paper wanted the cap removed to allow more faith-based free schools to open.

The Catholic Church has been singled out as the main benefactor of the policy because its rules have prevented new Catholic schools from opening in areas

affected by the cap. This is because it is against church doctrine to turn away Catholic children.

Hinds' comments have prompted criticism from some corners, especially those who see the faith cap policy as prioritising politics over improving outcomes

Education consultant and former head Tom Sherrington accused the education secretary of "trotting out the infuriating 'good school place' trope".

"Instead of trying to lead a system where all schools improve and deep-rooted problems get solved, we 'consider' plans to appease a few more potential voters," he said.

## DFE SEARCHING FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS 'EFFICIENCIES'

The government is "exploring opportunities" to make the free school meals eligibility process more efficient, the children's minister said this week.

Nadhim Zahawi faced several questions from MPs about the stigma around free school meals on pupil-premium payments for schools.

The amount of pupil-premium cash schools receive is dependent on the number of pupils claiming free school meals, but MPs said many parents were afraid to put their children forward for the meals, affecting the amount of money handed to schools.

Michelle Donelan, the Conservative MP for Chippenham, and David Drew, the Labour MP for Stroud, told Zahawi during education questions in parliament on Monday of stories from their constituencies about schools losing out on much-needed extra funding to help disadvantaged pupils.

Donelan asked if ministers would consider an "automatic link" between the pupil premium and the benefits system to ensure all children in need of additional funding get it.

Zahawi told MPs the government wants to make it "as simple as possible" for schools and councils to determine free school meals eligibility.



## NEWS

## HARRIS PUTS MOYNIHAN SALARY UP TO £440,000

JESS STAUFENBERG

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Redundancy payouts have more than doubled at London's Harris multi-academy trust last year, while chief executive Dan Moynihan received a £20,000 pay rise, accounts reveal.

The documents, published on Wednesday just before the deadline for trusts to file their accounts, show the Harris Federation spent £470,000 in redundancy pay in 2016-17, compared with just £189,000 the year before.

They also show that Moynihan – the highest-paid academy trust boss in England – received a raise of at least £20,000 last year. In 2016-17, his basic salary was between £440,000 to £445,000, up from £420,000 to £425,000 the year before.

Moynihan's total remuneration package came to between £550,000 and £565,000 last year.

The increased redundancy payouts were because the MAT adopted new schools which required staff restructuring, according to a spokesperson. The federation opened one new academy in 2015/16, and last year it opened four – two of which were previously failing schools.

Meanwhile Moynihan's salary was closely linked to the fact that Harris Federation, which has 44 academies and educates 32,000 children, is the top-performing MAT in the country, they added.

Employee benefits paid out to key management personnel also rose by nearly £500,000 last year. These benefits, which include employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions, rose from £1.9 million in 2015/16 to £2.4 million in 2016-17.

At the same time, the amount paid in non-statutory severance to staff who had been asked or chose to leave increased.

Non-statutory severance rose from £188,685 in 2016, to £193,050 last year. These are payments that fall outside normal statutory or contractual requirements and which are given to staff who resign, are dismissed, or reach an agreed termination of contract.

There were 19 non-statutory severance payments in total last year, ranging from £304 to £39,600.

The trust's accounts also reveal some related-party transactions. About £14,500 was spent at Tapi Carpets & Floors Limited, at which Paul Jacobs, the chair of Harris Academy Purley, is a director, and Philip Saunders, who is chair at Harris Academy South & Upper Norwood, used to be a director.

Lord Harris, who sponsors the federation, also has "an interest in the company".

The amount spent at the company was slightly down on last year, when about £15,800 was shelled out in purchases.

Of the 35 Harris academies so far inspected by Ofsted, 25 have been rated 'outstanding' and the rest as 'good'.



## A 'BILL OF RIGHTS' FOR EXCLUDED PUPILS

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

Excluded pupils should be protected by a "bill of rights" that would allow proper scrutiny of their school's decision to kick them out, the influential chair of the education select committee has said.

Robert Halfon is concerned about the lack of protection for pupils and their parents in situations where schools may have wrongly excluded them.

He is currently leading an inquiry into alternative provision, and believes the rising number of exclusions, which come to around 35 pupils a day, is the "greatest injustice in education at the moment". As a result, he wants a "clear set of rules".

He was shocked when a constituent's son was excluded ahead of his GCSEs for fighting with another pupil who had been cyberbullying him, dashing his hopes of an apprenticeship. The headteacher in question "ignored" an independent panel which challenged the decision and the pupil was "now at home doing nothing."

Pupils and their parents must be protected by a bill of rights, the MP for Harlow told *Schools Week*.

"There should be clear rules. I'm not against the headteacher having an important say, but at the moment the parent has no proper rights. I want a clear appeal system that works," he added.

His suggestion that appeal processes across the country are "patchy" was backed



by alternative provision experts.

Kiran Gill, founder of The Difference, an AP teacher training programme, said there were "wildly different" local authority processes.

"We definitely need more protection and transparency for parents' and pupils' rights in exclusions."

Currently, schools must follow statutory guidance which says pupils can only be permanently excluded if they seriously breach the school's behaviour policy, and if their continued presence at the school will also harm the education and safety of other pupils.

But schools tend to have very different "red lines" on what deserves an exclusion, she said. She added teachers must be supported and trained in developing inclusion policies and quality-assuring alternative provision.

Her warning follows Debbie Barnes, the director



Kiran Gill

of the ADCS educational achievement policy committee, which brings together local authority children's services, who has made a number of suggestions about exclusions.

She wants local authorities to get control back on mid-year admissions for all schools, so pupils who have been excluded during the year can be found places. At the moment, academies have control over their own admissions and can refuse to accept pupils. Schools should also have to "take back" any excluded pupils wrongly told to leave.

Meanwhile Ofsted should check schools are commissioning alternative provision in line with a "nationally-agreed quality assurance framework" that proves it is of a high standard.

Dave Whitaker, the executive principal of Springwell Learning Community, an AP school in Barnsley, also backed her recommendation that Ofsted reward inclusive practice. He and the Headteachers Roundtable, a think-tank for school leaders, are proposing that schools should have to reach a certain "inclusion score" in order for Ofsted to award them an 'outstanding' grade.

"Schools would have to actively seek inclusive practice to get the top grade," he said.

He added that the committee inquiry should examine whether "zero tolerance" behaviour policies are driving up exclusions in its second evidence hearing.

The DfE was approached for comment.

## Exam officers rail against disparate exam access arrangements

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

Schools find exam access arrangements increasingly strict and confusing, according to the body that represents exams officers.

Many schools want "much clearer" guidance on access, as well as special consideration for pupils with additional needs, according to research by the International Examination Officers' Association.

Some officers have even warned that extra help may be being offered to pupils who don't need it, leading to inflated grades.

Andrew Harland, the director of the iEOA and author of the report, said schools are "struggling to cope" with a rising number of requests for special provision.

This year, 56 per cent of roughly 300 respondents reported a rise in requests. Now Harland has said teachers should have "more say" in determining how pupils might be helped to access an exam.

For example, a pupil might need to be allowed to listen to music if it helps concentration, or an autistic pupil could need to take tests in a familiar environment, rather than an exam hall.

"We need to have better access to the system that is teacher-led. Instead, the exams process is working against lots of students," said Harland.

Last year, the iEOA's requests for flexibility



were rebuffed by Ofqual. The Joint Council for Qualifications, which represents the four big exam boards and produces access arrangement document for schools, also refused to recognise the concerns.

However, academics and special education needs and disabilities (SEND) experts have this year lined up to support Harland's views, and Ofqual and JCQ appear to have softened their position.

According to the iEOA, the JCQ's access arrangements and reasonable adjustments guidance has been changed 69 times in four years and is 110 pages long. As a result, some are simply not putting in requests when they should – meaning the real rise in access arrangements is likely to be even bigger.

Dr Abi James, a researcher in accessibility and assistive technologies at the University of Southampton, said teachers and special needs co-ordinators found the access arrangements system "very complicated to

navigate."

She claimed that JCQ, which makes decisions on almost all requests put through its online access arrangements system, has made the criteria "even tighter" in recent years.

There is also a "widespread perception" that the arrangements give an "unfair advantage" to pupils, but this is not backed by her research. Instead, anxieties at giving pupils unjustified extra time resulted in hugely varied grades.

Last year, just a quarter of SEND pupils passed their English and maths GCSEs, compared with 70 per cent of those with no identified special need.

