



**CHURCH MAT LEADERS  
PUSHED OUT OVER  
OFSTED GRADES**

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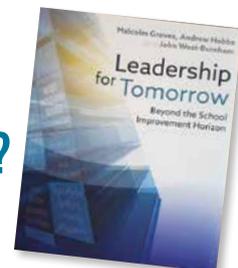
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# Postcode lottery of pupil absence fines revealed

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- Councils collect as little as a quarter of fines issued
- Confusion reigns following Isle of Wight case

**ALIX ROBERTSON** | @ALIXROBERTSON4 **Exclusive**

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## MEET THE NEWS TEAM

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**Shane Mann**  
MANAGING EDITOR  
(INTERIM)

@SHANERMANN  
SHANE.MANN@LSECT.COM



**Laura McInerney**  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

@MISS\_MCINERNEY  
LAURA.MCINERNEY@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

Please inform the Schools Week editor of any errors or issues of concern regarding this publication.



**Cath Murray**  
FEATURES EDITOR

@CATHMURRAY  
CATH.MURRAY@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Freddie Whittaker**  
CHIEF REPORTER

@FCDWHITTAKER  
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Tom Mendelsohn**  
SUB EDITOR

@TOM\_MENDELSON  
TOM.MENDELSON@LSECT.COM



**Alix Robertson**  
SENIOR REPORTER

@ALIXROBERTSON4  
ALIX.ROBERTSON@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Jess Staufenberg**  
SENIOR REPORTER

@STAUFENBERGJ  
JESS.STAUFBENBERG@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Pippa Allen-Kinross**  
REPORTER

@PIPPA\_AK  
PIPPA.ALLENKINROSS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

## THE TEAM

Head designer: Nicky Phillips  
Designer: Matthew Willsons  
Photographer: Ellis O'Brien  
Financials: Helen Neilly  
Sales team leader: Bridget Stockdale  
Sales executive: Clare Halliday  
Administration: Frances Ogefero Dell  
PA to managing director: Victoria Boyle



**Sam King**  
FEATURES AND  
DIGITAL REPORTER

@KINGSAMANTHA  
SAMANTHA.KING@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

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London SE10 8JA  
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## NEWS

## Cornish diocese forces an entire MAT board to resign

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

A Church of England diocese has taken the highly unusual step of ordering the trustees of an academy trust under its control to resign, after Ofsted rated the majority of its schools as 'requires improvement'.

The diocese of Truro has asked all five trustees of the St Barnabas Trust in Cornwall to stand down or be removed, prompting calls for closer scrutiny of how academy chains hire and fire their directors.

C of E dioceses traditionally adopt a "light-touch" approach when it comes to the trusts under their control, only intervening in the most serious circumstances. Trustees were therefore "shocked" by the intervention at St Barnabas, which occurred after two schools dropped from 'good' to 'requires improvement'.

Church leaders said they were forced to act after Antony Academy and Quethiock Academy took the total number of 'requires improvement' schools in the trust to four out of six.

Antony Academy had been rated 'good' in 2013, shortly before it became an academy, but dropped a grade last October, despite being told by inspectors that it was "improving".

Quethiock Academy was also rated 'good' in 2012, but was downgraded in 2016. However, the board was praised at the time for being



"proactive in seeking appropriate training" and told it "now provides valuable challenge to leaders".

Emma Knights, chief executive of the National Governance Association, now wants a process "overseen by the RSC" to check that boards haven't been unfairly dismissed.

"We at NGA wouldn't want to see a situation where, as soon as members start to get a worry, they get rid of a board unchecked," she said.

According to official Department for Education guidance, members of academy trusts have the power to appoint and remove trustees at will. The diocese of Truro is listed as a member of the St Barnabas Trust in its latest accounts.

Another trust school, Millbrook Academy,

was rated 'RI' when it joined the trust, and it remained at that level following an inspection last February.

St Martin's Academy, which had previously been 'satisfactory' at its last inspection in 2011, was also graded 'RI' in 2016, with directors criticised for not being effective in "holding leaders to account for raising standards".

However, both St Nicolas Academy and Braddock Academy actually improved after joining the trust, attaining 'good' grades in 2016.

Matt Bloomfield, the trust's former chair and one of the five trustees asked to leave by the diocese, said his team was "totally shocked".

"The board was very active within the trust and the schools were improving," he said. "For the whole board to be gone without warning, with zero choice, was completely unexpected."

He understands the diocese already had another board "ready to go".

Steve Lacey, another trustee, said the schools had been left "in a very vulnerable position" and the way his colleagues were told to resign was "not done with the process or values I would expect from a Christian organisation".

It is "astonishing" the diocese would discard a board that has "volunteered large amounts of their personal time", he added.

A spokesperson for the diocese of Truro confirmed directors were "given the option of resigning before being removed".

