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DREW POVEY
EDUCATION'S REALITY STAR
IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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FINALLY: Secret private school improvement notices published

- Warning notices appear online two years after *Schools Week* demanded transparency
- Reports from previous years are still missing, but the DfE won't say why
- Ofsted reports reveal serious safeguarding, fire safety and governance concerns

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The Department for Education has finally published the warning notices it issued to underperforming private schools, over two years after a *Schools Week* campaign first pressed to make the information public.

Nine notices issued in September and October 2017 were published today. They reveal how

each school failed to meet national standards for education, safeguarding, governance and other areas of private school operation.

The schools named in the documents are Iqra High School in Oldham, Dame Catherine Harpur's School in Derby, Yeshiva Lezeirim Preparatory Academy in Gateshead, Cleve House School in Bristol, Purbeck View School in Dorset, Redstone Educational Academy in Birmingham, Salisbury Cathedral School, and Walthamstow Montessori

School and Tarbiyyah Primary School, in London.

An Ofsted report for Walthamstow Montessori School reveals its leaders did not know about the independent school standards until the school was inspected last year. It also had no arrangements for governance and no formal assessment systems.

Safeguarding failures were identified at a number of the schools, including Purbeck View School, a residential school for autistic children, and Salisbury

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NEWS

Five schools investigated by ESFA named

JESS STAUFENBERG

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Exclusive

Five schools investigated for spending more than £320,000 in severance payments without government approval have been named.

Stand-alone academies Wilnecote High School near Birmingham, Langley Park School for Boys in south London and the Cathedral C of E Academy Trust in Wakefield, plus the multi-academy trust owned former Rydens Enterprise School in Surrey, and Grindon Hall Christian School in Sunderland, all made large payments to departing staff in 2015-16 without seeking government permission first.

Under academy funding rules, schools and trusts aren't allowed to make severance payments of more than £50,000 without approval. Schools under financial investigation are also banned from making similar payments of any amount without permission.

In its consolidated annual accounts last October the government said five academies were under investigation for six payments that breached the rules.

The names of all five were revealed to *Schools Week* by the Education and Skills Funding Agency in response to an information request.

Special severance payments are non-contractual payments made when a member of staff resigns, is dismissed or reaches an agreed termination of their contract.

Rydens School, which is overseen by the Howard Partnership trust and now called Three Rivers Academy, plus Wilnecote High, remain under review for payments of £53,000 and £57,000 respectively, while three other trusts were given "retrospective approval" for



Show me the money: How the severance payments add up

SCHOOL	SEVERANCE PAY	STATUS	FINANCIAL NOTICES TO IMPROVE
2015-16			
Langley Park School for Boys	£59,000	Retrospectively approved	No
Wilnecote High School	£57,000	Being reviewed	No
Cathedral CofE Academy Trust	£55,000	Retrospectively approved	No
Langley Park School for Boys	£55,000	Retrospectively approved	No
Rydens Enterprise School	£53,000	Being reviewed	No
Grindon Hall Christian School	£45,926	Retrospectively approved	Yes

four other unapproved payments.

These include two payments of £59,000 and £55,000 by Langley Park and one of £55,000 by the Cathedral Academy.

Grindon Hall, run by the beleaguered Bright Tribe Trust, also failed to get approval before it paid £46,000 to its former principal Chris Gray in 2015-16, at a time when it was both in special measures and under a financial notice to improve.

None of the schools responded to requests for comment.

There are concerns that academies and

their sponsors are often "not sufficiently aware" of strict financial rules.

Pamela Tuckett, a partner at the accountancy firm Bishop Fleming, warned that some trusts "don't think" to check strict financial rules in the academies financial handbook, and admitted that some governors lack the "genuine expertise" to ensure they don't unwittingly break the rules.

The schools now need to convince the ESFA they have "solid business cases" for the payments, she said.

Small trusts or single schools in particular

may lack the necessary grasp of the handbook, she added, and pointed out that governors are required to ensure that every board has "at least one individual with the specific relevant skills and experience of financial matters".

The handbook says schools must satisfy certain conditions to defend the large amounts, such as the threat of being taken to an expensive employment tribunal instead. Schools must also set out "alternative options", in a value-for-money form given to the ESFA then sent on to the Treasury for approval.

Phil Reynolds, an academies specialist at accountancy firm Kreston Reeves, said new detail in this year's handbook, including examples of when trusts do and do not need approval for non-statutory payments, indicates that many trusts have previously been "confused" by the rules.

The ESFA's response also revealed that the total amount paid by academy trusts in severance has risen for each of the past three years and by 14 per cent overall, from £285,564 in 2013-14 to £324,926 in 2015-16.

However, every payment made by trusts in 2013-14 and 2014-15 were preapproved.

Among them were several payments made by the academy chain E-ACT while it was subject to a financial notice to improve, including one payment of £179,651 in 2013-14.

The highest payment made in 2014-15 was by Churchfields Academy, at £105,000.



DfE names underperforming private schools

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CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Cathedral School, while fire safety issues were raised about both Tarbiyyah Primary School and Redstone Educational Academy.

At Tarbiyyah there was "evidence of possible illegal smoking indoors" and disrepair of fire escapes, as well as "shortcomings in the medical accommodation on the site". Redstone's checks of the fire safety systems had not been consistently recorded.

The existence of the warning notices was first revealed in December 2015 after a joint investigation by *Schools Week* and the Yorkshire Post that used the Freedom of Information Act to obtain a damning dossier of the previously unpublished documents.

The investigation uncovered 110 statutory improvement notices handed to private schools over a 16-month period. It also revealed that during that time, private schools had breached the minimum independent school regulations 410 times.



A subsequent *Schools Week* FoI request showed that 131 improvement notices were issued to independent schools from January to November 2016.

The DfE claimed in January 2017 that it would imminently begin routinely publishing these notices online, but it did not publish a single notice until the nine released today.

This collection is also incomplete: it does not

include any notices issued before the start of the 2018 academic year.

Ofsted reports for Dame Catherine Harpur's School reveal that leaders failed to carry out proper checks on "the suitability of all members of the proprietorial body", and had not ensured the "prohibition from teaching check is completed for all teaching staff".

This led to a warning notice in September

2017, however a follow-up Ofsted visit found that the school had managed to meet all the independent school standards by November 2017.

Warning notices are issued to private schools when there has been a "substantial number of regulatory failures". If a school receives a warning notice, it must submit an action plan showing how it will meet the independent school standards in future, and schools can be closed if they fail to act.

Private schools are supposed to publish the notices on their websites, but *Schools Week* research revealed that many did not.

Melissa Benn, the founder of the Local Schools Network charity, who chairs of state school campaign group Comprehensive Future, commented that the information should be systematically "available to all".

"It does not one any favours – be it the pupils, parents, the school or the wider public – if problems can be concealed from public view. Transparency is an important principle," she said at the time of *Schools Week's* investigation.

Additional reporting by Jess Staufenberg

NEWS

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT FUND PILOTS ARTS-FOCUSED CPD

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Schools can benefit from up to £150,000 in grant funding to boost arts-based teaching through partnerships with cultural organisations using the Teacher Development Fund.

The fund, run by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, an independent grant-making organisation, is accepting applications from schools until March 23. Applications that support disadvantaged pupils and show potential for effective collaboration will be prioritised.

Inspired by the Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education, the fund has so far funded seven pilot projects across the UK.

These include work with the Royal Shakespeare Company to help primary schools teach the bard, a project with the Royal Society of Arts which used theatre to improve literacy and language development, and a Welsh scheme which used music to teach modern foreign languages.

The fund will now focus on providing good continuing professional development (CPD), involving school leaders in planning and delivering activities, helping art practitioners work effectively with schools and evaluating the impact on teaching and learning.

Catherine Sutton, senior grants manager at the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, said the organisation recognises how important CPD and learning is for teachers to deliver the best for their pupils.

"By funding schools to partner with cultural organisations, the fund will enable teachers to gain access to high-quality CPD from artist-practitioners, and allow schools and arts organisations to work collaboratively in order to embed arts-based learning in the primary curriculum," she said.

The new fund is one of a number of recent schemes focused on supporting teachers' professional development.

The government's Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund was launched by Justine Greening in October 2016, in order to pay for CPD in areas identified as social mobility cold spots.

The first six organisations to receive their share of the £75 million were revealed in October as Ruth Miskin Training, the Teacher Development Trust, STEM Learning Ltd, Teach First, The Institute for Teaching and The Institute for Physics.

The Institute for Teaching will run a new 'Transforming Teaching Programme', focused on supporting school leaders to improve their expertise in developing other teachers. Meanwhile the Teacher Development Trust will identify schools to act as "CPD excellence hubs" in Blackpool, Northumberland, Sheffield, Stoke and West Sussex.

A new National Institute of Education was also established in October, and will offer teaching apprenticeships including a "master teacher" degree apprenticeship and a master's degree apprenticeship for senior leaders.

OFSTED'S BEADY EYE FALLS ON EXCESSIVE OFF-ROLLING

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Inspectors will investigate whether schools in some parts of England are misusing exclusions, after it emerged that secondary schools in two areas suspended more than one in 10 of their pupils last year.

Ofsted has ordered its staff to look at especially high rates of fixed-period exclusions in the north-east, Yorkshire and the Humber. Inspectors will also "look very carefully" at whether schools are improving their results by ridding themselves of "troublesome" pupils.

The region is home to six of the 10 worst-offending areas in terms of the proportion of secondary school pupils suspended in 2016-17.

In Middlesbrough, which tops the list, 12.75 per cent of pupils were suspended at least once. In Barnsley, it was 11.23 per cent of pupils. Doncaster (8.66 per cent), Redcar and Cleveland (8.08 per cent), North East Lincolnshire (7.6 per cent) and Sheffield (7.51 per cent) also make the list.

Cathy Kirby, Ofsted's regional director, has written to secondary headteachers on the matter, and will also ask inspectors to look at schools' use of exclusions when judging leadership, management and pupil behaviour.

Under the current Ofsted inspection framework, schools are already required to show inspectors their records and analysis of exclusions, pupils taken off roll and incidents of poor behaviour.

PUPILS GIVEN ONE OR MORE FIXED-PERIOD EXCLUSIONS (%)

LOCAL AUTHORITY	PUPILS GIVEN ONE OR MORE FIXED-PERIOD EXCLUSIONS (%)
Middlesbrough	12.75
Barnsley	11.23
Knowsley	8.81
Doncaster	8.66
Hackney	8.47
Redcar and Cleveland	8.08
Blackpool	7.82
North East Lincolnshire	7.6
Sheffield	7.51
Telford and Wrekin	7.49

But the watchdog will now look "even more closely" for signs that pupils are being off-rolled to boost a school's performance, as well as reports of children with poor behaviour being sent home on inspection days, Kirby said.

A fixed-period exclusion prevents a pupil from going to school for a set amount of time, ranging from part of a school day up to a maximum of 45 days within a single academic year over multiple periods.

Kirby said it was "difficult to understand" why certain areas found fixed-period exclusion "so much more necessary", and reiterated that the exclusions should only be used as a "last resort".

"If not properly applied, being removed from school can disrupt a child's education and affect their future life chances," she said.

"I am asking inspectors to look very carefully at the use of exclusions in areas



with high rates compared with national and regional figures. We want to be certain that pupils are being removed for the right reasons."

However, Paul Whiteman, the general secretary of school leaders' union NAHT, insisted schools

needed "autonomy" to exclude pupils if necessary, and said the decision to do so "is never taken lightly and always as a last resort".

He claimed that the measures used to ensure support for pupils most at risk of exclusion are "under threat" due to cuts in school budgets, funding for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and local authority behaviour support teams. There are also delays in providing mental health support and a fall in the number of speech and language therapists.

"Schools can't do it on their own," he added. "To avoid exclusions, they need support from the other local services around them. The issues that underpin exclusions reach far beyond the school gates, so schools need access to expert resources to help them identify at an early stage those students who need more help."

Study: Give pupils a 'dedicated' 15 minutes of reading time

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Secondary schools should set aside at least 15 minutes of "dedicated reading time" every day to encourage pupils to read more advanced books, a study has found.

The tenth annual 'What Kids Are Reading' report found the 10 most popular books among the 750,000 secondary-age pupils it surveyed were all written for primary pupils. One researcher now wants schools to set time aside for pupils to read more complex books.

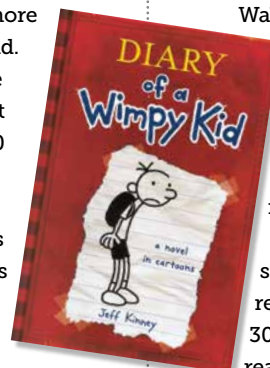
However, academics have warned that poorer pupils don't benefit from extra reading time unless they are guided by a skilled teacher, and a teaching union claimed schools would struggle to find time to squeeze it in.

Keith Topping, a professor of educational and social research at Dundee University, analysed the reading habits and choices of almost a million primary and secondary school pupils in the UK using an online library tool called Accelerated Reader.

His analysis found that books with "fairly simple" vocabulary and grammar aimed at younger school pupils are still the most read

by secondary school pupils overall.

The *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series by American author Jeff Kinney made up seven of the top 10 most-read books, and the other three were by British comedian-turned-author David Walliams.



Topping said he wished authors with a hold over the children's book market would produce stories "of greater comprehension difficulty" to ensure pupils improved while reading.

In the meantime, he asked secondary schools to allocate reading time of between 15 and 30 minutes, and ensure pupils are reading fiction or non-fiction more in line with their age – possibly by asking older pupils to recommend more difficult books to one another.

James Murphy, school partnerships director at Thinking Reading, a literacy intervention programme, supports giving pupils more time to access books during school.

But he said the weakest readers always need one-to-one tuition from a skilled teacher to improve

at all.

"We know that these pupils aren't able to access the books independently anyway, so the benefits of more reading won't accrue for those readers in the first place," he said.

He wants the government to collect better

data on reading ability and the quality of books read at both primary and secondary school, to improve interventions.

Accelerated Reader was described by the Education Endowment Foundation in 2015 as having a "modest" impact on weaker readers at the start of secondary school, offering about three months of extra progress.

But the evaluators, led by Stephen Gorard, a professor of education at Durham University, noted that pupils with "very low levels" of reading ability would need more initial support from teachers before benefiting from independent reading.