However the iEOA report also noted some exams officers are concerned pupils are getting access arrangements when they shouldn't be, and gaining grades that are a "false reflection of a candidate's true ability."

Harland said this was an ongoing concern of some members.

A spokesperson for Ofqual said it "agreed" that arrangements for applying for a reasonable adjustment "should be as clear as possible" and said it would be talking to the iEOA and JCQ about the report.

JCQ's representative said it was only "right and fair" for a pupil with a disability to get special provision if needed. However, they added that the criteria had to be "strict" to ensure only those who genuinely needed an arrangement got one.



# OBITUARIES

## Sir Cyril Taylor, the grandfather of the academies movement



Sir Cyril Taylor in 2003

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**  
@FCDWHITTAKER

Sir Cyril Taylor, a pioneer of the city technology colleges programme who advised 10 education secretaries and founded the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, has died at the age of 82.

Taylor had been involved in English schools since 1987, when he was appointed by Margaret Thatcher and her education secretary Kenneth Baker to oversee the roll-out of city technology colleges – seen by many as an early precursor to academies.

Sue Williamson, the chief executive of SSAT, paid tribute to Taylor, whom she described as the “initiator” of the specialist schools programme.

“Cyril guided our mission for 20 years with purpose and integrity,” she said.

“During that time he served as an adviser

to no fewer than 10 successive secretaries of state for education on the specialist schools and academies initiative. I’m proud to have worked alongside Cyril, and to have counted him as a supporter of our work at SSAT in more recent years.”

Born in Yorkshire in 1935, Taylor completed his national service with the King’s African Rifles in Kenya before attending Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he read history. He studied for an MBA at Harvard Business School, and received the Charles Bell Scholarship from the London Chamber of Commerce.

After leaving Harvard, Taylor worked for Procter & Gamble at its headquarters in Cincinnati.

He was the founder, in 1964, of the American Institute for Foreign Study, a cultural exchange and educational opportunities programme of which he remained chair until his death. In 1972, he helped launch Richmond, the American International University, in London, and served as chair of trustees until 2005.

Elected to the Greater London Council as a Conservative councillor in 1977, Taylor eventually became the council’s deputy leader until it was abolished in 1986.

In 1987, at the request of Thatcher and Baker, he founded the City Technology Colleges Trust, which oversaw the establishment of 15 vocational colleges set

up to help tackle youth unemployment, almost all of which have since become academies. The trust eventually became SSAT, and Taylor continued as its chair until 2007.

Williamson said Taylor had also raised “over £350 million in sponsorship to support schools” during his career, and had inspired others to get involved in schools.

“Businesspeople like Lord Harris engaged with schools because of Cyril’s drive and passion. Cyril wanted the best education for every young person. I am pleased that we were able to celebrate our 30th anniversary with him last year at the House of Commons. I, like many people, owe a great deal to Cyril – it is a very sad day.

“Along with everyone at SSAT, I’d like to convey my deepest sympathies to Sir Cyril’s family and all those who had the privilege to know and work with him.”

Lord Baker said he was “very saddened” to hear of Taylor’s death, and described the “tremendous energy” he put into the City Technology Colleges programme.

“I was very lucky to have found someone with such a passionate commitment to improving education. He was always so positive and a delightful companion. A great philanthropist, he had boundless energy which became infectious in his desire to do so much – he is owed a big debt of gratitude not only by me but by tens of thousands of students.”

## DAVID WHITBREAD, THE POPULAR NFER VICE-PRESIDENT

David Whitbread (pictured), the vice-president of the National Foundation for Education Research, has died at the age of 81.

NFER staff have paid tribute to the “insightful and modest” former council education officer, who was the Local Government Association’s first ever head of education.

Whitbread began his career in education as a language teacher, and later worked for the Ministry of Defence as an interpreter and as a language training officer at the Institute of Army Education.

He then served as an education officer in Norfolk and then in Hertfordshire, before becoming undersecretary for education at the Association of County Councils. He then served as the Local Government Association’s inaugural head of education when the organisation was formed by the merger of the ACC and other groups in 1997.

Following his retirement in 1998, he maintained his “interest and enthusiasm” for education. Whitbread was named as NFER’s vice-president in 2012, serving in that role until his death.

“David was a person of huge integrity who made an enormous contribution to NFER and to the whole education service,” said the body’s former chair of trustees, Richard Bunker.

“Nothing was too much trouble and he always gave calm, well considered and invariably helpful advice. He was a delight to work with.”

According to Carole Willis, the NFER’s chief executive, Whitbread “played a central role on the board for a number of years”.

“He was an insightful and modest man, with a great deal of very valuable experience from which we all benefited. I know he will be greatly missed by his family and friends,” she said.



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**AMANDA SPIELMAN**  
Chief Inspector, Ofsted



**MATTHEW SYED**  
Journalist, Writer,  
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## EDITORIAL

## Amanda Spielman must apply her zeal for reform equitably

Time's up for hidden education. Amanda Spielman, who does in fact wear glasses, has put them on "zoom" function and is peering closely. Sunday schools, Bible clubs, madrasas, home educators and illegal schools – all will feel the glance, and possibly full glare, of Ofsted's team if Spielman has her way.

The question is whether the chief inspector, who is in some respects as outspoken as her predecessor, can step away once her term is over without earning a reputation as the woman who relentlessly went after a tiny section of the sector that already feels maligned and misunderstood.

Where Sir Michael Wilshaw was outspoken against figures everyone loves to hate – academy bosses who earn too much, for instance – Spielman is bravely going after those who rarely irritate everyone precisely because they're in the shadows.

To be fair to her, she is picking up where others left off: Wilshaw wrote to then-education secretary Nicky Morgan with "serious concerns" about a school which segregated girls and boys – three months ago Spielman watched Ofsted win

an appeal against a school doing that.

The former chair of the education committee, Neil Carmichael, said home education needs investigating – on page 6 we report that a bill is proposing Ofsted carry out annual inspections on parents.

And now Spielman has reacquired a bone the Church of England previously forced Ofsted to drop: inspections of Sunday schools. Schools Week has a few questions.

First, the Church is "bewildered" by the accusation Sunday schools might be spreading intolerant views. Schools Week recommends Spielman finds an example of this, because she will then seal her case immediately. If she can't, she risks seeming intrusive.

Second, is this an attempt to balance out the focus on Islamist extremism?

If so, we have a third question: where is the mention of ultra-orthodox Jewish yeshivahs? This paper knows of several ultra-orthodox schools the DfE promised to shut down and still hasn't.

If Spielman is putting her gaze on wide beam, she should make sure she's taking in a truly broad church.

## The SENCO forum black-out needs to be fixed at once



Over two and a half months after a bumbling IT team managed to disable a forum for SENCOs during a routine upgrade, the DfE still hasn't managed to find anyone to fix it.

The mistake may have been entirely innocent, but that's unlikely to provide much comfort for SENCOs who have suddenly been cut off from a vital source of help and support for what is often a difficult and lonely job.

The forum's immobilisation is so complete that its chairs can't

even contact members to explain what's happened, leaving thousands of SENCOs around the country completely in the dark about why they can't access valuable advice at the start of a new term.

The DfE must urgently pull its socks up and correct its own mistake. It is disrespectful of SENCOs for this matter to take months to fix. Fingers and toes crossed that this time next week we're publishing a story informing you its fixed.

## It's a female-dominated sector, so why are women paid less than men?

In a sector traditionally dominated by women, where staff are so often role models for the young people they teach, ensuring that women are paid fairly and well represented in every tier of the schools system is vital.

Where staff lower down the payroll are almost entirely female, school leaders need to be asking themselves why, and what they can do to support better career progression.

It is not enough to say too few

women apply for jobs higher up, or women have made a choice to stay in lower-paid jobs or go part time because of child care responsibilities. What will you as an organisation do about it? How can you support female staff to progress?

The new data gathered by the government on the gender pay gap should motivate leaders to be more proactive in tackling any imbalance.





Brighton Aldridge Community Academy



# Principal

## Brighton Aldridge Community Academy

**Looking for your next significant challenge in a successful innovative, growing school?**

Brighton Aldridge Community Academy is a thriving 11-19 school rated Good by Ofsted (2016). The Academy's much improved outcomes are matched by a significant rise in popularity; sixth form numbers have doubled and it is projected that Year 7 will be over-subscribed for the first time in September 2018. Our £30m campus close to Brighton and Sussex Universities boasts superb sports facilities rarely seen in the state sector.