Simon Cade, its director of education, said that "put starkly, school performance and inspection outcomes last year showed that there was still a long way to go for this MAT".

The directors had made "assurances" that at least one school would retain its 'good' rating. The executive principal was also due to leave for a new job for Easter, but the board had not made arrangements to replace her.

The RSC for the region, former academy boss Lisa Mannall, was kept informed, the diocese added.



Emma Knights

## Schools lose £145k in new scam

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

Fraudsters impersonating headteachers have managed to con schools across the country out of tens of thousands of pounds in the latest scam to target the education system.

Figures from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau show that since last September, 48 schools have reported the scam, most of them in December and January. Of those, 12 schools lost out on £145,124 between them.

One school lost £19,150 in one go, while the average loss across all 12 schools was £3,023.

The scam involves a fraudster creating an email address that's similar to a particular headteacher's and using it to contact members of staff with responsibility for authorising financial transfers.

The criminal, pretending to be the headteacher, then asks for an urgent one-off bank transfer, with the amounts requested ranging between £8,000 and £10,000.

Action Fraud is now urging schools to be on their guard against the scam, including challenging any requests that seem suspicious – particularly urgent requests from senior staff – and ensuring there are robust systems in place to verify and corroborate financial requests.

This is not the first time schools have been preyed on by con artists.

In March last year Ofsted was forced to issue a warning after phishing emails purporting to be from the organisation were



sent to schools apparently asking for fees to be paid via PayPal.

Two months earlier, in January 2017, it emerged that conmen posing as officials for the Department for Education were attempting to inflict attacks of ransomware – which encrypts important files until a ransom is paid – on school computer systems.

The scammers would call schools and ask for the personal email and/or phone number of the head teacher or financial administrator claiming they needed to send them guidance forms containing sensitive information.

Instead, the emails sent included zip files containing ransomware which would encrypt files after being downloaded and demand up to £8,000 to recover them.

Back in February 2016, schools faced a different sort of challenge after a prankster who called himself "Uncle Rafool" called up more than 150 and impersonated an Ofsted inspector, telling staff they had lost their jobs before uploading the recordings to YouTube.



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## NEWS

## SIR DAVID CARTER 'CLARIFIES' HIS COMMENTS ON JANET RENO'S WHITEHAVEN VISITS

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The national schools commissioner has written to MPs to "clarify" comments about visits made by his officials to the troubled Whitehaven Academy, after "discrepancies" were found in his evidence to a powerful parliamentary committee.

Sir David Carter told the education select committee on December 5 that Janet Renou, the regional schools commissioner for the north of England, had visited Whitehaven in Cumbria "within two years".

He had been responding to questions from Copeland MP Trudy Harrison about problems at the struggling school.

When Harrison told him that Renou had not visited in the past two years, Carter said he would "agree to differ on that", and claimed he could "tell you exactly the dates she and her team have visited the school".

"The school may have told you that but I know for sure that she and her team visited certainly within two years and, I believe, in 2017," he said at the time.

However, a Freedom of Information request by the BBC in February revealed that Renou has in fact not visited Whitehaven since late 2015. Robert Halfon, the chair of the committee, then asked Carter for an explanation of the "discrepancy".

In his written reply, dated February 23, Carter claimed that when he spoke about RSCs he referred to both the officials themselves and members of their team.

"I should clarify that I meant this in the terms described above – seeing the RSC and her team as one and the same," he said. "They have visited and engaged with the school frequently in recent years as they have sought to identify the right support and future for the school."

Carter said Renou had met Whitehaven's headteacher in January 2016 and representatives of Bright Tribe, the trust which runs it, in Cumbria in January 2017.

In addition, members of her team visited the school in March and October 2016. Education and Skills Funding Agency staff also visited in April and October 2016, and officials "with responsibility for capital" made four visits to the school in 2017.

The Bright Tribe academy trust announced in November that it plans to walk away from Whitehaven, which has been flood-damaged and left in a state of significant disrepair. The trust will also relinquish four of its five other northern schools.

In his letter, Carter said he was "committed to securing a new sponsor for Whitehaven".

"Good progress is being made and I hope to be able to say more on this matter in the near future. I hope this clarifies the position."

## COLLEGE FORCED TO FOOT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT BILL

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

Exclusive

A further education college that has been forced to bankroll improvements to schools in its new academy trust has been dealt another blow after one was rated 'inadequate' just five months after the chain was launched.

Even though it had never run schools before, the Dudley Academies Trust (DAT), sponsored by the Dudley College of Technology, was handed four schools by the Department for Education last September.