Government data shows pupils on free school meals continue to lag behind their better-off peers in reading, with only 55 per cent reaching the expected standard in last year's key stage 2 SATs, compared with 72 per cent of pupils overall.

Malcolm Trobe, the deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said pupils' reading choices are unlikely to be affected by what teachers tried to prescribe them.

Secondary school pupils are "more likely to be guided on what books they read by what their friends are doing and what is in the media, than they are by their teachers".

"Introducing dedicated reading time in secondary schools is unlikely to change those dynamics, and it would be extremely difficult to fit into timetables that are already packed," he insisted.

NEWS

Catholics 'cautious' over faith cap commitment

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Exclusive



the 'Schools that work for everyone' consultation, and some dioceses invested time and money into efforts to open new free schools.

Some even took the "huge financial risk" of securing sites, while others spent "tens of thousands of pounds" preparing to open schools, *Schools Week* understands.

But the proposal was kicked into the long grass following the Conservatives' poorer-than-expected performance at last year's general election, leaving the church's school expansion plans in limbo.

East Anglia, one of the dioceses that took the risk the first time, told *Schools Week* it wants "immediately" to build eight new schools if the cap is lifted. Demand in the region has been driven by immigration from Catholic countries.

It has plans for a secondary school in Cambridge, a sixth-form college in Norwich and six primary schools: two in Cambridge, two in Norwich, one in Peterborough and one in Thetford.

"Over the last decade we have seen a significant rise in the Catholic community in East Anglia, primarily due to waves of immigration," Helen Bates, assistant director at the Diocese of East Anglia Schools' Service, told *Schools Week*.

The Catholic Education Service has welcomed Hinds' pledge, which it said demonstrated his "commitment to parents and their right to have choice in the school system".

"As the second largest provider of education in the country, the Catholic church looks forward to strengthening its ongoing partnership with the government, providing high-quality schools where there is parental demand for them," it continued.

The reverend Stephen Terry, chair of the Accord Coalition for Inclusive Education, called the cap "the most serious attempt by government in recent years to help boost mixing and integration in society", and said Hinds would "fail in his duty to wider society" if the cap were lifted.

"Though a small measure, the cap sends an important signal that schools should not seek to entrench religious division, but break down barriers and segregation.

"Scrapping the cap would go against both public opinion and what academic evidence and history warn about creating religious silos in the school system."

Humanists UK also criticised the move, and wrote to Robert Halfon, chair of the parliamentary education committee, demanding an inquiry.

Catholic school leaders are cautious about a new drive to lift the cap on faith-based admissions, after some took a "huge financial risk" and had their "fingers burned" the last time it was promised, *Schools Week* has learned.

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, pledged to lift the cap – which prevents free schools in areas with a shortage of places from admitting more than 50 per cent of pupils on the basis of faith – in an interview with *The Sunday Times* last week.

The Catholic Education Service has welcomed the move, and one diocese is poised to build eight new free schools in the east of England as soon as the cap is lifted.

But a source familiar with the situation said some in the church are privately nervous about the news, and won't act until matters are set in stone.

The cap, introduced in 2010, has hindered plans to open more Catholic free schools because canon law prevents them from turning away pupils on the basis of their Catholic faith. The Catholic Education Service estimates there is demand for about 20,000 places, which equates to around 35 to 40 schools.

Plans to lift the cap were announced by Theresa May and Hinds' predecessor Justine Greening in 2016, as part of

THE PFI STORM: SCHOOLS WILL LOSE NEARLY £5BN IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS ALONE

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Schools will pay a further £4.8 billion to private finance initiative firms by 2020, according to a new report.

Between 2010 and 2016, schools spent £7 billion on PFI schemes, which involve private companies paying for new buildings and subsequently taking an equity stake in the site. Occupants then pay back the company, with interest, over a long contract – typically lasting 25 to 30 years.

New analysis of Treasury data by the Centre for Health and the Public Interest shows that these projects will cost schools £4.8 billion between 2017 and 2020.

The National Audit Office warned last month that schools cost 40 per cent more to build when they use PFI rather than government borrowing.

CHPI's research found that the overall cost across the lifetime of school PFI contracts is likely to be £32 billion, compared with a capital value of just £8.6 billion.

Meanwhile the PFI companies holding education contracts have made £329 million in pre-tax profits since 2010, and are expected to rake in a further £270 million by 2020.

The schemes have caused huge problems for schools, especially as financial pressures have mounted in recent years. Payments to PFI companies are ring-fenced, meaning that if schools are looking to tighten their belts they still can't reduce these costs.

They are also tied into paying the PFI companies for services such as maintenance or cleaning, rather than being able to shop around for the best-value option.

School PFI contracts have been a cause for concern in academy trust takeovers too, with trusts unwilling to take on schools that are burdened with paying off expensive deals.

In July 2016 *Schools Week* reported how the 'outstanding'-rated St Joseph's College in Stoke-on-Trent backed out of planned sponsorship of nearby Birches Head Academy because the financial risks of its £380,000-a-year PFI contract were "too great".

Ofsted has also warned that negotiating the payments during the academy conversion process can have a negative impact on the progress of schools, such as Noel-Baker School in Derby, which was rated 'inadequate' due to "messy" talks with its proposed academy sponsor in 2016.

While schools struggle to meet their PFI contract payments, the private companies have benefited significantly from reductions in corporation tax. According to the CHPI report, they saved £33 million up to 2016, and will pocket a further £27 million between 2017 and 2020.

Of the 172 existing school PFI schemes, 115 were signed before corporation tax rates fell to 30 per cent in 2008/09 and a further 43 were signed before they fell again to 26 per cent in 2011/12.

Meg Hillier, the chair of the parliamentary public accounts committee, also hit out against costly PFI contracts in January, describing them as "inflexible" and "exorbitantly expensive".

EXPANDED GRAMMAR SCHOOLS READY FOR EXTRA PUPILS BY 2020

ALIX ROBERTSON

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Exclusive



Damian Hinds

in 2016 there was the announcement of £50 million a year for each of the coming four years for the expansion of selective schools," Skinner said. "I know there is a degree of frustration from schools that were waiting effectively for over a year now for an announcement of the funding to enable them to expand."

Although the £200 million was confirmed in Treasury documents in the autumn of 2016, no firm plans have been announced since. Plans to open the first new grammar schools in two decades were shelved last year, and the government is still yet to respond to its own consultation on selective education.

At the time, the government said it would "allow good and outstanding selective schools to expand", and would "fund expansion of places upfront on the basis of estimates, not retrospectively, thus removing a financial disincentive to expansion".

The purpose of the fund was to "simply enable grammar schools to do what all other

good and outstanding schools can do, which is to expand providing they can show there is sufficient demand which virtually all of them would be able to show", according to Skinner.

"In some cases schools may have already got plans in place and they may be able to go ahead fairly quickly," he added. "In practical terms, from an admissions point of view, I would have thought you are looking at 2020 in terms of the next opportunity for schools to take an additional form of entry or the equivalent."

Others are less enthusiastic about Hinds' comments.

Melissa Benn, who chairs the state school campaign group Comprehensive Future, criticised the government for exploring additional funding for selective schools when others are "struggling".

"It was deeply depressing to hear Damian Hinds speak at the weekend not only of his commitment to expand the number of selective places in England's schools but to declare that extra money will be made available to do this," she said.

"Such an announcement could not come at a worse time for the majority of schools, struggling with cuts and shortfalls to their budgets. Almost the entire education community will be dismayed at the prospect of funds being siphoned off to expand a system that all the evidence shows harms the education of those in surrounding schools."

Grammar schools will be able to expand and take on extra pupils as early as 2020 if long-awaited funding is made available, it has been predicted.

Comments made by Damian Hinds over the weekend in support of expanding the country's existing grammar schools have been taken by supporters and critics of selective schools alike as a signal that he could revive a £200 million expansion fund that was announced in 2016 but has since been kicked into the long grass.

The education secretary told *The Sunday Times* that "when it is possible for them to expand, physically, I want them to be able to expand", and said there were "capital sources available for most schools to be able to do that when they want to", and he is "looking at how to also facilitate that for selective schools".

In some cases schools may have already got plans in place and they may be able to go ahead fairly quickly.

Jim Skinner, the chief executive of the Grammar School Heads Association, told *Schools Week* that he hoped Hinds' comments would be the "trigger" for the "much-awaited" announcement of funding dedicated to the expansion of existing grammar schools.

"In the chancellor's autumn statement

NEWS

IN brief

RETURN OF THE CEO: FORMER BRIGHT TRIBE BOSS IS BACK

Kathy Kirkham has been reappointed as a trustee at the troubled Bright Tribe academy trust, almost exactly a year after she resigned as the chain's chief executive.

Companies House records show Kirkham was appointed to act as a director of the trust on February 8. She has also been reappointed as a director of the Adventure Learning Academy Trust, another chain founded and sponsored by Bright Tribe founder Michael Dwan and his Helping Hands Trust charity. She previously resigned from both roles on February 17 last year.

A spokesperson said Kirkham "played a valuable role in the establishment of the trust" and that "her extensive experience in the field of education makes her a strong and valuable member of the board".

Earlier this month, it was revealed that Bright Tribe plans to relinquish all but one of its northern schools, following extensive criticism that focused on the trust's involvement in the Whitehaven Academy in Cumbria.

ACADEMY TRUST CEOS AMONG OFQUAL BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The exams regulator has appointed five new board members, including two multi-academy trust chief executives.

Ian Bauckham, the chief executive officer of Tenax Schools Trust, will join the Ofqual board on March 1, while Dr Jo Saxton, the chief executive of Turner Schools, will take up a place on April 1.

Also joining in April are Major-General Rob Nitsch, the personnel director for the British army, Delroy Beverley, a former chairman of the International Advisory Board at Bradford University School of Management, and Lesley Davies, principal of Trafford College in Greater Manchester.

They replace existing board members Anne Heal, Barnaby Lenon, Tom Taylor, and Terri Scott, who have come to the end of their terms of office.

"The diversity of their experience and combined knowledge will greatly benefit Ofqual in its important work in ensuring qualifications in England are of the highest standard," said Roger Taylor, the regulator's chair.

ONLINE SENCO FORUM RESTORED IN FULL AFTER THREE-MONTH WAIT

The National SENCO Forum is finally up and running again, three months after it was accidentally taken offline by the Department for Education.

The 2,500 special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) who use the forum to contact each other for advice via an email chain were suddenly disconnected from the tool on November 18, during work to upgrade the DfE's online platforms.

A partial fix of the forum was completed on February 2, just hours after *Schools Week* published a story about the problems it was facing. However, many users still remained unable to access the service.

But now, almost three months to the day since the system crashed, the site's advisory chair Christopher Robertson told *Schools Week* the site finally started working again on February 9. He said he had received messages of "relief" from SENCOs now the forum is operational again, and hopes that the attention given to SENCOs since the forum collapse will "give rise to sharper political and policy focus" on the coordinators.

Ofsted backs hijab row school

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The school at the eye of a storm for its decision to ban younger pupils from wearing the hijab remains 'outstanding', according to Ofsted inspectors sent in to investigate concerns about leadership and management.

Inspectors said senior staff at St Stephen's Primary School continued to run an 'outstanding' school, but criticised the London Borough of Newham for its "ineffective" support during a row which saw "abusive correspondence and comments made by email and across social media".

A report published last week found that although the council provided some support in managing correspondence over the hijab ban, its backing had been "perfunctory at best", especially due to evidence the some correspondence had been coordinated.

Instead, the expected level of "emotional care and public support for school staff" from the local authority has been "too limited and, as a result, ineffective".

Ofsted made an impromptu visit to the school on January 31 after leaders backed down on a decision to ban the headscarf for pupils aged eight and under, in a change to its school uniform policy.

The climbdown was prompted by widespread complaints from the local community, and claims of bullying and harassment of school leaders. The school's



headteacher, Neena Lall, was allegedly subject to such behaviour, and the chair of governors Arif Qawi also resigned over the issue.

In their report, inspectors said negative comments and "abusive postings" on social media about the hijab ban and position on religious fasting had been "in complete contrast" to the culture of trust which exists between parents and school staff.

"School leaders, and in particular the headteacher, have faced bullying and harassment, and there is evidence that this has been coordinated by some people outside the school community," inspectors said. "Parents said that they just want the 'noise' from these people to stop so they can get back to being a great school community without distracting interference."

Abusive behaviour "appears to be largely instigated by people from outside the parental body", and the decision to remove the hijab from the key stage 1 uniform "was communicated to parents in June 2017 and implemented with little fuss in September 2017, following careful

consideration by governors".

Parents and carers "have regular opportunities" to ask questions and give their views to school leaders, including through question and answer sessions where leaders present ideas and take feedback from a "small group" of parents.

"Parents who spoke with inspectors said that the tone of a report in the national press upset them, but that school leaders have acted to reassure them and they continue to trust the headteacher and other leaders. With hindsight, the school recognises the need to consider communications more carefully, including those through local and national media."

Teachers and leaders "have created a calm and purposeful school environment where children thrive in a culture of high expectation and positive affirmation", while pupils are "extremely enthusiastic" about their learning and "overwhelmingly positive" about their school.

A Newham council spokesperson however came out fighting in the *London Evening Standard*.

"We refute Ofsted's comments about a lack of support and have provided significant support to this school over a period of time, prior to the interview and after the media reporting," they said.

"With such a diverse community, that has more than 200 languages spoken, councils must play a role in ensuring mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs."

QTS reforms will dissuade applicants, teacher-trainers warn

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Reforms to qualified teacher status (QTS) risk putting applicants off and making the benchmark seem less legitimate, according to teacher training providers and unions.

Responses to the government's consultation on "strengthening" QTS, seen by *Schools Week*, reveal unease about a plan to make trainee teachers wait two years before they qualify.

Under the proposals, trainee teachers will achieve a QTS (provisional) award at the end of the first year, and will then qualify in full at the end of their second year.

The government believes the longer period will provide new teachers "with more opportunity to develop their professional practice" through mentoring and early career development.

But the Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), the National Association of School Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) and the National Union of Education (NEU) have all expressed concerns about the proposals in their feedback to the government.

UCET, which represents 94 teacher training centres in universities, said it supported the idea of a longer qualifying period in principle, but urged the government to ensure the delay "does not dissuade people from applying".



The Department for Education must "emphasise the nurturing and supportive aspects of the proposals" rather than "present them as additional hoops" for trainees to jump through.