As Principal you will be supported by the Executive Principal for our South East schools. However, the defining characteristic of our trust is that the primary leadership of each school comes from its Principal, who shapes the distinct identity of their school within the community and the MAT.

Aldridge Education is a charitable trust working in different regions across England where the opportunities and prospects for young people are often most limited, and where the introduction of our entrepreneurial approach to education can have most benefit.

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**Sir Rod Aldridge OBE**

We are a values-driven organisation with a commitment to non-selective, inclusive schools, providing children and young people with an exceptional educational experience. Our goal is that, by the age of 25, all Aldridge graduates will have experienced an outstanding and enjoyable education and be able to sustain the life of their choice.

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Global Teaching Partners is seeking exceptional and well-qualified Mathematics, Science, Primary, World Languages and Special Education teachers for positions in the southern U.S. Successful teachers will have the opportunity to inspire U.S. students, develop cultural awareness and impact teacher effectiveness and student achievement. During their tenure, teachers will have opportunities to engage with American culture and learn U.S. teaching techniques and curriculum.

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## PRINCIPAL – AVANTI FIELDS

Salary: Competitive salary and PRP up to £110k (subject to performance outcomes)

Avanti Fields School is a new all-through school (4-16) with two-forms of entry in primary and six-forms of entry at secondary. The school will be growing incrementally year by year to a full cohort of 1,320; the first intake of Year 7 pupils will be in September 2018. The first Reception intake is to be confirmed.

Both permanent and temporary sites have been identified and the Heads of Terms are currently being negotiated with the DfE.

In preparing for the opening we need a Principal who, as an exceptional leader, can put their stamp on the operational, educational and strategic work that is required throughout the preparation phase through to the opening. You will be an energetic, innovative and inspirational Principal, who will ensure Avanti Fields provides its pupils an outstanding education rooted in the inclusive and distinctive Avanti Schools' ethos of educational excellence, character development and spiritual insight.

This new school is part of a growing family of Avanti schools and the Principal of Avanti Fields will have the opportunity to play a key role in the growth and excellence of that family. Avanti Fields will be the

second secondary school provider within the Trust and the successful candidate will be able to contribute to shaping the future of our trust-wide secondary offer.

All our existing schools have strong senior teams in place. The attainment, achievement and behaviour of learners in all our schools are excellent. Our parents and carers and students are highly aspirational. The successful candidate, whilst not necessarily a Hindu, will subscribe fully to the ethos and vision of the Avanti Schools Trust for the school. **Please visit [www.avanti.org.uk/careers](http://www.avanti.org.uk/careers) for more details.**

### The Successful candidate will demonstrate:

- highly effective leadership and organisational skills with the ability to motivate, lead and inspire the school community;
- excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to work effectively with all members of our community in continuing to develop our school;
- capabilities of a visionary leader with the highest expectations, and equally high levels of emotional intelligence and communication skills.

**CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2018 AT MIDDAY**

### Shortlisting

Successful candidates will be contacted about selection process Monday 19th February 2018

### Assessment Part 1

Student & Staff panel interview, data analysis, lesson observation etc Tuesday 27th February 2018  
Avanti House Secondary School, Harrow

### Assessment Part 2

Presentation and interview panel (if successful at part 1 of assessment process) Thursday 1st March 2018  
Krishna Avanti Leicester





# PRINCIPAL

## Competitive Salary

**Required from April 2018 or as soon as possible thereafter**

**We are seeking to appoint a Principal to lead our school through its next exciting phase of development. The position becomes available due to the retirement of our current Principal who successfully steered the UTC through its opening and has established its early reputation for high quality academic and technical learning for 14-18 year olds.**

Scarborough UTC, with specialisms in engineering and computer science, opened in September 2016 in a state-of-the-art new building with facilities and equipment to match. It is favourably positioned close to Scarborough town centre on a prestigious £47 million development, which alongside the UTC boasts a new university campus and Sports Village. The UTC is a school for 14-18 year olds with world-class sponsors such as GCHQ, Plaxton, Unison Group, McCain, Deep Sea Electronics and the University of Hull. These partners commit generous time and resources to ensure our students receive a relevant and leading edge technical and academic experience. An experience which accelerates their entry into careers in engineering and computer science through preparation for related university degrees or high level apprenticeships. Students study for approved Technical Qualifications, GCSEs and A-Levels. Ours is a distinctive offer, delivered through a challenging and applied curriculum. A programme of study which blends technical and academic routes with embedded employer projects and university enrichment.

Our new Principal will build on current foundations and lead the UTC through its next phase of development and expansion. He/she will secure the best educational outcomes and employer experiences for all students, whilst providing them with clear progression routes for their careers and

professional development. Studying with us gives students access to a range of exciting careers in the many areas of future engineering, such as advanced manufacturing, automation, robotics, programming, artificial intelligence and cyber security.

As Principal, you will be a passionate and school leader with the ability to inspire staff, students, parents, employers and our wider community. We are looking for a leader with:

- an expansive long-term vision for Scarborough UTC;
- the professional skills and characteristics to drive and implement that vision;
- a secure understanding of the ever-changing education landscape, system leadership and capacity building in financially challenging times;
- the ability to build, sustain and draw on effective business, employer, and community partnerships;
- the ability to lead, manage, motivate, and inspire staff, students, parents, employer and higher education partners and the wider community; and
- a proven highly effective, open, and collaborative approach.

This is a career-defining opportunity for a current school leader to provide innovative and world-class provision, with the support of employers and academic partners, to meet the needs of all learners at the UTC.

**To find out more information, please visit [www.leadscarboroughutc.co.uk](http://www.leadscarboroughutc.co.uk).  
For an informal and confidential conversation, please contact Rachel Singer or Jo Fish at Navigate, our recruitment partners, on 0113 287 8445.**

# DIRECTOR OF EARLY YEARS AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Valencia, Spain



Imagine Montessori School, located in Valencia, is looking to hire a Director of Early Years and Elementary (3 to 12 years old children) Education, to join-in immediately. Candidate is expected to be assertive, warm, positive and organised, with the ability to lead a dynamic and motivated team. Native or fluent in English, the candidate will also bring a passion for education and a creative approach to achieve our School's vision. Among the candidate's responsibilities are: leading academic coordinators and teachers team, ensuring authentic Montessori practice throughout our programs while meeting or exceeding British curriculum. Building relationships and engaging with staff, students and our diverse multi-cultural community are important elements of the role.

**"Must have" characteristics for the role:**

- Montessori qualification at Elementary level
- Bachelor in Education (Bachelor of Education (BoEd), Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE), Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), "Magisterio" or UK Level 6 equivalent)
- A deep knowledge on prepared environment for Elementary
- +3 years' experience in both Upper Elementary and Lower Elementary
- Be fluent in English
- Be a EU-citizen or have a valid work-permit

**"Nice to have" characteristics for the role:**

- Knowledge of the British Curriculum (Early Years Foundation Stage and Elementary)
- Experience in British Schools
- Experience in leading teams
- Experience in training teachers on Montessori principles

Imagine Montessori School is a growing school with the vision of spreading Montessori methodology through a relevant number of children by contributing to their natural deployment, involving families and the community into this process. English is the primary language of the School (Certified by British Council) with students ranging from 3 to 18-year-old. We already have a wonderful team of Montessori Children's House and Lower Elementary guides.



**PLEASE APPLY HERE:** <https://imaginemontessori.es/en/director-of-early-years-and-elementary/>

## PRINCIPAL

## GORESBROOK SCHOOL, DAGENHAM RM9 6XW

Salary: Competitive

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**To arrange an informal telephone discussion or visit to the school, please contact [debbie.goodwin@unitedlearning.org.uk](mailto:debbie.goodwin@unitedlearning.org.uk) or call 01832 864511.**

**Closing date: Midday on Friday, 9th February 2018.**

**To apply please go to <http://www.unitedlearningcareers.org.uk/vacancies>**

United Learning is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The successful candidate must be willing to undergo an enhanced disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service.



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# READERS' REPLY



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## Revealed: Failing schools that received emergency cash

**Janet Downs, Bourne**

Schools supporting other schools was more effective than academy conversion, the NAO found. Support, whether from a non-academy or a trust, would benefit from extra funding. And this can be beneficial. Support from The Rutland Learning Trust helped Langham CofE School upgrade to 'good' from 'requires improvement'. However, this extra funding and all those other pots of money sprinkled over England's schools does not make up for chronic underfunding of the whole system.