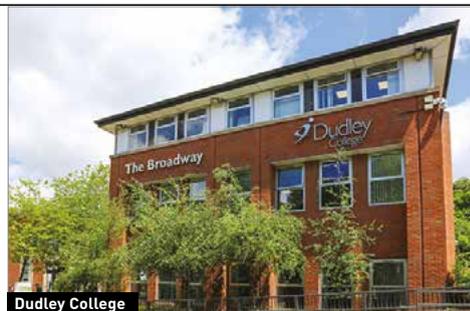
One of these, Holly Hall Academy, was given the lowest possible grading by Ofsted last month amid criticism of teaching, leadership and behaviour, causing the resignation of its headteacher.

Now the trust has revealed it is using college funds to pay for extra maths lessons, extra IT equipment and leadership training.

In its report on Holly Hall, Ofsted acknowledged that the "newly formed trust has swiftly gained an accurate view of the quality of education in the school" and said there were "early signs" of improvement.

The trust was given the green light to sponsor schools by the Department for Education (DfE) in January 2017, the same month another trust school, Hillcrest School and Community College, was itself rated 'inadequate' by inspectors.

The other two schools, the High Arcal School and Castle High School, were rated 'good' and 'requires improvement' when they



Dudley College

were still standalone academies.

Lowell Williams, the chief executive of Dudley College who also chairs the MAT, said the college was funding remedial maths and English lessons at the college, as well as a "big injection" of ICT equipment, and even planned a restructure of central support services.

He would not reveal the total spent on school improvements so far.

Government guidance says any potential sponsor for a multi academy trust must demonstrate a "strong track record of school improvement". Although Dudley College is an 'outstanding' college, it does not have school improvement experience.

A spokesperson for the DfE would not comment on the rationale behind the decision, but said officials are working to ensure the academies are "fully supported and their pupils have access to the education they deserve".

Williams admitted the college's "biggest fear" had been whether it had the skillset to work with school pupils, but said he had

been "shocked" by how much translated across between the two sectors, which are "not dissimilar at all".

He said the college had been approached by the schools for "support", and hoped the initiatives would improve pupil outcomes.

The trust is hoping to grow to include primary schools and wants to open an alternative provision free school, and aims to have all its schools achieving the national average progress score within three years.

"It's not going to be easy, but I think there's every opportunity to make this work," said Williams.

Colleges have had mixed success with forming multi-academy trusts in the past.

Three of the four schools run by Midland Academies Trust, which is sponsored by North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College, are rated 'requires improvement'; two have fallen from 'good' since the trust took over and another only recently rose from 'inadequate'.

In 2015, the trust also shut down two studio schools, the Midland Studio Colleges in Hinckley and Nuneaton, due to low pupil numbers.

However, the Bridgwater College Trust, sponsored by Bridgwater and Taunton College, now has four 'good' schools on its books after two improved from their previous 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate' ratings.



Lowell Williams

## Embattled Toby Young under scrutiny again

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

The government is "looking at the options" over its support of the New Schools Network after a report called into question the way the Department for Education makes appointments to public bodies.

The commissioner for public appointments found "serious shortcomings" in the process that saw Toby Young (pictured), the director of the free schools advocacy charity, appointed to the board of the new universities regulator, the Office for Students.

But Young's troubles may not yet be over. Sam Gyimah, an education minister, told MPs on Tuesday that his department was "looking at the options for support around the New Schools Network".

Asked if, in light of the findings, the government intended to review the contracts and grants handed to the NSN, Gyimah said the situation was under review and that an announcement would come "in due course".

"Toby Young is the CEO of the New Schools Network, which has been awarded a series of government grants to provide advice to people opening a free school," said the Liberal Democrat MP Layla Moran. "In the light of the blatant cronyism we have seen as a

result of this report, does the government now intend to review those contracts and whether or not due process was followed there?"

Young's appointment to the OfS board was announced at midnight on New Year's Day and prompted a fierce, immediate backlash, particularly in reference to comments made in past articles and on social media.

Although some of the criticism centred on his perceived lack of credentials for the role, attention was drawn to the numerous offensive comments he has made over the years on social media, and for his views on some education issues.

These include multiple tweets about the size of various women's breasts, and one in which he refers to a gay celebrity as "queer as a coot". It also emerged that he had deleted tens of thousands of his tweets.

His commitment to inclusive education was also questioned, after comments he made in a 2012 article for *The Spectator* appeared to attack the use of wheelchair ramps in schools and mock the work of special educational needs departments. Young has also previously written in favour of using "progressive eugenics" to improve intelligence.

Young withdrew from the OfS on January 9, saying he wanted to focus on his work with the

NSN, which he has led since January 2017.

The commissioner's report into his appointment found that "important principles in the governance code" were "breached or compromised" in a "number of areas", including "inadequate" due diligence, that was not conducted "in respect of all candidates on an equal basis".

It said DfE did not "delve back extensively into social media" when assessing the suitability of Young as a candidate, even though the social media activity of a candidate for the student experience board member was "extensively examined".