The warning was echoed by NASBTT, which represents about 90 per cent of school-based ITT providers and also supports the move to a longer induction period. The body fears that the "provisional" QTS would lack credibility for parents and the public.

"Any teacher holding QTS should be able to give an unequivocal affirmative answer to the question 'are you qualified?'" it said. Instead, teachers should get the full QTS at the end of their first year and an "endorsed" QTS at the end of their second year.

"The QTS should remain where it is with all the prestige and recognition that it rightly holds, and the endorsed QTS should be awarded at the end of the longer induction period," the organisation suggested.

However, the NEU warned that an endorsed or advanced QTS would create a "two-tier"

status in which teachers who qualified under the old system have a less legitimate award.

Alison Ryan, a senior policy advisor at the NEU, claimed members agreed that any sort of extended induction period would act as a deterrent to applicants, no matter how the government spins it.

"For most people it will feel like an extra two years towards getting qualified. In fact for many the 'supportive' element might actually look like two more years of additional scrutiny," she said.

Instead, the government should plan for both late and early career development. This idea has been touched on in the consultation, in the form of a "career pathway" and support for chartered teacher status developed by the Chartered College of Teaching, but she believes it still needs fleshing out.

The NEU will also echo UCET's concern that academies and free schools are still allowed to hire unqualified teachers, meaning they would not benefit from any of the changes at all. UCET's response called for the requirement for QTS to be reintroduced in all schools.

Meanwhile, the government must to provide central funding to schools to allow the changes to take place, NASBTT added. It is "absolutely clear" that schools currently have neither the finance nor timetable space needed to implement the longer induction period.

NEWS: NAO

DfE doesn't check whether academy leaders are 'fit and proper'

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

Academy trustees and senior leaders are not being properly vetted for their suitability to run schools, the government's spending watchdog has warned.

Labour MP Meg Hillier, the chair of the powerful public accounts committee, said she was "concerned" by the latest report from the National Audit Office, which found that people taking senior jobs at academy trusts are not fully checked out.

Although due-diligence tests are carried out on prospective bosses for academy sponsors, the Department for Education does not carry out its own checks to ensure that academy trustees and senior leaders are "fit and proper persons".

This lack of oversight continues despite "serious shortcomings" in the way some academies have been managed, Hillier warned.

The report, which focuses on the process of converting local authority-maintained schools into academies, is particularly relevant given the recent scandal involving David Meller.

The Tory donor resigned as a DfE director and took a leave of absence from his own academy trust last month following allegations that guests at the Presidents Club dinner, which is organised by Meller, "groped and harassed" women hired as



Meg Hillier

hostesses for the event.

Much of the criticism of the DfE following the scandal focused on whether sufficient checks were carried out on Meller before he was appointed to his various roles.

"Given the serious shortcomings in the way some academies have been managed, I am concerned that the NAO says the department isn't checking all academy leaders are fit and proper persons," Hillier said.

She also criticised the government for delays in converting failing schools into academies.

"According to the government, converting schools to academies is about raising standards. But it is mostly good schools that have converted. Conversion of underperforming maintained schools has been slow," she said.

"The school system the Department is creating is increasingly incoherent, and



David Meller

there is no clear indication of where it is headed next."

The report also reveals a shortage of sponsors, including multi-academy trusts, with the capacity to support new academies.

By January, 95 of the government's approved academy sponsors had asked not to take on more schools because they lacked capacity, and the DfE had paused the growth of 12 sponsors due to "educational, financial or governance concerns".

Meanwhile, 19 per cent of sponsored academies in the west Midlands are more than 50 miles away from their sponsor, and there are few sponsors located near underperforming northern primary schools which may need to convert in the future.

Paul Whiteman, the general secretary of school leaders' union NAHT, said the delays in finding a sponsor threatened schools' improvement plans, rather than speeding them up.

"The important thing is to provide

effective support quickly, and forced conversion is not the answer. In many cases, the local authority will still be the best partner for a school seeking to improve," he said.

"The lack of willing sponsors, and the number of schools that have been forced to convert but are miles away from their sponsor schools, underlines the problems associated with forced conversion."

A DfE spokesperson argued that the process for converting schools to academies has been improved, and that standards of governance expected from multi-academy trusts were now higher.

"We have introduced regular monitoring and reporting of the conversion process, and we are investing more than £30 million in academy trusts in areas facing the greatest challenges across England to boost their ability to improve other schools," she said.

The National Audit Office said the DfE should set out a "clearer vision" for the school system as a whole, to clarify how academies, maintained schools and local authorities should work together across the country.

It also suggested that the department reinforce financial risk and due-diligence tests at all academies and for trustees, speed up the process of converting 'inadequate' schools, and work on new initiatives to develop capacity in the local areas where need is greatest.

NAO FINDINGS

1. Conversion of failing schools isn't always happening

Since April 2016, it has been the DfE's policy to force LA-maintained schools rated 'inadequate' by Ofsted to convert to academies, and its aim to have them reopen as academies within nine months.

But the NAO found that of the 166 schools branded 'inadequate' between April 2016 and March 2017, 105, or 63 per cent, were still under council oversight nine months later.

2. 35% of all schools are now academies

As of January, there are 7,472 academies in England, equivalent to 35 per cent of mainstream schools. There are also 2,700 academy trusts.

Of today's academies, 6,996 schools converted to academy status from maintained schools, while 476 were set up as free schools.

The remaining 14,066 state-funded schools continue to be supported and overseen by local authorities. Of these, 12,174 are primary schools (73 per cent of all primary schools), 960 are secondary schools (28 per cent of all secondary schools) and 932 are special schools or alternative providers (70 per cent).

An estimated 3.8 million pupils (47 per cent of the total number of pupils) were being taught in academies, as of January 2018.

3. Academy conversion has cost the taxpayer £745m

Converting schools into academies has cost the government £745 million since 2010-11.

£81 million was spent on conversion in 2016-17 alone.

4. The future of academisation is 'unclear'

With so many secondary schools already converted, and with the many primary schools unsuitable for conversion, it's "unclear" how feasible further academisation of large numbers will be.

The vast majority of schools still supported by councils are primary schools, and their size and location often makes it more difficult to integrate them into multi-academy trusts.

5. There's a huge regional variation in coverage

By January 2018, the proportion of schools that were academies had reached 93 per cent in the London Borough of Bromley, whereas only six per cent of schools in Lancashire, Lewisham and North Tyneside were academies.

Rates of conversion tend to be lowest in the north and in London.

6. Some councils charge up to £20k in conversion fees

Some local authorities have started charging schools to convert to academies.

The NAO reviewed publicly available information on the matter, and found these fees range from £2,500 to £20,000 per school.

This is to cover things like staff costs and legal fees.

The Economist

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NEWS

CHARTERED COLLEGE CONFERENCE

HOW THE SCHOOLS COMMUNITY IS LEARNING TO WORK

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools are letting teachers take their planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time at home, banning work in the staff room and cutting the hours of senior leaders, all in the name of staff wellbeing and flexible working.

But researchers believe more still should be done to "normalise flexible working in schools", and have launched a project to help teachers and their employers catch up with other sectors.

At the Chartered College of Teaching's second annual conference, held in London on Saturday, several speakers and panellists focused on issues of workload and staff wellbeing.

And while some leaders shared examples of how flexibility was helping schools and their staff, others spoke of the need for change, especially in relation to encouraging younger women to return to the classroom.

Lucy Rose, a participant in Teach First's innovation series, explained to delegates how through her flexible teacher talent project, she and her research partner Lindsay Patience hoped to find ways to keep teachers in the profession who might otherwise leave for good.

"There is a well-documented recruitment challenge in education, and we're interested



Daisy Christodoulou

in this group of women aged 30 to 39. 6,000 of them leave the profession every year, and there's not much data on what happens to them," she said.

"They aren't the only people for whom flexible working would be beneficial, but they are nearly 30 per cent of the teachers leaving the profession, and it does suggest that teaching somehow, whatever people believe on the outside, is not compatible particularly with having a family."

Rose also warned that the education sector is "really behind" on flexible working.

"In other sectors, flexible working has proved to be extremely effective: up to an 80-per-cent increase in productivity in some sectors. If you translate productivity in another sector to pupil outcomes in education, the potential is huge."

Speaking to *Schools Week* after the conference, Rose explained that her project will initially be trialled in schools in and around the London Borough of Wandsworth.

For teachers, it will focus on things like helping them with their "business case" and to find job-share partners. For schools, the project will support and train leaders to "normalise" flexible



working, and with logistics such as timetabling, management, ethos and culture.

Rose's focus is not just on younger teachers returning to the classroom after starting a family, though. She is interested in how schools can support staff at all stages in their careers, and save money in the process.

For example,



Abed Ahmed

she told conference delegates of one school in Wandsworth where the senior team was offered reduced

hours so they could continue to work but spend more time with their families.

School leaders also shared their approaches to flexible working. "Anything to do

'LITERALLY DYING': FIGHTING FOR BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Teachers should not have to choose between their career and having a life, according to a maths teacher and author who quit the classroom "exhausted, stressed, frustrated and absolutely furious".

Lucy Rycroft-Smith, co-author of 'Flip the system UK: A teachers' manifesto', told the conference that she had been "forced into action and activism" by threats to her rights as a teacher, and encouraged others to speak up.

In her book, Rycroft-Smith tells teachers it is "okay to be fallible, and okay to be different", and warns it is both "unreasonable and unworthy" to expect teachers to "give up their life for a calling" and dedicate their time and energy "solely" to the children in their care.

The book also calls on teachers to put aside their differences over different styles of teaching and stand together.

"Right now, either you or somebody you know in teaching is literally dying because they're at the bottom of the system," she said.



Lucy Rycroft-Smith

"Please stop calling them a moron for using learning styles and help."

Rycroft-Smith left teaching in 2016, when she found herself "exhausted, stressed, frustrated and absolutely furious that I had no voice and no agency".

"In 2016 I took a lot of things for granted, and a political hurricane of idiocy took my breath away. Threatening the rights and the

premises I thought were universal has forced me into action and activism. In teaching, this hurricane, this perfect storm, is upon us too, and it is forcing us to act.

"If we want the trust and the agency and the pride, we must claim it. Sometimes we must resist. As we've already heard today, sometimes, we must say no. We might even have to be difficult or demanding."

The times-tables test 'will stigmatise' SEND pupils

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are being excluded by education policies like the times-tables test, experts have warned.

Panellists told the Chartered College of Teaching conference that the language the government uses when talking about needing "all pupils" to reach certain standards has caused a stigma around SEND, and that special schools are seen as a demonstration of parental failure.

Nancy Gedge, a consultant teacher with the Driver Youth Trust and an author who has written extensively about her experiences of bringing up a son with Down's syndrome, said special schools needed to be seen as operating "within an inclusive system".

"I was frightened of specialist school," Gedge

NCE 2018

WORK WITH FLEXIBLE TIME



The panel

given the choice to take their PPA time at home, and told that time away from school during working hours could also be spent on personal activities, as long as standards were maintained and tasks were completed.

"I found, as a result, some people choose to go home, some people choose to be in school, but I think the thing that's worked out the best and what people appreciate is the fact they have the choice," she said.

"It's not about 'you've got to stay in school, you've got to go home'. People have got that flexibility, and I think there's also that thing about professional relationships, where people feel valued in terms of the fact that, as a senior leadership team, we trust them. It's not about keeping tabs on them."

Alison Peacock, the Chartered College of Teaching's chief executive, said the notion of flexible working, and "ways of thinking intelligently about how we best thrive as a profession", was an important part of efforts to "shift the narrative away" from workload issues.

with work went out of the staff room," said Ceri Hathaway, headteacher of Brooklands Primary School in Derbyshire. "It's literally just settees, music, refreshment areas, tables, just for people to go in there and have that sort of escape lounge feel in there. That minimised the amount of space where teachers could go and work."

At the same time, staff were



Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock

children must pass the times tables test' and things like that, because I think 'hang on a minute. I've got one sitting at home who in year 4 would not be passing that times-tables test no matter what the state of his teaching'," she said.

"And that's not a problem, that's human diversity. I think we do need to challenge the whole language of 'all' to actually include 'all' children, and that includes specialist settings."

Delegates were also warned that attempts at including certain pupils with support needs in mainstream schools was having the opposite effect.

"How often do we see the same children going out for interventions? It's the same kids that need the support, quite often in reading and writing and phonics and maths, and at what cost?" said Maria Constantinou, an associate headteacher and inclusion leader at St. Mary's C of E Primary School in London's East Barnet.

"These children are coming out of the classroom, they're missing out on that high-quality teaching experience, and spending a lot of time with teaching assistants. Rather than being included are actually being excluded from the place that they should be the majority of the time."



said. "I really felt as a parent it was a failure of me as a parent for my child to go to a special school. It's really not; it's just a school.

"I think that we need to bring specialist settings into the conversation about inclusion. Because frankly, without them, some children would be denied an education at all."

The government announced last week that a trial of its new times-tables test for year 4 pupils will begin in around 290 schools in March.

Gedge said the language used around the test – which the government hopes will help it reach its goal of having every pupil know their times tables up to 12 by the end of primary school – is problematic.

"I do get cross when I see '100 per cent of

TEACHERS ARE SCARED TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES ONLINE

Teachers are "cautious" about blogging and using social media because their schools don't support them, an academic has warned.

Dr Helen Woodley told the annual conference of the Chartered College of Teaching today that a combination of curriculum changes and increasingly "hierarchical" school structures undermine the teachers' voices, and some are turning to platforms like Twitter and blogs to share their concerns.

According to Woodley, a special educational needs coordinator and researcher, blogging and tweeting by teachers has many benefits.

"No teacher who is on Twitter can escape conversations about Ofsted myths, pupil discipline, marking," she said. "We've all seen that. And teachers who are actively involved in sharing their voice in such forums share knowledge, skills and stories in ways we just couldn't have done as a profession before."

But there is "often a lack of professional support by schools in helping teachers use social media and blogs". This means teachers often "use them with caution", and worry the benefits of such platforms are outweighed by the risks of "criticism and public shaming".

When using the internet to share grievances and anecdotes, teachers also face "questions of ethics and anonymity", with the publication of certain sensitive information prohibited by teachers' professional standards.

"If we take those literally, it would be ethically wrong for a teacher to discuss on a blog, in an academic journal, in a conversation at a conference anything which could have a negative effect on a student, colleague or school being identified," said Woodley. "This naturally limits how we

can share our voices."