## Warrington UTC enrages neighbouring schools by 'poaching' pupils

**Chris Sainsbury // @sainsbo1967**

At a time when budgets are already under severe strain, the poaching of students like this can be massively destabilising for a school and will impact negatively on remaining students and staff.

## DfE board member quits amid charity dinner sex scandal

**Joe, address supplied**

So let me just recap. The government thinks this behaviour is nothing to worry about as long as everyone does it in private capacity? We have a long way to go.

## Which type of school did best for disadvantaged pupils?

**Gavin Boyd // @gavinboyd2012**

Why not address poverty and inequality? Teachers can't solve problems caused by neoliberalism and austerity.

## Headteacher boards ignore post-16 and SEND

**Heather Leatt // @Heatherleatt**

I was in a meeting with a proposed sponsor. When they discovered the school needing a sponsor had a SEN unit they were visibly shocked, wriggled a lot and finally walked away.

**John Scattergood // @jwscattergood**

Shocking disregard for very specialised and essential knowledge.

## DfE board member quits amid charity dinner sex scandal

### REPLY OF THE WEEK

**Mark Watson, Gloucestershire**

You're either a trustee (registered as a director at Companies House) or you're not. There is no concept of "taking a leave of absence" in company law so does this mean he is no longer a director? There are fewer rules that apply to being a member, so I'm betting he keeps his head down and hopes attention shifts somewhere else before public opinion forces him out entirely.

Reply of the week  
receives a  
Schools Week mug!



Before I became a teacher I briefly worked for KPMG, one of the world's largest auditors. It was shortly after the fall of Enron, itself one of the world's largest accountancy firms, after its senior leaders were discovered up to their necks in fraud, money laundering, and conspiracy, among other things.

The fall of Enron caused KPMG to bring in hundreds of complex rules which led to a lot of paperwork (which, as a junior, I was involved in mindlessly filing). It piqued my interest in the scandal and, after reading about it, all I could think was "why would these people risk everything?"

That question arises each time I hear a headteacher or academy chief has gone rogue and racked up inappropriate expenses or employed their entire family in non-jobs.

Critics say that putting schools into academy trusts rather than leaving them under the watch of councils has made it easier for leaders to push moral boundaries. But this doesn't make sense. The annually published PDFs of academy accounts are much easier to read than councils' books, and central government scrutinises them closely. Dodgy transactions also took place in schools under local authority supervision.

Reading an article on white-collar crime by the Clute Institute, however, got me thinking.

"White-collar crime" is difficult to define. A lot of behaviour that might be labelled as criminal in the real world gets rebadged as "a mistake" or "gross misconduct" when it happens at work. Over the past three years we've reported on several activities in schools



## LAURA MCINERNEY

Contributing editor, *Schools Week*

## How school leaders can be sucked into dodgy dealings

that sailed close to the wind, and might be seen as reprehensible, even if not actually illegal.

The article explained how several factors increase the likelihood someone will take part in such dubious deals. And two are particularly relevant to schools.

First, being seen as "an authority" makes people less likely to be questioned in their actions, giving them the "opportunity" to do things that might raise eyebrows if others did it. Undoubtedly, heads and chief execs are considered authoritative.

Secondly, the "cultural hedonism" of a job – that is, the extent to which people expect to achieve a level of wealth or a certain lifestyle from their role – also matters.

Until recently, no one would have said people in education were expecting mega-bucks. But since the introduction of pay flexibility, and the inflating salaries of chief executives – with the highest now hitting

£440,000 a year – this is no longer true.

Now, I don't necessarily have a problem with school leaders receiving high pay. When we audited other charitable organisations, including in health, executive pay sometimes went as high as £600,000.

But it would be wrong to say these salaries have no consequence. They are very likely contributing to people feeling differently about what they can expect. And if their governing body won't grant the salary they feel they deserve, and which transparency of accounts means they know other people are getting, then this may guide them to feel as if it is justifiable to increase their pay in other unofficial ways.

When this happens, heads and executives have that terrible triad which prompts white-collar dodginess: opportunity (because of their authority), desire (because they see other people getting high salaries), and justification (because they/the children are worth it).

The Clute Institute points to the last factor, justification, as what really seals decisions to flout rules.

Schools are particularly prone to arguing that certain extraordinary actions are needed because of the children.

"Buying £1 million of IT products from my brother might seem weird but the children need iPads," is the cry. Or: "Why not deck a principal's office with a £6,000 desk then? Children should see nice things!"

And if a chief executive can only get their governing body to agree a salary of £200,000 but others are getting twice that, then why can't they have a profit-making business on the side from which the school buys all its curriculum materials? "The school has to buy them from somewhere, why not pay me?"

The article ends with a few suggestions. First, that organisations should not allow unchallenged authority. Many school leaders surround themselves with great governors who ask tough questions. But too many trusts (and some councils) have a legacy of old mates in things together, which needs stamping out. Second, the paper recommends reducing individual pay-for-performance and instead move to collective incentives, for example where a whole team gets a percentage pay increase based on a team target.

The year before Enron collapsed it employed 20,000 people, held \$6 billion in assets, and publicly traded its stock. But people sometimes do strange and risky things when they think they can get away with it. That's the only answer to the question of "why?"



## PROFILE

## ROBERT HALFON

LAURA MCINERNEY | @MISS\_McINERNEY

**Robert Halfon, chair of the education select committee**

Robert Halfon, the new chair of the education select committee, campaigned in the corridors of Parliament for the position using leaflets and badges as if he were in a school election for class representative. Having lost his position as skills minister just weeks before, he wasn't going to let this chance go. The badges and leaflets, and almost every sentence from his lips, all included the phrase "the ladder of opportunity", a saying he repeated interminably as a minister.

Titters went up around the lobby among politicians too posh to poll for positions.

"It'll never work," a senior Whitehall official said at the time. He was wrong; Halfon stole the vote.

"Everyone was talking about it," he says, as we sit in his comfy ground floor office in parliament, tucked away between a lift and a carpark, and furnished with an armchair allegedly once owned by Winston Churchill. He says he neither cared for nor noticed the funny looks. But then, such tactics aren't a new move for Halfon, who had to stand three times for his parliamentary seat (losing by just 87 votes the second time) before he finally won.

During election times in his constituency of Harlow – classic Essex white-van man territory – he stands for up to six hours each day at the side of the A414 with a sign of his name, holding his thumbs up to commuters. At first they toot horns and shout expletives. But by the time polling day rolls around they are shouting "hi Rob" and head off to vote for the one candidate they've seen every day for weeks.

"People look at you bemused when you do these things," he admits, "but I kept repeating the 'ladder of opportunity' all the time. In the world as it is, no one has time to hear anything unless you repeat it 10 million times. Why do you think you get a pizza delivery leaflet every day or every week? Because even though you might not look at it for six months, there's going to be a rainy day when you don't want to cook and you're going to look for the leaflet in your drawer and order the pizza. So, slowly, you have to repeat the message, again and again and again."

The ladder metaphor has depth to it beyond mere symbolism. I can attest to this as I've seen it on leaflets, and heard about it in speeches, and in emails and in emailed speeches. Ultimately, the ladder looks at each phase of the education sector – early years through to adult learning – and analyses how opportunities can be spread around and what interventions must happen to ensure everyone gets onto it.

Halfon is a long-time evangelist for apprenticeships, having first encountered them via the charity Catch 22, where he spoke with young people who said that if they'd had

easier access to apprenticeships they might not have ended up involved in crime. He strongly believes pupils should be able to move easily between technical qualifications, apprenticeships and degrees and, if pushed, he believes more grammar schools would be okay as long as they are accompanied with equally selective technical schools, as was first envisaged by the Conservatives back in the 1940s.

"I'm a passionate supporter of university technical colleges [vocational schools recruiting from 14]. I know they have a mixed record but it transforms the idea of the way we see technical education," he says. "I'd love to see more UTCs but in a different way, possibly with a different age group, possibly starting at 16, and really with high rigour."

He's keen on technical education because he's seen the future, and it's not hospitable for people without the right skills.

"There was a newspaper article last week saying the Chinese had invented a robot that could read better than humans. Five Guys [a burger chain] in New York is now being served by robots. We've got a Five Guys in Harlow," he trails off, and waves his hand dejectedly.

"There was another report in the paper that the gender imbalance between men and women is going to get worse because of the robots. So we must grapple with this. Every part of our education should have a technical link. I did history, English and politics for A-level. That shouldn't have been allowed; I should have had to do a maths and science. I don't mean having to do

a masters in international relations.