"The evidence presented to the commissioner indicates that the decision on whether or not to appoint one candidate in particular was heavily influenced, not by the panel, but by special advisers notably from 10 Downing Street," it added.

In a subsequent statement, Gyimah said he was "working with the cabinet office".

"We will do as the commissioner has recommended we do to make sure that this process works better in future," he said.

In 2016-17, the New Schools Network received around £2.1 million, 85 per cent of its total income, from the Department for Education. Its DfE funding last year was around £900,000 more than the previous year.

The government is currently in the process of retendering the New Schools Network's contract, and is expected to announce the outcome this month.



## NEWS

# ABSENT-MINDED: HOW COUNCILS ACROSS ENGLAND ARE FAILING TO COLLECT TRUANCY FINES

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

## Investigates

Local councils are collecting as little as 25 per cent of the fines they issue for children's unauthorised absences from school, a *Schools Week* investigation has revealed.

Some even choose to forgive the fines if attendance improved after they were issued, or if they feel the charge will be detrimental to the family.

All 153 councils with responsibility for education were asked how many fines they handed to parents for taking their children out of school without permission in 2015-16 and 2016-17, and how many of those fines were actually paid.

The results of our Freedom of Information request reveal that councils have wildly different approaches to managing absences across the country.

In the last academic year, the number of fines issued by the 115 councils that responded to our enquiries ranged from none at all in Lewisham, Richmond, Windsor and Maidenhead and Warrington, to a whopping 6,876 in Lancashire.

The same councils handed out zero fines in 2015-16, when the highest number that year was 6,008 in Suffolk.

## Fines not followed up

In both 2015-16 and 2016-17, 15 councils received payment for less than half of the fines they issued.

In Newcastle, three in four fines went unpaid in 2016-17 compared with 70 per cent the previous year, while over 90 per cent of fined parents in Blackburn, Staffordshire, Kirklees, Southwark, Reading, and Dudley paid up.

A Newcastle city council spokesperson said the council is "proactive" about pursuing payment and fines issued in one academic year may not be resolved until the next due to the length of processing.

In 2015-16, Hackney collected just 30 per cent of its 422 fines. Last year it improved slightly to collect 35 per cent.

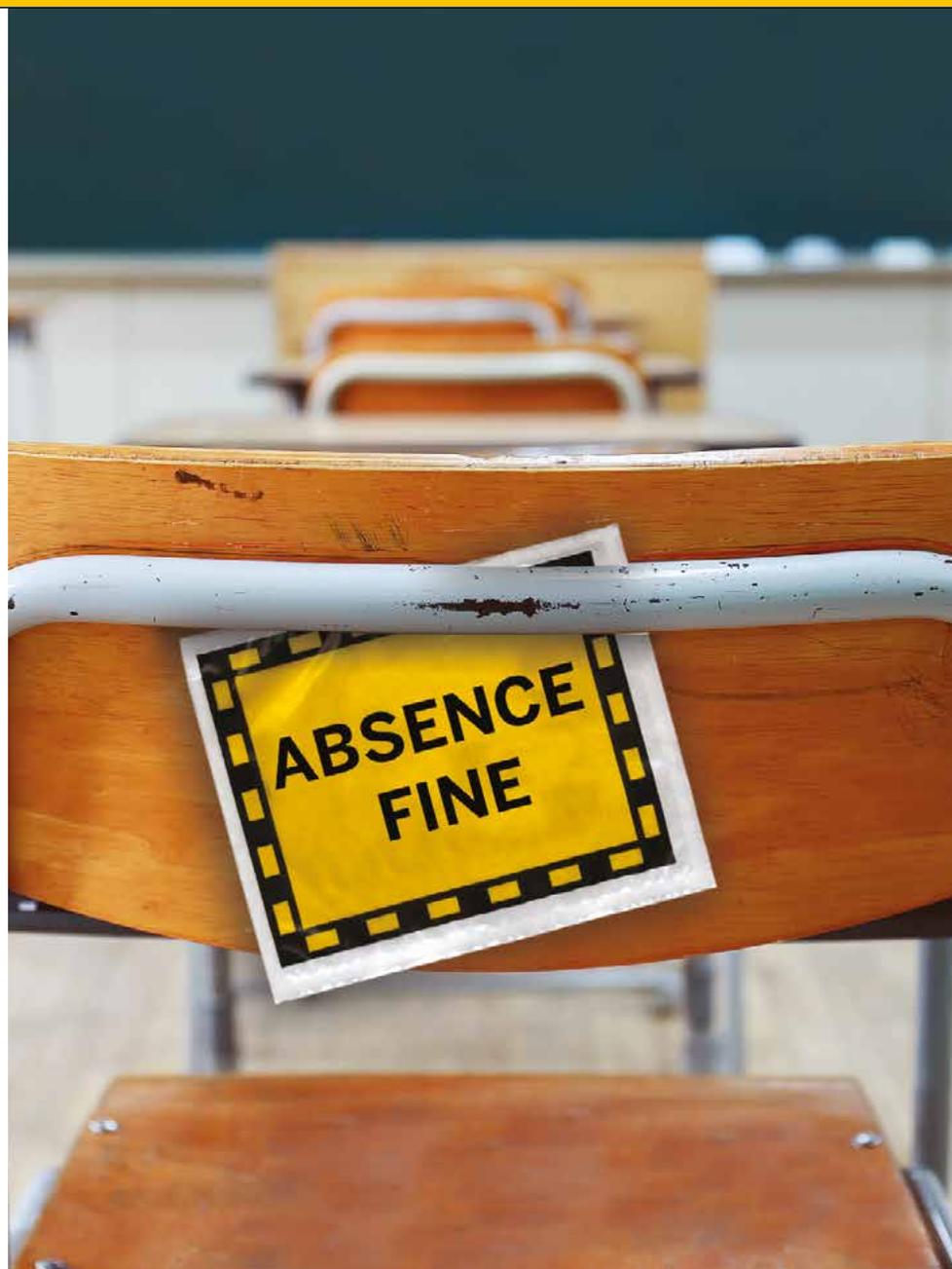
Anntoinette Bramble, Hackney's deputy mayor, said fines are cancelled if a parent provides medical evidence or "another justifiable reason" for a child's absence. The council cancelled 40 fines in 2015-16.