However, the use of "fictionalised narratives" – stories where names and details are changed to protect the anonymity of schools and pupils – allows school staff to tell their stories without fear of falling foul of professional standards.

These stories allow teachers to present real-life stories "in a way imagined by the

“OFTEN A LACK OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT BY SCHOOLS IN HELPING TEACHERS USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND BLOGS

author". For example, Woodley used the technique in her own thesis in order to tell the stories of eight-year-old pupils permanently excluded from school while protecting their identities.

"Fictionalised narratives are brilliant, because they lend themselves to sharing this highly sensitive information and they aim to show the truth of what people say or do, but yet also remain untrue at the same time."

While the importance of the student voice in education has grown over the past two decades, the relevance of the teacher voice "has been gradually undermined".

This has happened to teachers both at a national level, with the "introduction of a national curriculum and a centralised approach to teaching", and in the classroom, where "the role of teachers in being in control of their own classrooms, and having professional freedom has ended, and a new era of control and conformity arose".

This "control" of the role of teachers has continued, "through the narrowing of the curriculum, an increased focus on progress measures and in some cases, the undermining of the teaching profession as a whole".

"Down at a classroom level, the largely hierarchical nature of our schools mean there's often little scope for teachers to have their voices heard, as those who are higher up in the hierarchy take precedence. Here teachers can find their voices silenced by leadership, leaving them feeling disenfranchised within their own classrooms."



Helen Woodley

NEWS: WHILE YOU WERE AWAY

YEOVIL'S ST MICHAEL'S ACADEMY HIT WITH FINANCIAL NOTICE TO IMPROVE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

A junior school in Somerset has been hit with a financial notice to improve after it failed to set a balanced budget.

Under the terms of the notice, many of St Michael's Academy's spending powers are suspended, and decisions have to be run past officials.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has decided that the Yeovil school's failure to set a balanced budget put it in breach of the academies financial handbook – the rules that govern academy finances. Such non-compliance "is often indicative of serious financial and/or governance issues".

The ESFA also warned that the academy had failed to "ensure robust governance arrangements" and "good financial management and effective internal controls". It has also not ensured "effective planning and oversight of capital projects", and failed to ensure spending has been "for the purpose intended".

Officials are also concerned about a request for emergency funding from the school.

In a letter to Ed Pike, the school's chair of governors, Mike Pettifer, the ESFA's acting director for academies and maintained schools, said he "remains concerned" by the urgency of a request from the school for financial support. The agency is also "not sufficiently confident" in the trust's ability [to] "improve its financial position without support", he said.

The school must now commission a "full and independent review" of financial management and governance and submit an action plan, detailing the steps it will take to address any issues identified in the probe, to officials in order to get the notice lifted.

It must also prepare a revised financial recovery plan and meet several other conditions in order to comply with the notice. If it does not comply within the timescales set out by the ESFA, the school risks having its funding agreement terminated and being rebrokered to a new sponsor.

Last year, the school was rated 'requires improvement' by Ofsted, falling from its previous 'good' rating.

Pyke told *Schools Week* that the deterioration in the academy's finances over the last 12 months had happened "for several reasons". These include an unfunded increase in pupil numbers, which required the school to create an additional class and therefore hire extra teaching staff.

"In addition, the academy incurred extra costs on its summer works, which included some essential safeguarding to the car park and playground as well as improvements to the kitchen to allow all children to benefit from a daily hot meal," he said.

"The academy is working hard with the ESFA to resolve the issues; the revised budget will be aided by increased funding next year owing to the increase in pupil numbers. The academy will continue to provide three classes in each year group and no disruption is expected to the quality of the children's education."

ESFA 'to blame' for rescinded school application

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA_AK

The government's education funding arm "significantly contributed to the failure" of a new secondary school that had its planning permission rescinded just weeks before it was due to offer places, an MP has claimed.

Bob Neill, the MP for Bromley and Chislehurst in London, accused the Education and Skills Funding Agency of a "pattern of poor handling of planning applications" which has caused "anguish" to parents and children in his constituency as national offer day on March 1 approaches.

The Conservative backbencher has written to Damian Hinds, the education secretary, about problems with the proposed Bullers Wood School for Boys, after Bromley council withdrew planning permission for the new school.

Permission for the school, which was expected to form a multi-academy trust and share playing fields with the nearby Bullers Wood School for Girls, was originally denied by the council in January 2017 after concerns were raised over the levels of traffic in the area.

Contractors Kier Construction, with the backing of the ESFA, appealed against the decision and submitted a revised planning application. The council approved the amended application last October, giving the school a green light to open this September.

However, rather than withdraw the



Bullers Wood School for Boys

appeal against the initial refusal of planning permission, the developers and the ESFA were allowed to continue until last December, when the appeal was finally dismissed by the government's planning inspectorate, which upheld the original concerns about road safety.

This decision caused the council to seek legal advice on its permission for the second application and, on January 25, permission was withdrawn.

Neill accused the ESFA of a "complacent assumption that the appeal was bound to succeed", whereas any "sensible" developer would have withdrawn the appeal as soon as permission was granted on the second application in October. He said the ESFA "seemed more intent on making a point to the council" than ensuring the school was built on time.

At prime minister's questions on January 31, the MP also complained that "proposals for much-needed schools have been delayed, in no small measure because of concerns at the way the ESFA has handled the planning

application process".

The school's headteacher designate, Anne Gouldthorpe, said she was "deeply disappointed" by the result, and expected the ESFA to lodge another appeal against the decision.

She described the traffic report as "profoundly flawed", containing "factual errors" from a visit on a day with "widespread traffic disruption due to multiple emergency road closures".

Nancy Lengthorn, a local campaigner who helped organise protests against the council's decision, claimed the report was based on a day of "exceptional circumstances", including a burst water main and roads shut due to gas works and car accidents.

A spokesperson for Bromley council said the borough was expecting a small surplus in school places in September and was working with ESFA to find an alternative site for the school.

The ESFA "continues to work with Bullers Wood School for Boys to secure a site", a spokesperson said.

SCHOOLS URGED TO IGNORE 'DANGEROUS' GENDER GUIDANCE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools are being urged to ignore "dangerous" new guidance on pupils' gender from a pressure group.

Transgender Trend, an organisation set up by parents who "question the trans narrative", has published what it calls a "schools resource pack", offering advice to teachers and school leaders about how to support pupils dealing with gender issues.

The group believes the increase in the number of children worried about their gender is because they are being taught about gender identity, and blames internet use and "social contagion" for "glamorising medical transition" and causing "rapid-onset gender dysphoria" in children.

Its guidance urges schools to abandon what it sees as "special rules" for transgender pupils and to ignore existing advice, which it claims is biased in favour of transgender people.

But the LGBT charity Stonewall, which advises hundreds of English schools, said the guidance is "packed with factually inaccurate content" and warned schools they "must have nothing to do with this deeply damaging publication".

Hannah Kibirige, Stonewall's director of education and youth, said the document not only "fails to reflect the real experiences of trans young people", but "actively encourages schools to take steps that risk them falling foul of their legal duties and duty of care to pupils".

"The idea that listening to young people and taking steps to make them feel included might



encourage them to be trans is quite simply a myth," she added.

"Most teachers would agree that effectively supporting any young person begins with listening to them, and understanding their experiences and needs. Supporting trans young people is no different. Talking to young people about what steps will help them to feel included, happy and welcome at school just makes sense."

Stephanie Davies-Arai, a spokesperson for Transgender Trend, said: "Our schools pack has divided opinion, which is a reflection of the controversy surrounding the issue. We ask parents and educators keep an open mind, read it and decide for themselves."

In its guidance, Transgender Trend claims that some groups of pupils, including lesbians, those on the autistic spectrum and children with troubled backgrounds and mental health issues, are more prone to gender-nonconformity, and are being "encouraged to interpret their non-conformity as a sign that they are transgender".

The document also warns that schools

"should be cautious of giving a transgender child rights that are not afforded to other children", and should adopt "a consistent approach to interests and personal style (clothing, hairstyles, footwear) without having special rules for a transgender child".

It suggests that much of the existing advice on transgender issues comes from "organisations specifically set up to promote the political interests and needs of transgender people". This guidance sometimes "fails to take account of the needs and rights of the whole school community", the group said.

Kibirige said increasing numbers of schools are "welcoming, safe places for young people who are trans, or who simply don't conform to the gender stereotypes society expects of them", and warned the guidance would create confusion.

"As more schools open themselves to learning about how to be trans inclusive, there is a hunger for information from teachers, school staff and others involved in education," she said.

"That's why the 'schools resource pack' produced by Transgender Trend this week is so dangerous. Masquerading as professional, 'evidence-based' advice for schools on how to 'support trans and gender-nonconforming young people', the pack in fact provides the reverse. It is a deeply damaging document, packed with factually inaccurate content."

The Department for Education declined to comment on the content of the guidance, but confirmed that it did not endorse the document, or provide any funding to Transgender Trend.

GIBB DITCHES QTS SKILLS TEST TO SOOTHE RECRUITMENT CRISIS

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

At least 9,000 prospective teachers barred from training after failing a skills test three times are now allowed to book retakes after the government changed the rules.

Schools Week understands that the government's decision last week to scrap the controversial lock-out rule, which prevents would-be trainees from taking the QTS literacy and numeracy skills test for a total of two years if they fail it three times in a row, has affected between 9,000 and 9,500 people.

They had their access to the test booking system reinstated from last Thursday. Learndirect, which runs the tests on behalf of the Department for Education, is understood to have written to banned prospective trainees to inform them of the government's decision.

The rule change was one of a series of announcements made last week by Nick Gibb, the schools minister, aimed at enabling more people to qualify as teachers.

He also announced that the government will scrap fees charged to trainees for their first two retakes. Would-be teachers can now take the skills test as many times as they want, and will only have to pay for it after their third attempt. According to the government, this will save people up to £77 each in fees.

As revealed by *Schools Week* last October, thousands of trainee teachers have been effectively barred from qualifying every year by the rule, which was brought in by Gibb himself in 2012.

He told MPs on the parliamentary education committee at the time that the decision was part of a drive to "push up the bar of entry into the profession". He was responding to questions about the quality of teachers from Damian Hinds, the education secretary, who at the time was backbench MP.

The announcement last week prompted claims from school leaders that the government is further watering down its requirements of new teachers, after Gibb wrote to teacher-training providers urging them to change their entry criteria.

Writing for *Schools Week*, David Spendlove, professor of education at the University of Manchester, said the change was an indicator that the government "has simply messed up teacher supply and training over the last eight years".

Jy Taylor, headteacher at Twynham School in Dorset said that although there is a "massive crisis" in recruitment, lowering entry requirements "isn't the answer".

"Instead focus on ensuring the profession is attractive and desirable to those who can pass the tests," he said on Twitter.

Shaun Hopper, a deputy head at a primary school in Scarborough, also questioned the

move.

"Surely if they can't pass these tests they shouldn't be teachers?" he tweeted. "Or [the DfE] are in a state of panic because recruitment is awful and the only way is to let them take as many tests as they want before they pass!"

However, others have welcomed the move, which they say will allow trainees with the potential to be great teachers from being barred from the profession on the basis of the skills test alone.

"We have seen all too many examples of candidates with excellent potential being locked out of the profession for the sake of one or two marks on a test," said Emma Hollis of the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers. "This move will keep the profession open to those who deserve the opportunity to train to teach."

Ben Gadsby, an education policy expert, added: "All teachers should have the high standard of English and maths needed to pass these tests – whatever subject they teach. The changes announced today maintain that high bar, whilst ensuring as many keen would-be teachers as possible get the opportunity to begin training."

The latest school workforce census data shows that the rate of qualified teachers entering the profession fell to its lowest level since 2011 in 2016, and that the number of teachers without qualified teacher status rose by seven per cent between 2015 and 2016.

GOVERNMENT FACES A SECOND JUDICIAL REVIEW ON PUPIL DATA COLLECTION

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The Department for Education is facing up to a second legal challenge over the data it collects on school pupils.

Just months after two pressure groups, Against Borders for Children and Liberty, jointly requested permission from the High Court for a judicial review of the way the government controversially gathers pupil-nationality data, lawyers for another group, Defend Digital Me, have written to the DfE to notify it of a challenge against the new alternative provision census.

The AP census seeks to collect more information about why pupils from mainstream schools end up in alternative provision, but campaigners say the data it collects will tar people with "childhood stigma" for the rest of their lives.

Defend Digital Me has instructed human rights lawyers from Leigh Day and Doughty Street Chambers to pursue a judicial review of the AP census, and is seeking to raise funds for the challenge from supporters. A similar fundraising drive by ABC and Liberty last year proved hugely successful, raising more than £12,000.

Since January 18, councils have been collecting additional data about pupils in PRUs and other AP institutions, including information on the "primary reason" why each pupil was placed there.

Eight options will be available, including pregnancy or childcare, mental health needs, and permanent exclusion. The changes follow a year of campaigning that suggested AP is used as a dumping ground for disruptive or low-attaining pupils by some mainstream schools.

The government claims it needs "more accurate information" on the reasons why pupils move into alternative provision, but campaigners warn that the changes, which were rushed through parliament during the summer recess last year, warned pupils could be "labelled for life".

Information collected in the AP census on mental health problems, pregnancy, and whether or not a pupil has spent time at a young offenders' institute will all be recorded and held in the national pupil database. Access to this can be requested by third parties, including researchers, private companies and journalists, though organisers claim requests are only accepted under strict conditions.

"We believe that the DfE is putting millions of children at risk in England," said Defend Digital Me in a statement. "The government has built a national database of named permanent records, for every child in state education, joined up throughout their education from age two to 19.

"Since 1996 these records describe a child's school life: their behaviours, results, absence, exclusion reasons like theft or drug and alcohol related, plus their detailed personal data; date of birth, home addresses, ethnicity and more, including full names since 2002. The data are kept forever."

Times-tables tests for 8 and 9-year-olds to start at 290 primary schools

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Trials of a new times-tables test for year 4 pupils will begin at around 290 primary schools from next month.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, has announced the next stage in the government's primary testing reforms. He claimed the new online tests will "help teachers identify those pupils who require extra support".

But a headteachers' union has warned that the tests would not tell teachers "anything they don't already know about their children" and will increase pressure on schools "already cluttered with tests and checks".