So if he didn't follow an apprenticeship route, why does he think it's right for others?

"I'd have loved to do an apprenticeship if I'd been able to, either in law or journalism. That's why I introduced the parliamentary apprenticeship scheme. I would have loved to have done that.

"But if you're from an immigrant family and you're self-made, you just want your kids to go to university. I get that. But that's why I go on about this. At a dinner, if somebody said they went to Oxbridge, I want someone to say 'that's nice', then if someone's done an apprenticeship, everyone goes 'wow, what's it in? How did you get it? What's the job at the end?'"

Putting his money where his mouth is, Halfon was the first MP to have an apprentice and it's no coincidence that every time I've met this apprentice, she has discussed her job title with real pride. Team Halfon is always on brand.

Education committee chairs vary in their tenacity. Graham Stuart, who chaired the committee when Michael Gove was education secretary, often threw thorns into Gove's policies and Stuart always claimed it was the committee who stymied the secretary of state's more aggressive plans for GCSE reform. Neil Carmichael, Halfon's predecessor, was easier on the government but harsher on Ofsted, refusing to accept the government's recommendation of Amanda Spielman as Chief Inspector.

Halfon admits the power of the role is enormous.

"Because you're elected by all the MPs you're not dependent on patronage by the government. It

## "I DID HISTORY, ENGLISH AND POLITICS FOR A-LEVEL. THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ALLOWED; I SHOULD HAVE HAD TO DO A MATHS AND SCIENCE"

additional maths, but even a basic maths. I should have had to do something.

"Same with university, what did I go and do? Politics. I should have had to do some kind of science or technical subject all the way through. You have to put all the financial incentives towards addressing the skills deficit. If someone wants to do medieval history, that's wonderful! But they should take an additional loan and pay back an amount, and get no incentives for it."

Halfon, however, didn't go down a technical education route. He was raised in a traditional Jewish family and studied at Highgate, an independent school in north London, after his parents, who fled Libya in the early days of the Gadhafi regime, developed a successful fruit and vegetable wholesalers. After school he studied politics at Exeter University and went on to study

means the committee can have an incredible role in terms of being investigative. I'm not dependent on anything except for a general election where I lose the post automatically, and that is incredibly important."

He feels better about Ofsted, however: "I do like Amanda Spielman, I have to say. I've been impressed with her committee. But they've got to be much, much better at judging schools in terms of career advice, which is appalling."

Mostly, however, he wants the committee to be a "powerhouse of ideas" and find solutions. In particular, he is interested in exclusions and the 50,000 young people taught in alternative schools.

"It's a major social injustice: 35 children are being excluded every day, 60 per cent of prisoners have been excluded. In my own constituency a really good single parent saw their child excluded





## IT'S A PERSONAL THING

### Favourite book?

Non-fiction, the best book I ever read, was about a Nazi called *Albert Speer* by Gitta Sereny, who interviewed him over 20 years. When I read that book, I couldn't breathe. I swear I'm not exaggerating. You think it's going to be so heavy-going, but it's incredible, because it tells you how people fall into evil. There's no book like it on the planet. For fiction, I love *The Mayor of Casterbridge* because it points out our human flaws, and *Crime And Punishment* for the same reason.

### What do you eat for breakfast?

Varies. It's called the ACC diet, which is often Anadin, Diet Coke and a cigar. But sometimes I have poached eggs.

### Which animal are you most like?

Lion: Courageous and reflective. I love lions.

### If you were invisible for a day what would you do?

Give me more time and I'll get back to you. (A few days later: 'I've realised why it was tough to answer. I don't want to be invisible! I'm a politician!')

### Best recent purchase for under £30

A watch winder I bought on Amazon. I collect watches. This one is a Seiko but it's automatic so it relies on the movement of the hand. When you're not wearing it, you put it on the watch winder, it's lovely because it goes round and round, just enough to keep the battery alive.

from school. He was cyberbullied for months and went and had a fight with the kid. The child who had the fight was then excluded. The appeal panel was a fake. The parents have no rights and when the appeal panel said the child should come back, the headmaster disagreed and overturned it. So what's the point in having the panel?

"The quality of alternative provision is very patchy in certain areas of the country. It's absolutely criminal. We are ignoring the education of thousands of children. I'm not saying there should not be any exclusions. You have to if people bring drugs to schools, this kind of thing. I'm not against all exclusions.

"Nonetheless, why do some schools virtually manage to exclude no one," he asks.

"I think a significant amount of government attention needs to be focused on talking about social injustice. I hate all the social mobility talk. Social mobility is just about people who are mobile. Social injustice is about bringing people to the ladder of opportunity who are never going to get there unless you have active intervention from the government to change the system and make it work properly. We should get back to using the term 'social justice' properly."

His demands – more focus on skills and social justice – sound almost socialist. What exactly is it that led him to become a Conservative? He returns to his stock answer, that he found Margaret Thatcher inspirational, but he admits it's more than that. He doesn't like the idea of central

control; he just wants to help people to get to the ladder, and then it's up to them if they climb it.

"Also I believe in tradition, because it provides an anchor from one generation to the next, and because, to use a dreaded word, you have stability.

"All the crazy stuff that goes on here, for example. The fact I can't get up in the chamber and say 'you said this'; I have to say 'the right honourable lady'. I used to think it was ridiculous, but if you imagine it's like an apple, and every time you take a bite out of the apple, you get to the core, then the whole thing deteriorates and bacteria gets in and so on and so on.

"Hitler was only able to do what he was able to do what he did because the German parliamentary democracy had got so weak in the past 15 years,



# PROFILE: ROBERT HALFON

they'd whittled away one thing after another. So I think all the crazy traditions that are in the House of Commons, while they sometimes really frustrate me, they're there for a purpose, which is to protect the core of our democracy."

Another of his trademarks are his funky ties. One which he commonly wears at committee hearings looks exactly like the cover of the national curriculum documents from 2007.

So how does he feel about the Commons abandoning tradition and longer requiring ties?

"I've gone in a couple of times not wearing a tie, either because I forgot or someone spilt Diet Coke all over my tie. On the whole, I do wear it, because it's such a special place. I was watching *Narcos*, the Netflix series about Pablo Escobar, one of the biggest Latin-American drug kings, and there's a wonderful part where he gets elected and they make him put a tie on. This drug lord who controlled half of Colombia and killed people, but he was forced to wear a tie in the Colombian parliament. Amazing!"

Time is up for the interview, although one gets the sense with Halfon that his message will continue following you out the door. Indeed, as I go to leave, he insists his chief of staff gets me a copy of his ladder of opportunity.

"I already have a copy, lots of copies," I say.

"This one is new," he replies. "Look on the wall, we've added new statistics." Sure enough, in red lettering, there are some new lines on the ladder.

Of course, I left with the leaflet. And here I am talking about his persistence. Brand Halfon wins again.

**"I'VE GONE IN A  
COUPLE OF TIMES  
NOT WEARING  
A TIE"**





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## OPINION



# THOMAS BYRNE

Content coordinator at Fitch Learning and former civil servant

## Free schools shouldn't be judged together as a homogenous group

**Tom Richmond is wrong on one thing, argues Thomas Byrne. There already are numerous free school successes – and more than a few that have gone wrong**

It's true that it's too early to tell whether the free schools programme has lived up to its champions' claims; the former DfE advisor Tom Richmond was correct on this in his piece for *Schools Week* last week. It is wrong, however, to say we cannot draw tentative conclusions of some success and failure.

Commentators tend to fall into the trap of assessing new free schools as if they are a homogenous group, which is not the case.

When the programme was first launched in 2010, there was a strong focus on getting numbers through the door and new applicants were well supported

In contrast to this helpfulness, once they had opened, schools were expected to sink or swim. The same problems that plague charter schools in the US – instability and variable performance – were imported into England, affecting the early performance of the programme.

With the appointment of Lord Nash as under-secretary of state for schools in 2013, it could be argued that a cost-benefit analysis approach was introduced. Barriers to entry were raised, with a much bigger focus on meeting capacity for places. Crucially, additional funding post-opening, and ongoing support from education advisors, is likely to have given this wave of schools an advantage.

From about 2015, the lead was handed to established MATs, with a simplified application process, triggering batch applications. When campaigners like Toby Young and Nick Timothy call for an expansion of the programme it is not innovation they are now advocating for, but established providers. This approach wasn't altogether misguided. Mainstream free schools are more likely to be rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted, though potentially at the cost of innovation.