"When deciding to pursue non-payments of fines all factors are taken into consideration and a prosecution may not be pursued as once a fine has been issued, in many cases it then leads to excellent school attendance," she said.

Greenwich, Oldham and Hounslow councils all told *Schools Week* that a fine may be withdrawn without a parent paying if a pupil's attendance improves after it is issued.

Unpaid fines in Oldham led to 180 prosecutions in 2016-17, but a further 253 fines were withdrawn.

A spokesperson said sometimes it can be "appropriate for unpaid fines not to be pursued", for example if attendance has been recorded incorrectly, or if the fine would have



a "detrimental effect" on the family.

Wigan council pointed out that councils are unable to collect fines if "the schools withdraws the charge or an unpaid fine progresses to a court case which the school then chooses not to pursue".

When unpaid fines do bring parents to court, the original penalty notice is usually withdrawn. If there is then a successful prosecution, any further fine goes straight to the court and not the council.

## The Platt effect

Some councils said a particular court case had affected how they managed school absence fines, particularly in 2015-16.

Jon Platt, a father from the Isle of Wight, took his daughter on holiday without her school's permission and refused to pay two £60 fines for doing so – leading the local authority to take him to court in October 2015.

Platt claimed he had not broken the rules requiring his child to have "regular attendance" at school and was supported by both the Isle of Wight magistrates' court and the High Court.

However, he lost his case after it progressed to the Supreme Court early last year.

Lambeth council even cancelled a number

of fines in the aftermath of the High Court's decision, but later reissued them after the Supreme Court weighed in.

Bury council also cancelled fines after the first ruling, and north Yorkshire council found fine numbers were lower in 2015-16 while it awaited the Supreme Court's verdict.

Bracknell Forest council told *Schools Week* the case had allowed some parents to believe they were "entitled to a refund".

## Data disasters

The investigation also revealed patchy and sometimes inaccurate data on absence fines, with some councils even admitting to submitting incorrect figures in response to FoI requests.

Others claimed it would be too time-consuming for them to find the data, and several could not explain the reasons behind their numbers.

The London borough of Barking and Dagenham said "unforeseen, long-term staff absences" left the council "unable to enforce all of the fines we issued", though this "has now been resolved".

Councillor Richard Watts, chair of the Local Government Association's children and young people board, would not say why councils were finding it so challenging to keep accurate and easy to access records for school absence fines.

He did however claim it was "right that councils are able to respond in a proportionate manner to individual cases".

"What is needed is certainty for parents, teachers and councils, so that headteachers have the confidence to approve or reject requests for term-time leave in the best interests of pupils," he said.

"It is important that the Department for Education works with schools and councils to avoid any doubt about the law."

## Shaping up

Three councils mentioned improvements to their processes for school absence fines.

Nick Small, a cabinet member for education for Liverpool city council, told *Schools Week* that he is "looking at a more careful and targeted use of fines to make sure it is the most appropriate and effective action to take".

And in Wigan, the council recently held a consultation on how to improve the penalty-charge notice process. In April it set up a new attendance service to help deal with unauthorised absences by focusing on "early intervention".

Similarly, Knowsley council said it had recently introduced an 'Attend, Achieve, Succeed' campaign, and was working with pupils "to reiterate the importance of school attendance".