Despite confirming the rough number of schools taking part in this year's pilot, the government has only named a handful of those involved, and refused to name others when pressed.

Two schools in Lincoln – Manor Farm Academy and Witham St Hughs Academy – are confirmed as taking part, as is the Carlisle-based St Ninian Catholic Federation, which has two schools, St Margaret Mary and St Cuthbert's.

Reach Academy Feltham, a London free school often singled out for praise by the government, has also been named as a trial school.

Following the trial, the times-tables test will be rolled out to all schools that



Nick Gibb

volunteer to run it from 2018-19, but it won't become compulsory for schools until 2019-20. The test will take around five minutes to complete, and school level will not be published, nor be used by Ofsted and others to "force changes in schools".

However, despite ministers' assurances, Nick Brook, the deputy general secretary of the NAHT union, said it was still "hugely disappointing" that the government had decided to press on with the tests in the face of opposition from school leaders.

"This test won't tell teachers and parents anything they don't already know about their children," he said. "Although school results won't be published, this government test will be scrutinised by Ofsted when they visit and therefore become even more significant.

"A pupil's primary school years are already cluttered with tests and checks. We

want all children to succeed at school, but the answer isn't to test them more."

Times-tables tests have been on the cards since 2015 and were originally supposed to start in 2016, but firm proposals were only announced in September last year, in the government's response to its long-awaited consultation on primary testing. The tests are part of the government's aspiration for all pupils to know their times tables up to 12 by the time they leave primary school.

The government initially proposed that the tests be sat by 10- and 11-year-olds during in year 6, but proposed moving them to the end of year 4, when most pupils are nine years old, after last year's consultation.

The Department for Education claimed the change was made because "the majority of the sector said that year 4 would be the best point to run a check on progress being made".

However, the government's own consultation response document, published last September, said that just two fifths of respondents supported times table tests at the end of year 4. It was the option with the most support, but not the choice of "the majority" of school staff, as officials claimed today.

Gibb said the tests will "ensure that all pupils leave primary school knowing their times tables by heart and able to start secondary school with a secure grasp of fundamental arithmetic as a foundation for mathematics".

NEWS



EDITORIAL

Private schools have absolutely no right to privacy



The Department for Education has finally published the warning notices it gives to independent schools. It's the right move for parents, who deserve to know if schools are letting down their children, and it's fair for state schools, who have always had their notices published.

But the whole thing might never have happened if it hadn't been for a chance conversation in the autumn of 2015.

Back then, the Queen Ethelburga School was involved in a row after inspectors discovered 700 CCTV cameras on the school's premises.

Digging further, a strange detail came to light. Queen Ethelburga didn't just fail its inspection; it had also been given a "warning" from the government. What did a warning involve? No one knew, because no details were available.

After speaking with the *Yorkshire Post* reporter John Roberts, who first covered the case, we worked in tandem to find the names of other private

schools also under a notice to improve. Eventually, in an explosive story that made the front page of a national newspaper, we were able to reveal that prestigious schools such as Hill House, once attended by Prince Charles, and the Royal Ballet School were also given warnings.

Yet it would be another 12 months before we would get the government to agree to proactively publish the reports, and 12 months more until, finally, this week the DfE started to publish them on its website. There is now parity for parents who can know whether their child is attending a school under threat of closure regardless of which sector it is in.

It also shows the DfE is getting serious about the quality of small independent schools. Given one notice released this week had a leadership team which didn't even appear to know it needed to meet any standards, or have any governors, or do safety checks on staff, it's fair to say this is a sector that does need oversight.

It's high time we scrutinised academy leaders' suitability

Given the increased scrutiny on academy leaders' pay and questionable related-party transactions, Meg Hillier's concern at the lack of checks on those who run our schools is completely justified.

The National Audit Office's report on academy conversion is timely. It raises important questions about how many more schools can be converted, given the hurdles for primary academies, and reveals that even the forced conversion of failing schools isn't going as well as

the government expected.

But the reason the lack of a proper check on academy leaders has made the headlines is because it touches on the concerns of the wider public. The reality is, regardless of the debate over whether academies are better or worse than their LA-maintained predecessors, parents won't put their trust in schools until they can put their trust in their leaders, and that requires a much higher level of accountability than we have now.

Big severance payments are even worse than this tortuous analogy...



When the DfE released its academies accounts report, it made mysterious mention to some trusts that were "under investigation" for handing out thousands of pounds in golden-goodbye handshakes to departing staff, but which only asked for approval "retrospectively". This is like giving your best mate money so they don't kick up a fuss about an argument you've had in the playground, but the money belongs to your mum, and you only check with your mum afterwards

that was OK.

Happily, it turns out that mother (the DfE) will rubberstamp that extra pocket money, even if you didn't ask first. But what happens if mother decides that, no, it really was too much money? And you were on pocket money watch (aka a financial notice to improve)?

Schools Week has asked the DfE whether a former head might be forced to hand back the cash, and we'll tell you as soon as we get the answer.



Principal – Leeds East Academy

White Rose Academies Trust

Spot Salary of between **£88,000 - £100,000 - plus a 10% PRP allowance. For an exceptional candidate, a spot salary in excess of £100,000 may be offered. (Relocation package may be available).**

Leeds East Academy is the most improved school in Yorkshire and the 4th most improved school in the country, celebrating remarkable GCSE results with an outstanding **Progress 8 improvement of +1.09**.

Housed within a state-of-the-art new school building, Leeds East Academy is now the premier choice of school for families in the local area.

Leeds East Academy is also a highly desirable and dynamic world-class establishment for ambitious education professionals, who will be joining one of the most productive, supportive and talented leadership teams in the country.

Part of The White Rose Academies Trust - the most rapidly improved family of schools in the region - Leeds East Academy is accelerating on a thrilling journey which will ultimately see the school, its staff and its students, secure an Ofsted rating of outstanding by 2020.

We are looking to appoint a highly-skilled individual with boundless ambition, inspirational charisma and integrity, who can mobilise and support a highly skilled and dedicated team of professionals. Outstanding candidates will offer the vigour and vision to drive forward our improvement programmes at the forefront of our team of expert leaders and talented teaching staff.

If you believe you have the skills and experience to further the vision of our exciting future, we want to hear from you.



Andrew Whitaker

Andrew Whitaker
Executive Principal
White Rose Academies Trust



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To apply, please visit www.whiteroseacademies.org/careers. Should you wish to visit our Trust and our academies, contact Mrs Yvonne Hare at Hare.Y@whiteroseacademies.org, who will be happy to arrange a tour at your convenience.

Head of Mathematics



Rare opportunity for a new leader to have a truly transformational effect in a school on an exciting journey of improvement

Are you ready to give countless young people the same chances and experiences that your schooling gave you; one that inspired you to get into teaching and one that will give you the opportunity to have a transformational effect on a school and community that has known sustained under-performance? If so, we need your help

We want somebody who is looking to make a real difference. As a leader, someone who has a 'roll up your sleeves' attitude to work. As a teacher, someone who embraces and enjoys working in challenging circumstances. And we need someone who will champion our passionate vision about helping our students strive for a culture where hope, aspiration and ambition is not a thing of the past, but a reflection of their future adult lives.

If you apply for this post, you must already be a dynamic, innovative teacher who will inspire, motivate and challenge. Above all, you will be passionate about mathematics and be ready to help our students feel the same way.

In return, we will invest heavily in helping you to develop your career aspirations into reality. We can offer you a great salary, the chance to be part of a group of schools where you can develop, excel and flourish; with career

progression unrivalled by any other MAT. However, most of all, we can offer you a school that is totally focused on ensuring that every child is supported and challenged to deliver outstanding personal progress.

We will offer you the support of a leadership team dedicated to helping young people striving for more and as a GLF Schools' employee, you will enjoy the benefit of working within an excellent support and learning network and will be exposed to significant collaboration opportunities across our schools.

Ultimately, though, we can guarantee you the ultimate teaching project, one that on reflection, you can look back and are proud to say YOU were a part of.

We would strongly recommend that you let us arrange a visit for you to visit the school to see for yourself why this is such a special opportunity.

Salary: highly competitive
Closing date: 26th February 2018
Start date: September 2018 (earlier start date available for the right candidate)

Please contact the GLF Recruitment team on **020-8716-4987** or **recruitment@gifschools.org** for further information

GLF reserves the right to invite candidates for interview prior to the closing date. We would therefore recommend that you submit your application as early as possible. Please be advised that references may be requested on receipt of your application. Please state if you wish this to be delayed until shortlisting/interviews have taken place.

Mulberry
Schools Trust

Green Spring Academy
SHOREDITCH



Role: Executive Principal

School: Green Spring Academy Shoreditch **Borough:** Tower Hamlets
Age Range: 11-19 **Start:** 1st September 2018 **Salary:** Generous and competitive salary

Make a difference within a strong supportive leadership group and an inspirational community of practice

Green Spring Academy is an 11-18 secondary academy located in Shoreditch, East London. It serves an urban, inner city and multi-ethnic intake with a very high percentage of pupil premium students. The academy is in the process of preparing to join the Mulberry Schools Trust and in September 2018, it will begin a fresh and exciting new journey.

The successful candidate will play a significant leadership role in this new stage of the academy's life, crafting a strategic future for the academy within the Trust. The post holder will:

- build on the academy's many outstanding strengths to create a system-wide role in school improvement and cutting edge professional practice
- have oversight of one of the academies in the Trust
- contribute to Mulberry's Teaching School work, heading the development of a leadership academy focused on developing new senior leaders and headteachers for the Trust

This is a unique opportunity for a talented leader with vision, drive and ambition, and the desire to make a real difference to our pupils and community within a supportive MAT leadership group.

For an application pack and for more information contact Shanaz Jameson, Mulberry Schools Trust sjameson@mulberryschoolstrust.org 0207 790 6327 x 205
Closing Date: Monday 26th February 2018, Noon.
Interviews: 8th and 9th March 2018

We are an equal opportunities employer and we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.



The Russett School

Head of Academy

The Russett School Middlehurst Avenue Weaverham Northwich Cheshire CW8 3BW.

Required for September 2018 or sooner

Leadership Point 18 to Leadership Point 22 (£59,857 to £66,017)

The Russett Learning Trust and Governors are looking to appoint an excellent leader for the Russett School.

The Russett School is a special academy providing outstanding education for pupils and young people from ages 2 to 19 years with Severe Learning Difficulties, Speech and Language Difficulties and Complex Needs.

This role brings a wonderful opportunity to become a key player in our academy and our Trust. We are looking for someone who has the highest expectations in terms of our pupils/students and staff. Who is passionate and committed to working with children with special educational needs and who will embrace the ethos and values of the academy and Trust.

This is an exciting opportunity to work with our Trust in continuing to maintain our high standards by providing an outstanding education for all our pupils and young people.

As Head of the Academy, you will lead on the day to day organisational management of the academy. You will be working with a strong Trust Board, Executive Head Teacher and Local Governing Committee. You will work closely with the Executive Head Teacher who oversees the strategic direction of the academy.

We would welcome the opportunity to talk to you and show you around the academy. To arrange, please contact **Julia Hughes, Clerk to the Board of Directors**, on **01606 855831** or by email to jhughes@russett.cheshire.sch.uk

An application pack (including job description and person specification for this role) is available to download <https://www.russettschool.co.uk/about-us/vacancies/>

For further information about the academy, please visit www.russettschool.co.uk

Completed application forms should be returned to Jhughes@russett.cheshire.sch.uk by noon on Thursday 1st March 2018. Shortlisting Friday 9th March 2018 and interviews will take place on Wednesday 21st March.

The Russett Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service is required prior to appointment

Programme Manager (Doncaster) - Reach Programme



Located: Doncaster

Reports to: Programme Director - Reach Programme

Salary: £38,000 to £42,500 pro rata, depending on experience

Contract type: Initial fixed term to 31 December 2020; part time 3 days a week; secondments from local setting considered

As Programme Manager within Doncaster, you will be working with approximately 10 primary and secondary schools, as well as local providers, serving low-income communities to support them in developing interventions that will transform outcomes for those most at risk of exclusion. Each school will identify 10 pupils to participate in the programme.

You will support identified staff from within the management teams across your schools to:

1. Effectively embed interventions from a range of our evidence based delivery partners
2. Support the adoption of a research-led approach to improving outcomes for those young people at risk of exclusion, helping the schools to identify and evidence need, before designing and delivering collective solutions to these needs.
3. Help the schools to reflect on the learning gained through this work and spread that learning throughout the school.
4. Share best practice and learning across the cluster.

You will also work with the wider Reach Programme team to share challenges and learning, accelerating the programme's effectiveness in helping schools to support those most at risk of exclusion.

If you have at least 3 years' experience in the English education sector (including working with young people at risk of exclusion), experience working in the Doncaster context and a track record of leading successful initiatives targeting improved pupil outcomes - and you can prove to us you have the ability to influence, inspire and to initiate change, then please take a look at the detailed job specification, which gives further details on requirements for the role and how to apply.

This role is part time (3 days a week) and is fixed term to 31 December 2020 (to the end of current funding). We would be open to secondments from the local setting.

How to Apply

To apply for this position, please send a CV and a covering letter to recruit@righttosucceed.org.uk by 9am on 12 March 2018. Your letter should outline your interest in the role. It should also detail how your skills and experience meet the specified requirements.

Head Teacher



Courthouse Junior School
'Respect, Enjoyment & Perseverance'

Date Posted: 14th February 2018

Closing Date: 9 March 2018

Contract Term: Permanent

Start Date: 1 September 2018

Contract Type: Full-time

Salary: £51,561 - £69,725 (L11 - L24)

Are you looking for a new challenge with a supportive team and children with huge potential? If so, then Courthouse Junior School has the perfect opportunity for you. We are seeking an inspirational leader to take Courthouse from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Good' and beyond, providing a school that fully serves our local community.

We believe that Courthouse Junior School has exceptional promise and potential. We are a large local authority maintained junior school in Maidenhead with a mixed three form intake. The governors are determined to find an enthusiastic, ambitious and inspiring new Headteacher who has the vision and drive to improve our school and develop our local partnerships.

We have dedicated and hard-working teachers led by an interim Executive Team, fully committed to further improving standards of teaching and learning. We are seeking a new leader who will drive standards forward and help all of our pupils and staff to fulfil their potential. Whilst Ofsted has identified many challenges for our school, they were impressed by the attitudes of our pupils

"Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about school."