Sanctuary Buildings, the Department for Education's headquarters, turned out to be an effective education factory for churning out bog-standard but effective, MAT-led free schools. There was arguably less incentive for local authorities, knowing the

DfE would fund decent MAT-led schools, to fulfil their duties to meet the need for bums on seats; especially with the '500 free schools over the course of a Parliament' target introduced by David Cameron.

There have been success stories. Islamic free schools are the best-performing of all free schools, bringing higher educational standards. Officials should look closely at the work of the Tauheedul trust as inspiration for a decent social cohesion policy. Unique schools – Michaela, XP School, WLFS, School21 et al – can push divergent pedagogy to the limit, with potentially enduring consequences for the system as a whole.

Then there are the horror stories. Did you hear the one about the Future Tech Studio School in Warrington, which closed just three years after opening, after the DfE opened the UTC Warrington just down the road? What about Burton UTC, which never managed to recruit enough pupils to even open? Even without such nightmares, their Progress 8 scores should be enough to trouble us. Every time you hear someone say free schools are more likely to be successful, including the DfE, they omit these schools, even though they are quick to count them when trumpeting how many are open. They want the acclaim for success, but refuse to acknowledge mistakes.

It is clear we spend too much time focusing on the title of a school, and too little thinking about what goes on inside. Rather than making foolish attempts to look at the whole programme, we should focus on what makes new schools successful. There are tentative steps towards this, with the New Schools Network report highlighting the apparent success of so-called "gromps", schools that "combine the academic standards of an old-fashioned grammar with the inclusive ethos of a modern comprehensive", but these are cherry-picked statistics with a warped methodology to suit a pre-existing Toby Young-shaped agenda.

Should the new junior minister Lord Agnew wish to look at the performance of open free schools, it would be wise to ponder what form the schools we want should take, and how they can be helped, rather than the label attached to them.



# LEORA CRUDDAS

Chief executive, Freedom and Autonomy for Schools - National Association

## Too few trustees are aware of the importance of their legal duties

**If there is a single part of the academy system that needs our urgent attention, it is trusteeship, argues Leora Cruddas**

There is still much that is misunderstood about the differences between governing a local authority-maintained school, governing a single academy trust and governing a multi-academy trust.

At its most extreme, this lack of understanding has led to massive scale failures like the recent collapse of the Wakefield City Academies Trust. Ultimately, a breakdown in governance is a breakdown of the trust we hold with children and young people.

The governing bodies of maintained schools do not have the same legal and financial responsibilities as those at a single academy or multi-academy trust. It is crucial that this is well understood.

Governors are all responsible for setting a strategic direction for the school, creating robust accountability and ensuring financial probity. That's where it ends at maintained schools, but trusts have more on their plates.

In addition to their duties as a governor, academy trustees are directors under company law and trustees under charity law. Trustees must ensure compliance with the trust's charitable objects, and with company and charity law. They must also comply with the trust's funding agreement with the secretary of state.

This means that they have legal responsibilities that governors of maintained schools do not. For example, because a trust is its own legal entity, separate from the local authority, trustees are accountable in law for the contracts they let, for health and safety, for financial management and solvency. In fact, all academy trusts are required to prepare an annual report and accounts, which are publicly filed. Trusts do not have the weight of the local authority behind them if something goes wrong. In fact, the academy or multi-academy trust is directly accountable to parliament.

And unlike the governing board of a maintained school, the trust board is the employer of staff and the holder of land titles, whereas for maintained schools, the local authority is usually the employer.

The level of responsibility a trustee enjoys is therefore significantly greater than that of

a governor at a maintained school, and so the knowledge and skills trust boards require to lead their organisation is correspondingly greater.

This becomes even more complicated for multi-academy trusts, where the trustees are leading complex organisations with a number of schools. The level of knowledge, skill and experience is therefore greater even than the requirements on a single academy trust.

“**When we accept the role of governor and trustee, we assume the mantle of responsibility for the future chances of our children**”

It is perhaps a bit passé to mention WCAT, but it exemplifies both a failure of governance, and why it is so important that we get governance right. There are of course many other examples.

A report by WCAT's interim chief executive Chris Pickering, who was hired last May to try to help the ailing trust, pointed to many failures of governance, notably a culture of secrecy and a lack of transparency, duplicated functions and poor financial oversight. This failure of governance translated into the trust's inability to support its own schools. Leaders and teachers at individual schools in the trust continue to do the job of educating children and young people; they were failed by those at the top.

Nelson Mandela said "there can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children". When we accept the role of governor and trustee, we assume the mantle of responsibility for the future chances of our children and young people. When we act irresponsibly or worse, negligently, we fail children. This ultimately, is why we must take governance seriously.



**After news broke that only two of the 10 largest multi-academy trusts are actually implementing the so-called Baker Clause, which requires schools to allow technical education providers access to their pupils, the man who fought for the clause in the first place explains why it is so vital that every school complies**

A recent survey of university graduates found that one in 10 regretted following the careers advice given to them at school. That is why I endorse the Gatsby benchmarks of good career guidance, now embodied in the government's own guidance on careers education.

As the skills minister Anne Milton states: "A thriving careers system, that is accessible to everyone, is at the heart of our focus on social mobility. We must break down the barriers to progress that too many people in our country face today and give young people the skills to get on in life."

Every school and college must now ensure their students, from all walks of life, are enabled to choose what is best for them.

I believe that for too many years technical education has been considered the destination for children deemed by schools to be less academically able. At a recent apprenticeships conference, the head of a very successful school said that she would not consider giving her students, 90 per cent of whom were destined for university, access to information on apprenticeships.

Why not? Degree-level apprenticeships



## LORD KENNETH BAKER

Founder, Baker Dearing Educational Trust

### Schools must allow their pupils to discover apprenticeships

are every bit as challenging as more academic degrees, with the added difficulty of having to demonstrate the skills and knowledge in the workplace. In 2014, a study by Sandler Training of over 1,000 SMEs found the majority were more likely to fill their entry-level positions from apprentices and those with practical skills rather than from academic graduates. More recent research by the Edge Foundation, which I chair, demonstrates that this has only been reinforced over the past few years. Two thirds of MPs in a YouGov survey thought that careers information and guidance is too heavily focused towards higher education.

That must be the challenge of a 21st century school – to prepare students with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to thrive in the workforce and ensure this country can flourish in the global economy.

The government must provide greater clarity for parents and students by ensuring the school and college performance tables, for too long now dominated by academic measures, place greater emphasis on technical qualifications and the destinations of students.

Progress 8, Ebacc and Attainment 8 are no longer sufficient and, in many respects, are deficient measures of the success of our schools and colleges. We must measure the success of our education system by the ability of its graduates to generate wealth for themselves and for the population.

The Baker Clause, section 2 of the Technical and Further Education Act 2017 – which requires schools to allow a range of education and training providers access to pupils to inform them about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships

– is such an important addition to the choice debate. Allowing technical providers to engage their students isn't about school funding, it is about inspiring students to reach their potential and to make informed choices about where to fulfil that potential.

That is why I am so disappointed at how slow the school system has been to respond. CEOs of multi-academy trusts and local authorities must act to provide the vision and leadership that our students demand. I do not see section 2 as a threat to the education system, but as an opportunity for schools and colleges to work together to develop new and, in some cases, stronger partnerships, which offer a rich blend of academic and technical education that every student can benefit from.

**“ I am so disappointed at how slow the school system has been to respond**

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## REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS  
OF THE WEEK

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

### Oracy in the curriculum and how technology can help

@ICTEvangelist

In this comprehensive post, Mark Anderson explores how we can support the development of oracy using technology. Mark is good at pointing those less confident with technology than he is (which I suspect is most of us) towards useful (sometimes free, or low-cost) tools which can energise teaching and learning. He explains what is covered by the current computing curriculum, but stresses that the range of technology out there offers "a great opportunity to develop digital skills across the curriculum and not just in specific computing sessions".

### Gender imbalances in schools – changing the conversation

@TeachTalks

Mike Hodgkiss contributes to the @WomenEd blog, giving his perspective on the importance of addressing the gender imbalance in school leadership and showing how the #WomenEd initiative is not simply about women supporting women. He discusses the "complex and interconnected" reasons for the shortage of women in educational leadership and how young people need to see female role-models in positions of power.

"Gender equality does not mean that men and women should become the same, but rather that a person's opportunities should not depend on whether they are born female or male," he stresses. "Education can, and should, play a role in shaping attitudes and transforming behaviours to improve gender equity."