## WHAT IS A PENALTY NOTICE?

**Parents must have permission from their child's headteacher if they want to take them out of school during term time, and they can be fined if they do so without the school's approval.**

**These 'penalty notices' cost £60, which rises to £120 if the parent does not pay within 21 days. If the fine is still not paid after 28 days the parent may be prosecuted.**

## NEWS

## SCHOOLS WHICH DON'T CLUE PUPILS INTO VOCATIONAL ROUTES WILL BE REPORTED

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Exclusive

Schools that flout their new legal obligation to allow training organisations the chance to speak to pupils about technical qualifications and apprenticeships should be reported to the government, the skills minister has said.

In her monthly column for *Schools Week's* sister paper *FE Week*, Anne Milton said further education providers should report non-compliance with the so-called "Baker clause" to the Department for Education.

The rule – named for its orchestrator, the former education secretary Lord Baker – became a legal requirement for schools on January 2. It means every school must give training providers access to every pupil in years 8 to 13, so they can find out about non-academic routes.

Schools must also publish a policy statement on their websites, detailing how to arrange access, which premises or facilities can be used, and the grounds for granting or refusing requests.

In January, a *Schools Week* investigation found most large academy trusts had failed to meet the duty, prompting both Baker and Robert Halfon, the chair of the parliamentary education committee and Milton's predecessor as skills minister, to write to the government demanding action.

This week, Milton told colleges and other training providers to take matters into their own hands and "let me know" if they face problems with schools.

"As a result of the new duty, I expect to see schools setting up careers events, assemblies and options evenings so that providers can talk to pupils about what they offer and what it is like to learn in a different environment," she wrote.

Milton said the Baker Clause should be "the start of a change in how schools and parents look at what young people do in future, and give all pupils access to these exciting career options".

"Please get in touch with your local school or college and find out how you can support them, and if you have any problems do let me know."

Of the 10 largest academy trusts with secondary schools investigated by *Schools Week* in January, just two, The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT) and Delta Academies Trust, provided copies of their policy statement.

Ark Schools, Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), the David Ross Education Trust and Oasis Community Learning admitted that they had yet to comply with the new legal requirements.

The Harris Federation did not respond to *Schools Week's* enquiries, though we did find a document on one of its academy's websites which appeared to contain the relevant information. United Learning and Ormiston Academies Trust did not respond at all.

At the time, Baker said he was not surprised.

"We know that many schools will try to resist this, but it's very important that it should be implemented more rigorously."

## SPECIAL-SCHOOL PUPILS TRAVEL THREE TIMES FURTHER TO SCHOOL

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Special-school pupils face "insurmountable" travelling distances to school and risk being "forced out of the system altogether" as transport services are cut, a think-tank has warned.

New research by the Education Policy Institute has found that on average these pupils travel three times further to school than their mainstream counterparts. In rural areas, as many as one in 10 special-school pupils travel more than 23 miles each way, while even in city areas, one in 10 pupils live nine miles from their school.

The think-tank warned that the distances leave them at particular risk of budget cuts affecting home-to-school transport, and as such, could push them out of the school system altogether.

The research points to the government's 2016 'Schools that work for everyone' consultation, which lamented the lack of 'good' or 'outstanding' secondary schools "within three miles" of some homes.

However, the title of the consultation was "something of a misnomer", according to the EPI, because it "said nothing of the 110,000 pupils that are educated in the nearly 1,000 state-funded special schools".

Researchers found that in city suburbs, the average year 7 special-school pupil travels 2.5 miles to school, two-and-a-half times further than their average mainstream counterpart.



In larger towns and cities, the gap is wider: special-school pupils travel 2.9 miles compared with mainstream pupils, who travel 0.9 miles. In rural towns, the gap is larger yet, between 2.2 miles for mainstream pupils and 6.7 miles for special-school pupils.

In rural villages, mainstream pupils travel on average 3.8 miles, while special-school pupils travel 10.1 miles, on average.

Simon Knight, director of Whole School SEND, warned the lack of investment in the specialist-schools sector meant the nearest appropriate school "isn't always available", and therefore many children are "having to travel extraordinary distances to get to a suitable school", often with journey times of more than an hour each way.

"Given that the DfE's own predicted increase in demand for special schools is 13,000 extra places in the next eight years and only 60 schools are currently in development, this is a situation that is

likely to worsen," he said.

"If children are to endure long journeys to and from school, then we need to make sure that transport operators and staff have suitable training in order to ensure that the journey does not impact negatively on the child."

Jon Andrews, the EPI's director for school system and performance, who wrote the report, said there was an "ongoing debate" about providing children with a good local school, but "relatively little is said" about the needs of special-school pupils.

"For some pupils these distances risk becoming insurmountable," he said. "A reliance on home-to-school transport leaves pupils vulnerable to cuts in local authority budgets and changes to local provision. In the absence of alternative arrangements, these pupils could end up being forced out of the system altogether."