"Pupils are considerate of others and are developing into responsible young citizens." (Ofsted, 2017).

Courthouse Junior School prides itself on its pastoral care and prowess in sport and performing arts. Our pupils excel in their extra-curricular activities, including a fabulous choir, orchestra and award winning sports teams. Our new Headteacher will embrace this ethos as well as enabling pupils to strive for academic achievement.

You will be supported by an enthusiastic and committed staff and governing body. We are strong advocates for a positive work/life balance and manageable workloads across the school.

If you are an experienced Assistant Head, Deputy Head or Head Teacher with a strong track record of success, and you have the vision and ambition to lead our school, this could be your ideal next step. With exciting challenges we are certain that our new Headteacher will be very happy at Courthouse Junior School.

Closing date: Noon on Friday 9th March 2018

Interviews: w/c 19th and 26th March 2018

Take up post: 1st September 2018

Please download an application pack directly from our website here:

<http://9nl.es/6n88>

Return completed applications to: governors@courthousejunior.co.uk

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/>

READERS' REPLY

Reply of the week
receives a
Schools Week mug!



EMAIL



TWEET



FACEBOOK



WEBSITE

Labour pledges school fire safety overhaul

f Dave Crathorne

When teachers said they were fire-fighting to keep their schools open I don't think this is what they meant. Let's get the education budget right and dilapidated schools rebuilt before we worry about sprinklers.

Damian Hinds: 4 things we learned from the new education secretary's first interviews

t Wry Otter // @WryOtter

Better than lifting the cap on faith school admissions would be to add reformed religious studies GCSE to the EBACC element of Progress 8. That would increase dialogue in ALL schools.

Schools urged to ignore 'dangerous' gender guidance

f Natasha Read

Stonewall carries a lot of weight so it is unfortunate that it hasn't offered a critique of the actual content of the guide. I would be happy for my son's school to follow this guidance. It offers a compassionate approach that takes into account the Equality Act, UNRC and safeguarding protocols and the school's duty of

care to all pupils.

The approach seems very neutral and balanced which is what we need when there has been so little research into the best way to support trans-identified children. It's a far better approach than I have seen from other organisations which scaremonger parents with bogus suicide statistics and advocate an "affirmation only" approach.

Times-tables tests for 8 and 9-year-olds to start at 290 primary schools next month

t John Wolfe // @Johnwol72100052

I remember a friend's daughter crying for weeks because of exactly this. She went to a fee-paying school. Perhaps Gibb did too.

Five ways the DfE has damaged teacher recruitment

t Education State, address supplied

Another reason there are problems with recruitment and retention is the effort spent making able young people think teaching is no longer a career but something you do for a short while. England's universities should ask themselves why, unlike Scottish ones, they chose to work with interests that promote this idea of teaching as a temporary job. It is not only the DfE that is to blame for the current mess.

Schools urged to ignore 'dangerous' gender guidance

REPLY OF THE WEEK

t Secondary teacher

I was shocked and appalled at the publication of a so-called "guidance document" by Transgender Trend by your organisation. It appears that the document was not properly vetted or peer-reviewed before publication. It makes some wild claims that are not supported by current medical opinion and studies such as the development of gender dysphoria in autistic individuals. The paper they cite for this information does not expressly state this and on reading the authors note, constantly, that there is a lack of scientific evidence and study to support the claim and that any data has been collected on case studies of small groups and not on the wider scale of population study.

The authors have hand-picked a small selection of studies to support their opinion and have ignored the wider evidence available.

The site makes claims such as high suicide rates amongst trans individuals are a myth. This is factually incorrect and only based on one study, which they try to debunk. They have completely ignored the Stonewall Cymru Schools report 2014 and other such studies.

They are a group of parents, not trained individuals such as psychotherapists, psychoanalysts, doctors or other professionals, and are in no way qualified to offer advice or guidance to anyone. They advocate "conversion therapy" a practice that is widely agreed to be damaging psychologically to individuals who undertake it.

As a teacher, I will not be using this so-called "resource" as it is obviously biased and potentially very harmful and advise that it is removed immediately.

Back in the 2000s, "thinking hats" were a mega-cool concept in schools. Available in six different colours, each one signified a way of thinking about a problem. For example, yellow-hat thinking involved looking positively at a problem, while people wearing white hats were told to look purely at facts.

The concept is less cool these days. Rarely does one enter a primary school to find a multi-coloured set of trilbies sitting on the teacher's desk. But the approach can still be helpful when others are gung-ho for a solution which you feel needs more evaluation.

Flexible working is a flavour-of-the-month idea for improving teacher workload and lessening turnover. White-hat thinking shows it's needed: teachers are leaving at higher rates and fewer people are entering, right as a demographic bulge of teenagers maraud into schools.

From a yellow-hat perspective, flexible working would enable more people to fit a job that can seem brutally inflexible around their complicated personal lives.

But there are also the red hat of hunches and the black hat of cautions, and these are where my fears start to creep in.

Promoting flexible working doesn't always resolve teacher shortages. It can actually make them worse.

Let's imagine a teacher who will leave the profession unless they can go part-time. By being flexible, they may stay. This is good. But there will also be teachers who are NOT currently thinking of leaving who also



LAURA MCINERNEY

Contributing editor, *Schools Week*

Flexible time is a poor fix. We need a totally new deal for teachers

decide part-time sounds like a good idea and will reduce their hours. So we may go from a situation of losing one teacher, to losing half the time of four teachers. Instead of needing to replace one teacher, we now need to replace two.

This is what happened with GPs in the early 2000s. The job was changed to be more flexible and promoted as "family-friendly" in order to attract more people. It worked, but over time the average number of hours worked by GPs fell, and the shortage is now worse.

Secondly, flexible working approaches can counterintuitively end up meaning people work more than before. As companies like Netflix and Virgin moved to unlimited holiday policies, evidence has shown that workers actually take fewer days, but don't

have the benefit of being paid back at the end of the year for untaken leave days.

In Germany, organisations that moved to flexible working saw hours rise among staff. Notably, however, men tend to get paid more for this, largely because the assumption is that extra hours undertaken will be paid overtime. Not so for teachers in the UK, sadly. All of which leads to my third concern. Having written about this issue earlier this week I was contacted by many people saying they'd chosen to go part-time so they could catch up with lesson-planning and marking on their "off" days in return for seeing their children or doing a hobby on the weekend.

For teachers who can drop to four days of pay, that's great, but what does it mean for teachers who need a five-day income, especially younger ones with huge debts

and sky-high rents? Should they simply be expected to always work weekends for free to catch up?

The green thinking hat is for creative solutions: is there one?

At heart, teachers are contracted to work 1,265 hours of directed time per year. That is, for 1,265 hours, school leaders can tell teachers exactly where to be: teaching classes, attending meetings and so on. Beyond that, however, teachers must work "such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher's professional duties". But what counts as reasonable? In a system demanding excellence from everyone everywhere, the list is never-ending.

In the 1990s, when the deal was originally struck, teachers mainly spent their time outside of classes marking and, once a year, writing reports. Excel barely existed. Neither did PowerPoint. No emails. No mobile phones. Although work sometimes crept into personal life, it was more manageable.

At that time the 1,265 deal probably seemed like a coup. You could leave school when your allocated hours were done and mark in the comfort of your own home with few demands on how long you ought to do it, and no need to upload the results into a cloud so managers could check on you.

Now, in the modern era, that deal no longer works. Like the dreaded hats, it's getting old.

It is now time we donned the blue hat pulled together all the findings, and created a new deal for teachers on working hours. There has to be a better way.

DREW POVEY

CATH MURRAY | @CATHMURRAY_

Executive headteacher, Harrop Fold School

For the first time in the history of Channel 4's *Educating* series, the filmmakers have persuaded a school to let the cameras return for a second season.

From the channel's point of view, it's a no-brainer: *Educating Greater Manchester*, which aired in the autumn from Harrop Fold School in Salford, was a huge hit with the public. The cast is media-trained, the cables are already in the ceiling and the pupils no doubt have storylines or personas they intend to develop, to advance their teenage dreams of fame.

But why a headteacher – and board of governors – would expose their community to that kind of scrutiny a second time is not so clear.

We meet on day one of filming. Harrop Fold's two-storey central hallway is teeming with camera operators and teachers attempting to fit "staged melees" around pupil crowd management. A teacher hands off his radio microphone to me, assuming I'm part of the crew.

This isn't normal, insists executive headteacher Drew Povey: "You'd never do it if that was the case. You might do three or four days but you wouldn't do the best part of a year. You'd never manage it."

Ceiling cameras will be installed over half term, so "it's literally like having CCTV". Except that it's not: there's also a camera crew inside a control room somewhere, watching your every move.

Povey won't tell me the exact value of the disruption fee they receive, but you get the impression it won't make

much of a dint in the school's multi-million-pound deficit, which was racked up over a decade ago through the combination of a PFI deal and the cost of a turnaround team when the school was failing, prior to Povey's headship. Together this earned it the dubious accolade of "the most indebted school in the UK".

If that weren't enough, it had already been labelled "the worst school in the UK" by both Ofsted and the DfE back in 2003.

This is exactly the kind of superlative that the media laps up, but Povey insists it's not hyperbole.

"It was in *special special* measures, an amalgamation of two schools that went wrong. Change management done at its worst, and what happened was it went into a really bad place and when the inspectors came in, they said 'this is absolutely its own category of special measures'." The school needed a full-time police officer – often two – to help deal with behaviour.

A school improvement partnership board was established, including Department for Education and local authority representatives. Money poured into Harrop Fold to turn it around: this was the

pre-crash era, when everything could be put on credit. But after he was promoted from deputy to head in 2010 at the age of 32, he discovered that his school was in debt to the tune of £3 million – and expected to pay it all back.

This might explain why Povey can sound disconcertingly like a serial entrepreneur; once he gets going, he reels off a slew of commercial ideas, several to do with monetising the leadership materials he's developed.

But shouldn't a headteacher be focused on running the school, not raising funds?

"I know what you're saying," he replies, "but we are where we are, and no one's helping us. And no one has helped us. I've been there in your shoes with my head on this part of the desk," – he mimes banging his head – "but we have to do it. So I can sit here and whinge and moan or I can just get out and make it happen. And we're making it happen."

If Povey had earned his stripes as deputy head in charge of behaviour, he was no leadership expert when he was appointed, very young, to this gargantuan task.

"Paying back a deficit in a PFI setting when you're already overspending and you've got a falling school roll [they went from 1,200 to 600 pupils] is the perfect financial storm. Everything that could possibly go wrong is going wrong.

"Where do you go for advice when you're the worst school? Or where do you go for advice when you've been told you'll never manage to pay this debt back?"

His team believed they could do it, however,

has had to forge his own path.

"I've not got the giftedness and the natural ability that other people might have, but I can work hard," he admits. He tells his pupils the same thing.

"We have this really bent view about success: it has to be somebody at the top, and it's not. I never aspired to be a head but I was offered this job, and to lead Harrop is the biggest privilege ever. I don't think I could be a head anywhere else. But running Harrop means everything to me and I'll just do the best damn job I can while I'm here, and give it everything I've got. And then if I can give it everything I've got, as I say to the kids, I'm trying to be a better headteacher every day and I'm trying to get better at this this job of headship, and you need to be doing the same.

"And everybody's got to have that same growth mindset, which sounds so twee now because we're sick of saying it, but it's very powerful. If the staff don't believe and the kids don't believe, you're wasting your time. So belief is the foundation of everything, and it doesn't matter if you're not going to break any records. You can break records for yourself. It's not about being the best. It's about being the best version of you."

As a novice head, he started trying out strategies from the books; some worked, some didn't, so he'd adapt them or write his own materials.

Gradually his middle and senior leaders began to ask him to share, as did the rugby club where he coaches at weekends. One day the police came in for a meeting and, having asked him about the diagrams he has plastered all over the wall,

invited him to do a talk, which led to an invitation from the NHS. Povey – who uses "we" to signify that this is a team effort – has also worked with companies such as Allianz, Crawford Insurance, Warner Brothers and Mitie Facilities Management, which is, somewhat ironically and by

total coincidence, the company that manages the school's PFI contract.

"We manage to keep ourselves afloat doing that leadership work," he says, which might be an understatement. One way or another, they have reduced the school's debt by half.

One might suspect that Povey can make more for the school from his leadership talks than from a second TV series. So what's in it for them? Could they be getting addicted to the buzz of celebrity?

"I don't think so," he says, as if momentarily reconsidering my sanity. "I don't think anybody's like that here. To be honest with you, you're not really a celebrity, are you? I mean like, what's celebrity about being an RE teacher? I love RE, it's a great subject, but there's nothing celebrity about it. (Povey started out as an RE teacher at William Beamont Community High School in Warrington,


"SOME PEOPLE HAVE A MISTAKEN VIEW THAT WE DID THIS BECAUSE WE'RE IN LOVE WITH OURSELVES, OR WE WANT TO BE ON TV"

and Povey, as their leader, started waking early to work on strategy. Specifically, at 4:56 am every day, "because it's 4, 5, 6 – I looked at my clock and thought 'I like that time'. What a loser."

At this point he visibly reddens, and makes me promise I won't make him look like too much of a nerd. While doing his morning circuit training, he would listen to leadership audiobooks, and in the breaks between sets, make notes.

He sticks to a similar routine to this day, although having made his way through about 450 leadership manuals to date, one wonders whether there's much of worth left to read. Then comes yoga stretching, followed by a "mindful dog walk", which involves "just getting my head in a good space for the day and focusing on not very much".

Povey, who describes himself as "very, very average" and found academic learning difficult,



"EDUCATION IS NOT CELEBRATED ENOUGH"

having done his undergraduate degree and PGCE at the University of Chester.)

"Some people have a mistaken view that we did this because we're in love with ourselves, or we want to be on TV, or I want to be famous, or some of the staff want to be famous, or the kids. It was never about that for us.

"We're doing it because this school has had a tricky past, reputationally. I mean, the fact that the school's even open is miraculous; the amazing staff that have worked here, and the amazing kids and the community that supported us have kept us alive. It's not being celebrated, and it should be."

On screen, Povey is adept at flashing a smile and seems happy to play along with the kind of staffroom banter and pranks that add the magic to a hidden-camera series. But like other *Educating* headteachers who have taken this kind of risk, he has a more serious motivation for playing the media game.