### The difficulty is the point: Teaching spoon-fed students how to really read

Tegan Bennett Daylight

In this recent piece for *The Guardian*, Australian writer and academic Daylight discusses the importance of students

developing sophisticated reading skills, and ensuring that we set sufficiently challenging and stimulating reading tasks rather than always trying to make things easier and more accessible for learners: "keeping students happy by not failing them." This is a feisty and impassioned piece which offers some insight into the world of higher education in Australia from the perspective of an outspoken critic, but which has wider repercussions for all of us with respect to high aspirations and expectations where reading capability is concerned.

### 10 tips for surviving the second 100 days as the head of a school in challenging circumstances

@southgloshead

We often see advice for surviving the first 100 days of a new role, perhaps especially in leadership, but Simon Botten considers here some strategies for making it through the second 100 days as a head in a challenging school.

"If the first 100 days was about big ideas and a few quick wins, then the second 10 days is when the real work starts," he writes. I found this post amusing, illuminating, practical and potentially reassuring – it's for all those who take on a fresh professional identity and find the second 100 days rather more challenging than the first.

### Reflecting on powerful pauses

@jmsreflect

This post, from a colleague at John Mason School in Abingdon, focuses on the use of pauses – not just after the teacher asks a question, but after the first response is offered. After considering the importance of "wait time", this teacher went one stage further and discovered that "simply restraining myself from responding immediately to students' answers has led to an important change in the nature of dialogue and questioning in my classroom". This thoughtful and compelling post makes an important contribution to the discussion of how we can use questioning to best effect in our teaching.

### Five things I wish I'd known 15 years ago

@josepicardo

Several bloggers have recently reflected on the advice they might give to their younger selves. It is a salutary exercise which can help us to clarify our thinking and consolidate our learning about what works best for us. Jose Picardo considers subjects such as feedback, the use of research findings, avoiding perfectionism and time-consuming tasks, planning with learning in mind, and using technology effectively, and in each case cites useful further reading to develop our thinking further.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Challenge: How governors can challenge school leaders effectively

By David Marriott

Published by Adamson Publishing

Reviewed by Martin Matthews,  
national leader of governance



How can governors challenge school leaders effectively? That's a mighty difficult question to answer in such a short book. Challenge is one of those ethereal aspects of governance: you know it when you see it. As the author says: "Going beyond paying lip service to 'challenge' is this book's key focus."

As a national leader of governance, I feel very protective of the role. I shouldn't have worried; through the chapters it's clear Marriott has been up close and personal with many real, complex governance situations. When he says being a governor is equivalent to "a high-powered, well-remunerated, full-time professional job", it shows he understands.

Only those who have been governors know how difficult defining challenge can be. This book sets out to demystify what it is. The first couple of pages aren't as positive as they could be, but once you settle into the chapter it becomes clear the author knows and cares about its value.

The constant references to the governance handbook and the governance competency framework demonstrate a level of professional rigour which governors need to inform their learning. The scenarios at the end of each chapter sound like many conversations I've heard first-hand and this supports both personal reflection and training discussions. The commentary sections will enable group discussion to unpick both the positive and negative aspects of the vignettes.

School leaders should expect challenge: it improves the education children receive, but it must go hand-in-hand with support, and must neither be disrespectful nor aggressive. The first vignette commentary is a good example of this: it discusses the governors' teamwork but also considers "the headteacher seems to be taking on too

much": this is challenge and support in the same conversation.

The human dimension of governance is carefully and fairly explored. The author clearly understands that "the boundaries of [governors' and educators'] respective roles need to be understood and respected". Neither should tread on each other's toes, but tiptoeing up to that point is what excellent challenge looks like.

The chapter on data sources is comprehensive. It sets out the need for methodical, systemic and triangulated challenge and clearly explains how this dovetails with the school improvement cycle.

The 'making use of data' section outlines the what, where and when of why challenge is possible. That includes a question

on "how do you know your head teacher is honest".

Thankfully dishonest staff are rare, but as the author says, "telling the difference between a valid explanation and an excuse is not easy".

The chapter on the principles of effective challenge refreshingly tackles both the positive and negative aspects of being a governor. It doesn't pull its punches on unprofessional or weak behaviour. The author is right that a board cannot "wait for the next Ofsted

inspection"; children get one chance and governors have to be sure they provide effective challenge. The mention of a professional clerk is welcome but I would have hoped more was made of the role of the chair in setting ethos.

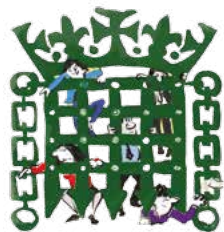
The context of schools is also very important and this section helps to unpick how each strand has individual properties which need governance variations. Many governors don't know how unique or similar their schools are, and this may help them reach out to other governing boards.

A short bibliography would be very welcome. My other suggestion for improvement (as I declare an interest) would be to explain where to find external free peer-to-peer support from the national leaders of governance programme.

This book is an excellent addition to a school CPD library, and possibly the first of a governance section. It's worth teachers reading it to get to grips with the basics, while middle leaders and new senior leaders would find it useful as would any governor extending their subject knowledge.







# Week in Westminster

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

## FRIDAY:

The exam watchdog Ofqual released its accounts today and revealed a £52,422 monthly charge to research body NFER for the "national reference tests" taken by a few thousand 16-year-olds each spring term to help calibrate the difficulty of GCSEs. Tracking back, it seems NFER is earning a decent amount from the project: £52k per month, plus more than £500k for delivering the tests, £100k in August for further "developing" the test, and £188k for updating software and writing a new booklet for the 2018 testing round.

## MONDAY:

The new education secretary said that he is "carefully considering" lifting the 50-per-cent cap on places in free schools that can be saved for children from religiously-inclined families. It's not like it's an intricate decision though, is it? If you lift the cap, then in areas with school place shortages you might make things worse. If

you don't lift the cap, the Catholic Church will continue refusing to build new schools, which means the government will have to fork out for them instead. Hinds is simply delaying.

Jonathan Slater, the chief civil servant at the DfE, was up in parliament today, trying to explain why academy accounts are still all over the shop. He categorically denied that any academy trust is "too big to fail", which will be news to people involved in the slump in AET's fortunes a few years ago, when its having 60-odd schools made it impossible to be unilaterally closed.

For the 700th year in a row, Slater was asked why the government still doesn't know the value of the land that all academies are on.

This isn't surprising. Week in Westminster knows of academies whose deeds were supposed to be held in local authority vaults, but when officials went to look, the cupboards were bare, so we can understand why it is taking "longer than hoped" to resolve.

## TUESDAY:

Former schools minister David Laws dopped in the blue side of the coalition family today when he said that university technical colleges were forced through by former chancellor George Osborne, who twisted then-education secretary Michael Gove's arm on the matter. Question is: why did Osborne care? He was the chancellor at the time.

The long-time rumour is that Lord Kenneth Baker – who has spearheaded UTCs (including this week on page 19) – had told George that he'd be supportive when his moment came to take over from Cameron's leadership, but only on the condition that he supported UTCs.

If true this means the millions wasted on UTCs are because of one guy's fervent belief that 14-year-olds want to go to vocational schools and another's equally strong impression that he should be the next prime minister. Funny how wrong fervent believers can be sometimes, eh?

## WEDNESDAY:

The last day for academy trusts to publish their annual accounts, and the Harris Federation dropped its into the box at the last minute.

Tucked away in Harris' accounts was also a £14,500 spend at a store called Tapi Carpets, a company in which several of the trusts' directors are involved.

This struck us as odd. Lord Harris, the federation's namesake, made his millions from starting Carpetright. Why couldn't they provide the floors?

Turns out, the rug lord sold all his Carpetright shares in 2014. Tapi Carpets, meanwhile, was started by his son Martin, but in October posted a pre-tax loss of £100 million. Ouch. Hope the £14-grand helped!

Elsewhere MPs on the public accounts committee loudly criticised the government's lack of control on teacher recruitment. MPs listed seven things the government needed to do. Number one? Come up with a "coherent" plan. (We're not even joking).

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEELIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



**Name** James Wilson

**Age** 33

**Occupation** Vice-principal

**Location** West Midlands

**Subscriber since**

September 2016

Fly on the Wall is a chance for you, the subscriber, to tell us what you love (and hate) about *Schools Week*, who you'd like to spy on and, of course, what the world of education would look like if you were in charge...



## FLY ON THE WALL

**Where do you read your copy of *Schools Week*?**

In bed at 5.30 on a Friday morning. It's my Friday habit.