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College leaders, labelled the report "timely". The number of pupils in need of special-school places is expected to increase by 11,000 over the next five years as the pupil population increases.

"These young people are obviously among the most vulnerable in our society and must be a priority in terms of place-planning. It is also important that any decisions over local transport services take into account the needs of pupils who travel to special schools," he said.

## Teachers, prove your subject knowledge!

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

Teachers should have to prove their subject knowledge is up-to-date at regular intervals to maintain their qualified status, a top Ofsted boss has said.

Professor Daniel Muijs (pictured), the watchdog's head of research, said he supported a "periodic requirement" for teachers to demonstrate they know about the latest research and discoveries in their subject area.

Speaking to *Schools Week* at a Westminster Education Forum, Muijs said the Chartered College of Teaching should work with subject associations to develop a professional development programme for each subject.

At the end of the programme teachers would be "recertified" as either qualified or chartered teachers. The proposal is not Ofsted's official policy, so much as an idea Muijs is "looking at", and one which he would welcome in the sector.

"Rather than saying the subject knowledge you acquired 30 years ago is still valid, this is to ensure professionals are up-to-date in the latest developments," he explained.

"It would make sense to have a periodic requirement to do a certain amount of professional development around subject knowledge, that would be a requirement for recertification as a qualified or chartered teacher."



Rather than observing teachers in lessons on their subject knowledge, subject associations should develop accredited programmes for them to attend.

"So for example, the Mathematical Association offers an accredited set of professional development awards, and if you do that then it's proof that you have refreshed your knowledge," he suggested.

Subject knowledge CPD is becoming more important as many schools move towards a knowledge-based curriculum, he told delegates.

The Department for Education has also said it wants more teachers to do subject-specific CPD, and £75 million was announced last September for knowledge-based and skills training as part of the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund.

But Alison Peacock, the chief executive of the Chartered College of Teaching, said it should be up to teachers whether they wished to undertake subject-specific CPD.

The college will support initiatives that

already exist, such as the 'chartered science teacher status', she told *Schools Week*.

"What I would want the Chartered College to do is amplify more of what's coming on in the subject associations," she said. "So if you're the kind of teacher who sees this as something you're excited about, we want to help give you the chance to do that."

Asked whether the college would develop a formal subject-specific chartered teacher status alongside subject associations, Peacock said there will be more talks between the two sides "down the track".

Dr Jennie Golding, a past president of the Mathematical Association, told delegates that specialist chartered status might tackle the "three- to five-year slump" many teachers suffer in their early careers, by providing a motivational goal and extra support.

However Gareth Conyard, the DfE's deputy director of the Teacher Workforce Development team, said there were no specific plans to develop specialist subject CPD programmes.

There is already "some support available for English, maths and science," and the DfE's curriculum team "will continue to look at what might be appropriate for us to deliver versus other people".

The DfE is however encouraged by evidence that teachers who do subject-specific training become more engaged with their jobs, he added, and is "interested in understanding" how that could help with retention.

## NEWS

## It all adds up: DfE doubles advanced maths premium to £1,200

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The government has doubled the amount of money on offer to schools which encourage more pupils to study maths at A-level.

The new "advanced maths premium" announced in last year's autumn budget was originally going to be worth £600 for every extra pupil persuaded to study the subject beyond GCSE.

But the Department for Education has this week announced that schools will get £1,200 for every additional pupil who studies a two-year A-level in maths or further maths. Additional pupils who study both maths and further maths A-levels will be worth £2,400 to their school.

Schools will also get £600 for every additional pupil studying a one-year AS-level or core maths qualification.

The grant, which is backed by £80 million in funding and has no cap on numbers, will start being calculated from September. Schools' eligibility will be calculated based on increases in the number of pupils studying the subjects beyond GCSE.

For example, if a school increases its numbers studying maths A-level from 100 in one year to 105 in the next, it will receive an additional £6,000. A school increasing its numbers studying core maths or AS-level maths by the same amount will get £3,000.

*Schools Week* understands the first tranche of funding will be based on



increases in pupil numbers between 2017-18 and 2018-19, with schools actually receiving the money in 2019-20.

Critics say the use of 2017-18 as a baseline is unfair on schools that have already made efforts to increase numbers studying maths beyond GCSE in recent years, and which won't benefit from the extra cash.

Around 95,000 pupils currently study maths at A-level every year, while 16,000 take further maths and around 5,000 sit core maths qualifications, which are for pupils who want to study the subject beyond 16 but who did not get top grades at GCSE. Around 160,000 pupils sat AS maths last year, although this number has decreased in recent years since the decoupling of AS from A-levels.

The advanced maths premium formed part of a £177 million investment in maths education at the autumn budget.

This also included grants of £350,000 for every new specialist maths free school that opens across the country over the next few years, and £27 million in funding to extend the "Teaching for mastery" maths programme to a further 3,000 schools.