First, the debt's still not gone. Second, he's striving to raise aspirations in a challenging context: "When you do something like this, the way it changes young people's views of themselves and of their role in education and of their area is stark. It was brilliant seeing them coming in and being really proud of being from Little Hulton and being really proud of going to Harrop Fold school, and that was fantastic."

Then the opportunities started pouring in. High-profile speakers such as Olympic rower Dame Katherine Grainger, companies offering apprenticeships, donations to the school fund, university partnerships, places on higher-aspiration programmes. One viewer even sent a box of goodies to a pupil whose bullying ordeal was portrayed on screen.

Other schools that have been on *Educating* have been begged by the production company

PROFILE: DREW POVEY

TwoFour to let the cameras back in, but none had previously agreed. Having won a national platform and emerged unscathed, why would Harrop Fold take the risk again?

"The *Educating* brand has never made the schools look bad," insists Povey. "That's not really what it's set up to do".

"Education is not celebrated enough. We always talk about Finland or Singapore or Shanghai, or literally anywhere else, and there's loads of really good stuff happening in all schools up and down this country."

"When we had the conversation with governors and with the local authority, it becomes 'let's look at the risk factors. What are they? Pretty low. What are the positives of doing it so far? Extremely high. And therefore is it worth us doing another show, and potentially amplifying what we've currently got?' And that's where we ended up.

"This TV show is about the right thing for kids. If this TV show doesn't improve what happens at this school, what happens in this area, and what happens in education then there's no point doing it."

**"I MEAN
LIKE, WHAT'S
CELEBRITY
ABOUT BEING AN
RE TEACHER?"**

IT'S A PERSONAL THING

What's your escape fantasy?

I'm actually dying as I say this because I sound so sad, but I love being with my family at the caravan in north Wales, right up in the mountains – it's literally the middle of nowhere. I don't get there as much as I want to, but when I get there I love it. I think I'll retire to Wales.

Who was the teacher who most influenced you at school?

Mrs Firth. I was five years old and she was fantastic. She's in the book *Educating Drew*. I mention her in that because I had a stutter and she was great. She was my first teacher, but she was there throughout my primary school and when I went onto some of the other teachers they'd just send me back to her. She tolerated me where the rest of the staff wouldn't. Always cared, always bothered.

What would you have done if you hadn't gone into education?

I'd have probably worked in elite-level sport in some capacity. I started coaching rugby at 16 and I've done leadership work with various international sports teams, such as Toulon in the south of France. I still work with the

Warrington Wolves rugby club. So I would have always ended up doing something in sport. But I think I would have always ended up looking at leadership, success, change, culture – those kind of things really interest me.

What film star or pop star did you most relate to in your teens?

I've never been one really to look at famous people and go "oh, my goodness". I suppose sports people would have been more my thing, so really good rugby league players. People like Sean Edwards, Ellery Hanley, or Paul Cullen, who played at Warrington.

If you had a slogan you could put on a billboard, what would it say?

I do think the golden rule is dead important, because it's amazing how we forget that, don't we? So something about treating people as you'd like to be treated, and the fact that nobody ever gave 100% and regretted it. If you know you have given it your all, you're not normally that gutted at the end. So probably those two. There's a link between the two in my head as well, about treating people as you want to be treated and giving everything – because very often, if you give everything, then I think you're treating people right.

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Daniel Bibbington, Head of Design and Technology at Beverley Grammar School

OPINION



MIKE TREADAWAY

Associate research fellow,
Education Datalab

Northern schools do need help, but not in the ways you think

It's undoubtedly true that schools in disadvantaged areas of the country need additional help, but we need to be better informed as to why, explains Mike Treadaway

Educating the north, a report published by the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, hit the headlines recently.

Comments like "poor pupils in the north are a GCSE grade behind" typified the reporting. While the report itself was more balanced, it did suggest that "too many children in the north aren't getting the education they need or deserve".

It would be easy to conclude that schools in the north are much less effective than those in London. The same might be said of schools in the Midlands or in the south outside London – the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils is similar to those in the north.

However, things change if we start to look a little deeper. The prior attainment (at key stage 2) of disadvantaged pupils in London is higher than in other areas. Research we have published on the pupil premium shows that the attainment gap at GCSE for the most disadvantaged pupils is twice as big as for the least disadvantaged. And the gap is lower for most minority ethnic pupils than for white and black Caribbean pupil groups.

Comparing schools on the basis of "similar pupils in similar schools" (the technical term for this is "contextual value added" or CVA) is something that Fischer Family Trust introduced in 2003, and while CVA has come and gone from the DfE's performance tables, it continues to be available in FFT Aspire.

New research I have carried out (bit.ly/EduDatalab1) shows that if we take a CVA approach, school and pupil characteristics account for around 85 per cent of the difference between disadvantaged pupils in London and the north. Much of the remaining 15 per cent is because pupils in London are taking more subjects that count in Attainment 8, but this has been closing over recent years.

So if schools in the north have similar effectiveness to schools elsewhere when a CVA approach is used, does this mean that the Northern Powerhouse Partnership's demand for more resources is not justified?

Other research that we are publishing today (bit.ly/EduDatalab2) suggests that there are important ways in which the north (and other regions) differ from London.

Pupils who are entitled to free school meals

for over 90 per cent of their time in school – and particularly those of white or black Caribbean ethnicity – present the greatest challenge. And schools with a proportion of these pupils above the national average are not evenly distributed. Nationally it's about 18 per cent of schools – but in the north it is 41 per cent!

Minority ethnic pupils do particularly well in schools where they make up more than half of the cohort. This is true across all regions, but London has a much higher proportion of schools where this is the case than any other region.

Do these facts mean that schools outside London cannot learn from the success of London schools? Certainly not! Lessons from the London Challenge initiative highlighted the benefits of collaboration between families of schools. The performance of minority ethnic pupils, many of whom have English as

“ **Minority ethnic pupils do particularly well in schools where they make up more than half of the cohort**

an additional language, is also an area where London can offer insights, although, as the Education Policy Institute's Jo Hutchinson pointed out recently, removing specific funding for EAL is potentially an issue.

In 2016 there were 80 schools where disadvantaged white pupils formed the majority of the pupil premium cohort, but where Progress 8 scores for these pupils were average or higher. Importantly, 43 of these 80 schools are in the north, with eight in London. We looked at one such school – Sheffield Park Academy – in detail last year.

This suggests that schools in all regions can learn lessons from others in their own area. Online tools, such as 'collaborate' in FFT Aspire make this possible, but it does need a commitment to openness and collaboration between schools if it is to have a real impact.

The argument for additional resources to help schools in the north can be justified – albeit on the basis that it is harder for them to close the gap, not because their schools are significantly less effective.



RAMONA DERBYSHIRE

Partner, Thrings Solicitors

Are 'buy-out' clauses in supply contracts actually enforceable?

Schools are complaining that staffing agencies can levy thousands of pounds whenever a supply teacher is offered a permanent contract, even if the full recruitment process is followed. Ramona Derbyshire looks at what the law says

Like any commercial entity, a school is subject to public procurement rules and at liberty to contract with other parties on the best terms it can negotiate. Where those terms are concluded, and the service performed, the school is bound by those terms, regardless of whether the deal turns out to be less than favourable for the school, or indeed where the leadership team failed to read or fully understand the terms.

When considering staffing agencies it is important to be careful for two reasons. Firstly, there is a distinction in law between an employment business, where the worker is employed by the employment business and hired out to the customer, and an employment agency, which places workers in temporary or permanent roles. Different terms are likely to apply to the type of service being provided, so it is important to understand which service you are taking up and what terms apply.

Secondly, and whichever service you are using, both often come with hefty terms that can be long and complex. Ordinarily you will find standard terms as to what happens when a worker introduced by the agency, which can mean simply dropping a CV into your inbox, is taken on via a permanent contract, usually invoking a transfer fee.

Transfer fees may be charged by an employment business to a hirer and are typically payable when an agency worker it introduces is subsequently engaged directly, either on a permanent or a temporary basis. The justification is that the transfer fee compensates for the time and energy invested in engaging, screening and introducing the worker and for loss of revenue stream elsewhere.

There is a regulatory framework. The Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003 assert that the employment business must not charge the transfer fee unreasonably. So, for example, where a school has directly hired a temporary worker, the employment business can charge a transfer fee provided the hirer is given the option to have the

worker supplied for a specified extended period of hire, at the end of which the worker will transfer without charge. It is unlawful for an employment business to seek to enforce any contractual term against the hirer that is unenforceable under the regulations.

On the subject of transfer fees, Belgian footballer Jean-Marc Bosman won a landmark victory in 1995 on the importance of free movement of labour, forcing a ban on restrictions and allowing players in the EU to move to another club at the end of a contract without a transfer fee – in a situation known as the Bosman ruling. But before schools get too excited and cling to the laces of the football boots, the decision was caveated to apply only to transfers between clubs within EU associations.

“ **Belgian footballer Jean-Marc Bosman won a landmark victory in 1995 on free movement of labour**

To help avoid fees, a school should consider adopting a policy on how it goes about recruitment. This could include nominating a point of contact for all recruitment enquiries, operating a preferred supplier list (PFL) with applicable terms and conditions, and making agents sign up to the PFL on your own terms. Where an agent provides unsolicited candidates, schools could make a written response stating their policy, that speculative approaches will not be considered and that candidates' CVs will not be considered outside of that policy process.

If you are a larger school or multi-academy trust making repeated use of agencies, make the most of your buying power. Scrutinise the agents' terms and renegotiate those that you aren't happy with. Have your own bespoke terms drawn up and seek to engage the agency on your terms. The agency is likely to want to keep your business and at least seek a compromise.

How do you know if your school's approach to assessing pupils is effective in promoting learning, asks Jamie Scott

Every school has its assessment framework, but is it fit for purpose? Schools use assessment every day, and it can be difficult to stop, step back and review the approach to ensure it is fit for purpose. To quote Professor Rob Coe at the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring, "assessment is one of those things that you think you know until you start to really think hard about it". So, in the spirit of reflection and self-evaluation, here are five questions to ask of your school assessment framework to help determine its efficiency and effectiveness.

1. Are we using assessment to measure important aspects of the curriculum?

Assessment, pedagogy and curriculum are inextricably linked and, when the best of these are brought together well, they form the backbone of effective teaching. When assessment is sharply focused on the curriculum, and used as a tool of good pedagogy, teachers can maximise its value to improve the responsiveness of their teaching.

After all, how can we know what to teach tomorrow, if we do not know what has been understood today? Effective assessment needs to relate to the curriculum map, strategically challenging pupils to recall and strengthen the right pieces of learning and understanding.

2. Do our assessments measure the things we intend them to measure?

Form should always follow function in assessment. We must know what we want to measure and why in order to select the right tool to achieve our purpose. An assessment that is ideal to measure progress might be a poor choice for identifying strengths and weaknesses to inform, plan or adapt your next lesson. To assess better, we need to be explicit about purpose.

3. Are we assessing learning or performance of short-term memory?

Learning is the long-term retention of knowledge, understanding and skill, as well as the ability to transfer these to novel contexts. Therefore, teaching needs



JAMIE SCOTT

Evidence-Based Education

Assessing your school's approach to assessment

“ **Assessment needs to be designed to gauge students' long-term retention and transfer**

to promote learning which is retained and transferable, and assessment needs to be designed to gauge students' long-term retention and transfer. Does your

school's assessment approach allow you to reliably demonstrate student knowledge and understanding at the point of initial assessment, and that they are able to retrieve that knowledge and understanding six weeks, six months or a year later?

4. How can we be sure that progress is real and not just measurement error?

Measuring progress reliably is difficult. All forms of educational measurement contain a degree of error and so assessment is less precise than often it is perceived to be – whether that be national tests, classroom quizzes or teacher observation. It is a complex and time-consuming exercise to create an assessment that is sufficiently sensitive to be able to reliably measure progress in a relatively short space of time, so teachers need to understand error in their assessment measurements to make accurate judgements about progress.

5. Are you using assessment to create learning, and not just record the residue of it?

Tests have traditionally been used to measure learning. However, a growing body of research demonstrates that high-quality tests are better learning opportunities than repeated study. The act of responding to questions thoughtfully strengthens a student's learning; practice testing using well-crafted questions can actually promote learning, making assessment into more than simply a tool for recording data about learning.

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REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS
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Our blog reviewer of the week is Iesha Small, an educational researcher, teacher and commentator @ieshasmall

Can we teach curiosity? @s_donarski



"Embedding curiosity as professionals... is about developing an intellectual eagerness within our pupils." Much is written in educational circles about creativity and knowledge but less about curiosity and the desire to learn. This post by teacher Sarah Donoski challenges teachers to be eager to know more ourselves so that we can foster this hunger in our pupils. Sarah teaches at a well-known independent school where academic success is assumed by many observers, so it's interesting that she too has experienced what many teachers in the state sector complain about: a lack of desire from some pupils to push themselves beyond the minimum required to get what they consider an acceptable grade. As an insatiably curious person myself, who loves when my classes ask me questions like "who invented maths, miss?" I enjoyed reading Sarah's comments about the importance of questions from both teachers and students.

Three lessons schools could learn from my pimp @jazampawfarr



"School had the potential to be a window to a world that I believed was unavailable to me. Unfortunately, it mostly rubber-stamped my suspicion that I just wasn't good enough." This was Jaz Ampaw-Farr's experience as a disadvantaged child at secondary school. A former teacher and reality TV show star, Jaz is now an international speaker who I have seen speak movingly about teachers as "everyday heroes".

Were she at school now, she would almost certainly have been in receipt of pupil

premium funding and would have been on the radar of many schools' designated child protection officers, had any teachers been aware of what was happening in her life beyond school. Despite the potentially NSFW title, this blog is an important read for anyone who works in schools. It is about the importance of relationships over inflexible compliance and raises interesting points around school behavior and inclusion policies. Many of Jaz's teachers missed the signs of extreme abuse because of (sometimes minor) outward non-compliance, but there were a few who engaged with her as a human being and had a profound impact on her. My natural leanings are towards the "no excuses" end of the spectrum, but I struggle with the lack of empathy that can result if applied unthinkingly at its most extreme so this was a thought provoking read.

So you want to change policy? Six steps for academics looking to achieve policy change

James Lloyd on the LSE Impact blog



Teachers have more agency and direct access to government as a result of social media than ever before. Groups like Headteachers' Round Table, ResearchEd and WomenEd are grassroots movements which catch the eyes of decision-makers. Big-name bloggers are read and quoted by politicians but how can we translate this into real change? James Lloyd, a former member of the prime minister's strategy unit, writes for anybody hoping to impact educational policy.