**Which section of the paper do you enjoy the most?**

The special reports are very informative and keep me up to speed in the ever-changing world of UK education.

**If you could wave a magic wand and change one education policy, which would it be?**

It wouldn't be a magic wand, it would be a simple stop sign. Allow us to adapt to the changes already put in place before allowing new change!

**Who is your favourite education secretary of all time?**

David Blunkett: straight-talking and no nonsense!

**What is your favourite story or investigation reported in *Schools Week*?**

The story about year 11 students being off-rolled a few weeks back. Otherwise it's the Progress 8 guide. I still use it sometimes when explaining P8 to colleagues.

**What do you do with your copy of *Schools Week* once you've read it?**

I share it with other members of the senior team.

**What would you do if you were editor of *Schools Week* for a day?**

I'd write to every head and ask them for one sentence to summarise the great stuff in their school and then publish a bumper issue.

**Favourite memory of your school years?**

Playing rugby for the other school locally on a Wednesday as my school did not have a rugby team. So many lessons of French missed.

**If you weren't working in education, what would you be doing?**

Working back home up north, hopefully running a nice coffee shop somewhere.

**Favourite book on education?**

*Freedom Writer Diaries* is the reason I did not drop out of a challenging NQT year.

**What new things would you like to see in *Schools Week*?**

A focus on governance, which is a minefield sometimes.

**If you could be a fly on the wall in anyone's office, whose would it be?**

Tough one... I think my brother's as he works in the States in computer science and I don't really know what he does day to day.





# School Bulletin *with Sam King*

If you have a story you'd like to see featured in the school bulletin, email [samantha.king@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:samantha.king@schoolsweek.co.uk)



## Eternal echoes of the Holocaust **FEATURED**

**A** national education project aiming to keep the memories of Holocaust survivors alive has been launched at 12 Birmingham schools.

Led by the CORE Education Trust, with the help of Birmingham Repertory Theatre and UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, the Echo Eternal project will assign the story of one Holocaust survivor to each of the participating schools over the course of a year.

Supported by poets, choreographers, visual artists and theatre companies, students will have a month to produce an artistic response to their assigned survivor testimony, which will be presented at an event to commemorate National Holocaust Day at Birmingham Repertory Theatre in January 2019.

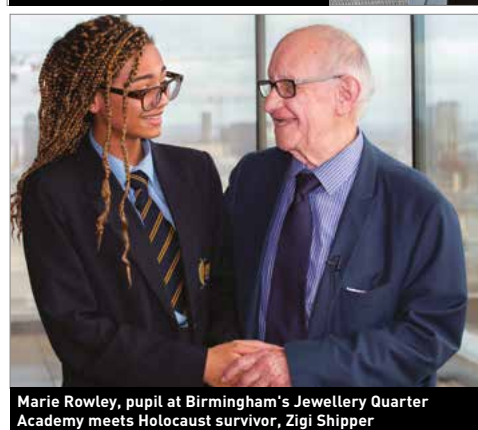
The programme will also include a citizenship aspect, with lessons exploring the history of the Holocaust and ways students can work towards a world without hate and prejudice.

"There's quite an urgency to tell these stories, and to make sure that they're relevant to the lives of children and young people," explained Steve Ball, associate director at Birmingham Repertory Theatre. "In some cases the project will be explicitly linked to the curriculum – they'll work with an English teacher or dance teacher. In other cases it will be extracurricular."

To mark the launch of the project, the journalist Natasha Kaplinsky – who has



Birmingham students share Holocaust survivor stories as part of Echo Eternal



Marie Rowley, pupil at Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter Academy meets Holocaust survivor, Zigi Shipper

recorded 112 of the survivor testimonies – and 88-year-old survivor Zigi Shipper met students from Jewellery Quarter Academy, which will be the first of the 12 schools to take part.

After the project has concluded in Birmingham, it will run in 12 Glasgow schools for a year and 12 Cardiff schools, before culminating at 12 London schools.



Natasha Kaplinsky, Zigi Shipper and Adrian Packer, CORE Education

A filmmaker will work with each of the schools involved to document their experiences, which will be shown at the newly-built Holocaust memorial and education centre in Westminster and made available nationally.

"Our duty is to honour these stories by allowing children to generate an authentic response to what they hear and to keep the memory of the survivors alive eternally," said Adrian Packer, chief executive of the CORE Education Trust.



Last year's conference

## BREXIT SUMMIT FOR SCHOOLS (WHO AREN'T TIRED OF IT YET!)

**T**he Citizenship Foundation is hosting a conference so pupils can learn more about Brexit and engage in debate with other schools.

The half-day conference will take place at Leeds Beckett University on March 26, and is open to 14- to 17-year-olds from schools across the UK.

Over the course of the event, young people will listen to a keynote speech from a leading academic, and work with experts in Brexit in small groups, to debate and discuss the issues identified during the negotiation process.

"A lot of teachers were coming to us saying they want to teach students about it but it's just so complex they didn't know where to start," explained Therri Tait, partnerships manager at the Citizenship Foundation. "We wanted to create something that was unbiased and showed all the viewpoints."

It will be the second time the education charity has run the conference, with 95 per cent of the young people that attended last time saying the conference helped them better understand the implications of Brexit on their future, and that of the UK.

Tickets cost £20 per student. To book, visit: <https://smartlaw.org.uk/brexit-conference/>

## Music to our ears



Tasmin Little, right with students

**B**udding musicians have had the chance to perform with a world-famous violinist at a concert celebrating their school's 95th anniversary, and the centenary of the English Speaking Union, an education charity.

Pupils from Benenden School's symphony orchestra played pieces by Mozart and Vivaldi in support of Tasmin Little, who received the 'Critics' choice award' at the 2011 Classical BRIT Awards, at a concert at London's Symphony Hall.

The school orchestra also performed a piece composed by a former pupil of the school, Grace Young.

The joint celebration came about as the school and the charity both share the Princess Royal as their patron.

"We are honoured that our Symphony Orchestra performed with Tasmin Little in such magnificent surroundings," said Samantha Price, the school's headmistress. "We are committed to not just helping pupils to reach the very highest standards of performance but also to widening participation in music."

"I really appreciated their attentiveness and intensity as well as their willingness to take on board musical ideas and incorporate them immediately into our performance," said Little.



Pupils dressed as Paddington

## Grin and (Paddington) Bear it

**A** Norfolk primary school has held a Paddington Bear-themed day to bring literature to life.

Pupils at Ormiston Herman Academy came dressed as characters from Michael Bond's *A Bear Called Paddington* as part of a school initiative to encourage reading and literacy development, and were asked to take part in range of activities related to the book.

Tasks included finding out facts about Peru, where Paddington Bear is originally from, researching the history of London's



Paddington Station and solving maths problems relating to wellington boots. There was also the opportunity to make, and more importantly sample, marmalade sandwiches.

"It's very important that children develop a sense of wonder and excitement towards literature and film – and I hope the children were able to tap into a little bit of that today," said Kathryn Rutherford, the school's principal. "It has been a wonderful day, filled with fun and imagination for staff and students alike."





## IRFAN LATIF

Principal, DLD College London

**START DATE:** January 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Headmaster, Sexey's School

**INTERESTING FACT:** Irfan is a keen traveller and adventurer and recently led expeditions to Base Camp at Everest, Venezuela and the Red Sea.



## TIM CANNELL

Headmaster, Parsons Green Prep School

**START DATE:** January 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Interim head, Parsons Green Prep School

**INTERESTING FACT:** Tim's interests include exploring new restaurants, gardening and renovating an old barn.

# MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new



## SARAH SELESNYOV

Director, Southwark Teaching School Alliance

**START DATE:** March 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Programme leader, UCL Institute of Education

**INTERESTING FACT:** Sarah speaks five languages (with varying degrees of fluency): English, French, German, Russian and Spanish.



## AMANDA ILHAN

Head of juniors, AKS Lytham Independent School

**START DATE:** January 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Pre and primary deputy director, British International School Istanbul

**INTERESTING FACT:** Amanda plays the flute, guitar and piano.



## MATT MARTIN

Headteacher, Kedington Primary Academy

**START DATE:** January 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Deputy headteacher, Westfield Primary Academy

**INTERESTING FACT:** Matt is a trained NCETM maths mastery specialist and took part in a Shanghai teacher exchange in November 2016.

## Get in touch!

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

# future



# future



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## SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

Solutions:  
Next week

## Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

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.