For part of my working week, I am a researcher and part of my role at the LKMco think-tank involves developing policy which affects the lives of young people in various ways. Some points were familiar but James gives a handy summary and I'll be sharing it with my colleagues during our Monday's team meeting.

Times-table tests: a fuss about nothing?

@JamesMacNaughto



"I've taught maths at KS3/4/5 for my entire career, and not having strong recall of times-tables is a huge barrier for the weakest and most disadvantaged," writes James MacNaughton, who could have taken these words out of my mouth. Times-tables tests have recently been proposed for year 4 pupils. As a secondary maths teacher and parent of a child currently in year 3, I have a direct personal interest. MacNaughton addresses general thoughts and potential fears around accountability well. If you have time, James's previous blog, 'Reflections on my first term in SLT', is also worth a look.

BOOK REVIEW

The character conundrum

By Matt Lloyd-Rose

Reviewed by Mehwash Kauser,
English teacher

Published by Routledge



The character conundrum, written by a former Teach First associate director, is touted as a "practical guide" for teachers to support their pupils in developing the "skills and mindsets that underpin success in learning and life". I'm not sure I would consider Matt Lloyd-Rose's text a guidebook, more an exploration of the research he completed over three years of school visits, and a tentative proposal for some ideas. The author himself states that "given the gaps in existing research, this book does not claim to be comprehensive, definitive or even totally correct".

The book's theoretical underpinning is the widely-known research by Carol Dweck and Angela Duckworth, on "growth mindset" and "grit", respectively. Lloyd-Rose sets himself the challenge of working out how these can be taught practically in schools, and uses observational examples to support his ideas.

Except for the clarification of how he is defining character, as the qualities of confidence, independence and resilience, the introduction is fairly self-explanatory. A long-winded explanation of process in chapters one and two are equally skippable, which brings us to the really juicy and more useful part of the guidebook: the case studies.

For time-pressed practitioners, the true value lies in reading and (shamelessly) stealing ideas and strategies, of which there are plenty – under headings such as 'Celebrating mistakes as opportunities for learning', 'Making the steps to success visible to pupils', or 'Encouraging pupils to consult one another when they're struggling'.

The case studies reassured me that everyone is experiencing the same problems I am. Lian's year 2 pupils, who stopped at "I'm stuck" and thought their teacher was more responsible for their learning than they were, are no different to my year 11s who believe

their GCSE grades are solely determined by me.

Rose's key tenet is that non-academic outcomes should be centred in academic learning and these outcomes should be prioritised all the way up to post-16. This more than anything else resonated with me; I am an English teacher at my core. Running intervention sessions or extra days is futile if they are not reinforced through the academic learning in my classroom.

However, realistically, this needs to be a whole-school goal and until the culture and ethos of a school prioritises such qualities, I fear lone teachers fighting this battle would feel like they're losing. These qualities are seen as part of a hidden or secondary

curriculum which is not even clearly defined, let alone measured, recognised or valued as much as academic GCSE and A-level results are.

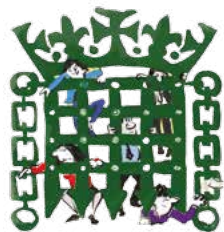
The most superfluous parts are the chapters following the case studies: 'Knowing where you're going' and 'Creating the right conditions'. Lloyd-Rose's insistence that the strategies that work are applicable cross-phase, and his consequent refusal to label them for a particular

age-group, is unhelpful, and negated by suggestions such as creating "personalised stickers", which, for every single student we teach in the secondary classroom, is simply unrealistic. Weeding out the strategies which impinge on whole-school or faculty-level policy would make this section much more usable.

The reality is teachers like myself read books to magpie ideas: we need high-impact, low-workload solutions. Some of Rose's strategies feed into the workload problem rampant in education, which is the last thing we need. All it takes is one senior leader to think personalised stickers are a good idea and before you know it hours of a teacher's weekend are taken up trying to keep up with a new whim. However, I do concede that this is maybe more of a problem with the culture of fads in education than with this book in particular.

For me, the book was interesting as a tool for reflection, but offered nothing that will overhaul or dramatically change my practice.





Week in Westminster

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

SUNDAY:

Less than a week after Damian Hinds miraculously "announced" a multiplication check for year 4 pupils that was actually proposed by his predecessor Justine Greening in October last year, the new ed sec made headlines again with some more of his own fresh ideas.

In a wide-ranging interview in *The Sunday Times*, and later with Andrew Marr, Damian Hinds talked about his enthusiasm for grammar schools and how he wants to help them expand. Given that academy grammars can expand their admissions numbers at will, it's not like they need a great deal of help.

Also, in what must only be regarded as the world's most amazing coincidence, Hinds has decided that his absolute first policy priority is to lift the 50-per-cent cap on faith-based admissions for religious schools – a policy only ever mentioned in the past by a former prime ministerial aide, Nick Timothy. Nevertheless, *Week in Westminster* is assured by people in the

know that Timothy is definitely not behind the policy. With this sort of coincidence going around, though, I'm hoping Timothy might also let us know what numbers he writes down for the lottery each week, too.

Asked about financial pressures on schools, Hinds said he wanted to pay tribute to teachers for their hard work. Unfortunately these tributes are not redeemable against electricity bills, PFI charges or the apprenticeship levy.

MONDAY:

Hinds appeared on Radio 4 to discuss the government's plan for university tuition fees. In particular he promoted the idea of more young people doing "commuter degrees" rather than "moving away" from university. *Week in Westminster* doesn't remember Hinds commuting to Oxford mind you.

TUESDAY:

Despite the entire Social Mobility

Commission team resigning in protest over the government not taking social mobility seriously, a job notice has gone out for another head of the commission – somewhat suggesting the government does want to keep their annual reports going.

Unfortunately the four-day-a-month role is unremunerated, but you will be given travel expenses. Is this a push for "commuter commissioners" perhaps?

WEDNESDAY:

Academies minister Theo Agnew today wrote to chairs of multi-academy trusts to say hello and note excesses in CEO pay which are being waved through by governors.

"I would not expect the pay of a CEO or other non-teaching staff to increase faster than the pay award for teachers," he wrote.

A slight problem for Theo is what this means for chief execs who are currently on very low pay versus those on high pay. One main reason for why school funding has been such a basket case these past few years

is that the initial unfair differences in pay were made worse by percentage increases.

For example, a CEO on £400,000 will be on £440,000 in five years if there's a two-per-cent increase limit. A CEO on £200,000 will only move up to £220,000.

THURSDAY:

WiW was poised to find out exactly what a "teacher analysis compendium" might be, something apparently landing on the DfE's website at 9.30am, but the promised link simply said: "Sorry, but this page doesn't exist." Seconds later, a separate document on statistical standards was released admitting that official figures "are not always easy to find through our website". So in future, the DfE will apparently produce statistics meeting two key principles: that they will be easy to find and easy to use. Sigh. One can but hope.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEELIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



Name Alan Brown

Age 50

Occupation Primary headteacher

Location Chester

Subscriber since Edition 126

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*?

Bed, in the office, on the sofa... basically anywhere I get the chance. The email from Laura in the past, and now Shane, is the highlight of Friday morning.

Which section of the paper do you enjoy the most?

Laura McInerney always writes an interesting section that makes me think, reflect and smile.

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

For education not to be based on party ideologies. There is wonderful research out there that should drive education forward, with educationalists making the decisions and not MPs without any educational background.

Who is your favourite education secretary of all time?

It is a tough job to do as you cannot please everyone and the good things they do, are often overshadowed by the negativity. Everyone has an opinion. Let's just say some have made better decisions than others.

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

I like the way that the government policy on free schools is being investigated and explored, especially since there seems to be a lot of secrecy around aspects of it from the government, especially the financial side.

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

Our school paper copy goes in the staffroom. I store another electronically in iBooks for future reference.

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

I liked Kieran McGrane's idea, in edition 126, of an article about the top 10 reasons to be a headteacher. I love my job and would encourage anyone to give it a go, when they are ready.

Favourite memory of your school years?

I remember all my primary teachers being bothered about me and my classmates. From Joan Nelson in reception to Jan Henderson in year 6, I felt special and have very fond memories of infant and junior school days: Miss Phillips singing to us in year 3, Mr McQuibben teaching me art in year 4, Mr Jones and his reading of *Danny Champion of the World* (with character voices) and Miss Henderson for her enthusiasm and empathy.

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

I probably would have worked in a bank, one of my mum's jobs. I am glad Mr Davies mentioned primary teaching to me while in sixth form. I still see him in Sainsbury's. I stopped and thanked him for the encouragement recently.

Favourite book on education?

Education forward: Moving schools into the future by David Price. A wonderful selection of pieces that have enthused me, making me think about the schools of the future.

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



Girls' design triumph swells Merseyside STEM club

FEATURED

A Merseyside school's STEM club membership is on the rise after four of its members won a national competition by inventing an expanding flower pot.

The team of four year 9 girls from Weatherhead High School took first place in the Design Museum's annual design and enterprise challenge, Design Ventura, with their invention the Petal Pot, beating competition from 328 participating schools and over 14,500 students from across the UK.

The Petal Pot expands as the plant inside it grows, eliminating the need for repotting. One of the students came up with the idea after seeing her mother getting rid of pots that garden plants had outgrown.

Working on the project for half an hour each week at lunch time, the team developed a polypropylene prototype of the pot, as well as business plans and a pitch for their product, which they presented to judges in London after making it into the competition finals.

As their prize for winning, the pupils' invention will now be properly manufactured and sold to the public at the Design Museum's London shop.

"The girls will be working with designers



Growing up: The budding inventors



The Petal Pot

and retail specialists to make the product. There's a lot of personal development and real, valuable experience there," said Rhiannon Pearson, the school's DT teacher. "We'll be buying a couple."

As a result of the foursome's success at the competition, interest in the school's weekly lunchtime STEM club has increased.

"We only had the four girls as members initially, but now it's grown to just over 20 as a result of this competition," Pearson added. "We've publicised it in school and the girls have talked about it as well, and pupils have been saying 'oh wow, you've been going to London? Wow, you're having it made?'



Receiving their award

They've developed a real enthusiasm about it."

Fairmead School in Somerset took second place in the competition with a plate that has a thumb dent in it to help with carrying, and Hans Price Academy in Somerset came third with Plate Mate, an attachment that holds toast so your plate remains free for other food.



#10kTalks

LEARNING FROM APPRENTICES

Schools are being encouraged to invite apprentices to speak to their pupils as part of an initiative to get 10,000 people talking about apprenticeships.

Run by the National Apprenticeship Service, the 10k Talks movement will match schools with apprentices past and present, with the aim of educating students on the routes available to them after their GCSEs.

The project is taking place ahead of National Apprenticeship Week, which runs from March 5 to 9.

"Welcoming back a former student or other local apprentice is a great way to showcase to students how an apprenticeship can kick off a great career," said Sue Husband, director of the NAS. "You have the power to ensure more young people learn about the great benefits."

Interested schools can book a visit from an apprentice, by visiting: <https://resources.amazingapprenticeships.com/request-support/>



Combining colour and sound

Making music

Getting in tune with progress

A new three-year programme will help SEND pupils across London make their own music using state-of-the-art technology.

Eye Music Trust, a visual arts charity, will tour special educational needs schools across the capital with week-long workshops that allow pupils to control movement sensors which trigger music, colour and light.

The charity was awarded a £87,900 grant by the City Bridge Trust to run the project, which will be accessible to children aged four to 19 in around 16 schools across London's boroughs.

The charity's long-term goal is to place the technology permanently in SEND schools, so

children with disabilities can produce music, even if they have no movement at all, by employing the use of muscle sensors.

"Children with profound disability find it impossible to play musical instruments. The unique software and sensor system that Eye Music Trust has created enables them to control complex music and create their own intense therapeutic colour with just the movement of the head or hands," explained Simon Desorgher, projects director at the charity.

Schools can register their interest in the project by emailing Simon at: simon@colourscape.org.uk



The panellists

Answering the big questions

Students debated the gender pay gap, lowering the voting age and Brexit with MPs and councillors at Batley Girls' High School's third annual 'Question Time' event.

Over 400 students and their parents attended the Q&A with panellists Tracy Brabin MP, Baroness Pinnock, Councillor Robert Light and Professor Munro Price, who were joined in the hot seat by two of the school's sixth-formers and student political ambassadors, Hana Yaqoob and Hawa Patel.

The West Yorkshire school's deputy head, Gillian Hughes, took on the role of question master, acting as an intermediary between the students and panellists.

The project was set up at the school three years ago in an effort to get more students to engage with and understand politics, and the deceased MP Jo Cox featured as a



The school's student political ambassadors

panellist in its first year.

"We're very much about developing those opportunities to get critical thinking in place, to bring in outside speakers and just improve the level of understanding and knowledge about what's going on in the world," said David Cooper, co-head at the school. "The panellists all commented 'why doesn't this happen in every school? It should be common practice!'"



DR RUTH NORRIS

Headteacher, Derby Grammar School

START DATE: September 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Director of academic excellence and head of history, Denstone College

INTERESTING FACT: Ruth has represented both Oxford and Cambridge universities in the sport of fencing at national level.



PAUL TARRY

Regional director for the Midlands, Oasis Academy Trust

START DATE: January 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Principal, Oasis Academy Hobmoor

INTERESTING FACT: Paul introduced a scheme where professional artists work with the children every term at Oasis Academy Hobmoor.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new



DARREN KING

Principal, Oasis Academy Hobmoor

START DATE: January 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Deputy principal, Oasis Academy Foundry

INTERESTING FACT: Darren and his wife donated all the money they received as wedding gifts to a charity in Rwanda, to help build a school for orphaned genocide victims.



AMELIE MORGAN

Head of prep, Notre Dame School

START DATE: January 2019

PREVIOUS JOB: Assistant head, St George's College Junior School

INTERESTING FACT: Amelie read history of art at Newcastle University, then did a master's degree in education leadership.



IAN MCNEILLY

CEO, The de Ferrers Trust

START DATE: May 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Senior HMI, Ofsted

INTERESTING FACT: Ian is a qualified journalist and used to write about boxing. He worked for *Boxing Monthly* for eight years.

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

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

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

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.