The Sixth-Form Colleges Association, which represents around 90 sixth forms and other post-16 providers, said although it welcomed "any new investment" in 16-to-18 education, the extra funding would have "little impact on the vast majority" of pupils.

"The government should focus on ensuring schools and colleges receive the funding they need to provide all young people with a rounded, high-quality education, irrespective of the subjects they choose to study," it said.

"The best way of doing this is to conduct a fundamental review of 16-to-18 funding to restore a link between funding levels and the cost of providing a high-quality sixth-form education."

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said: "Although maths remains the most popular subject at A-level, this premium will open up the opportunity for even more young people to study advanced maths qualifications, providing them with the knowledge and skills for future success."

Although the maths premium is now calculated on a per-qualification basis, rather than per pupil, there are restrictions to stop schools being "double-funded".

Only pupils studying both a maths and further maths qualification in the same academic year will attract double funding, up to £2,400 over two years, but this is the "only combination of qualifications that will attract funding twice in one year", the government said.

## IN brief

## LOW-PAID SIXTH-FORM TEACHERS WIN TWO-PER-CENT PAY BOOST

The lowest-paid teachers at sixth-form colleges will get a two-per-cent pay increase under a deal struck between the National Education Union and the Sixth-Form Colleges Association.

The SFCA, which represents 90 post-16 institutions across England, has agreed to increase the pay of everyone on points 1 to 6 of the national teacher pay scale and a one-per-cent rise to those above point 6. The rise relates to the current academic year, and will be backdated to September 2017.

The move brings sixth-form college teachers in line with other school teachers, who received the same deal last year.

Graham Baird, SFCA's director of HR services, said: "This agreement is at the edge of affordability for most colleges given the ongoing funding pressures facing the sector, but teachers in sixth-form colleges work hard to support their students and it is important that they are rewarded for that."

## SCHOOLS TO BE 'GIVEN A VOICE' IN SAFEGUARDING DISCUSSIONS

Local councils, health services and police forces will have to involve schools in their safeguarding work from now on, the government has announced.

Updated statutory guidance on 'Working together to safeguard children' will include an expectation that all schools be "given a voice" in the work of those who set local safeguarding policy.

Although schools have a legal duty to keep all their pupils safe, they do not currently have to be consulted on how other agencies deal with safeguarding.

The change to the guidance means those agencies will now be expected to make an "explicit reference" to how they plan to involve and "give a voice to" local schools in their safeguarding work.

Of 600 respondents to a question about the change in a recent consultation on the issue, 569 organisations agreed with the proposal to beef up the guidance.

## YORKSHIRE'S RODILLIAN MAT'S SPENDING POWERS SUSPENDED

A Yorkshire academy trust has been hit with a financial notice to improve as a result of "historic failures" of governance and a failure to balance its budget.

Under the terms of the notice, many of the Rodillian multi-academy trust's spending powers are suspended, and decisions have to be run past officials.

However the trust's chief executive has said its deficit increased after being put under pressure by the government to take on struggling schools.

The trust was previously under investigation by the Education and Skills Funding Agency for spending nearly £8,000 a 78-night stay in a four-star hotel for its chief executive.

The ensuing investigation found a number of "significant failings and weaknesses" at the trust. The financial notice to improve said some of those issues still remain "unresolved".

## OCR STRUGGLES AS SCHOOLS ABANDON IGCSE

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

A major exam board has reported a huge slump in certifications as schools shun iGCSEs in favour of more traditional qualifications.

According to Ofqual's annual qualifications market report, OCR, the third-largest provider of GCSE and equivalent qualifications, awarded 21 per cent fewer certificates last year.

Exam boards WJEC and Pearson also saw falls of 17 per cent and 10 per cent respectively, but AQA, the largest provider of GCSEs, only dropped by 0.2 per cent.

The figures have been ascribed to a sudden loss of interest in iGCSEs, which no longer count towards a school's league-table position. Policy experts have warned that boards will continue to narrow the range of subjects on offer as more pupils are entered only for exams that count in league tables.

GCSE certificate numbers dropped across all four major exam boards last summer. At the same time, there was a two-per-cent drop in the number of 16-year-olds in secondary schools.

OCR suffered the biggest loss by far, with a fall from 1.5 million certificates in 2015-16 to 1.2 million last year.

AQA was the only exam board that increased its share of GCSEs, up from 46 per cent to 53 per cent, which means it now certifies more than half of every GCSE pupils sit.

EXAM BOARD	DECREASE IN NUMBER OF CERTIFICATIONS, 2016-17	GCSE MARKET SHARE	
		2015-16	2016-17
AQA	0.2%	46%	53%
Pearson	10%	30%	28%
WJEC	17%	8%	6%
OCR	21%	16%	13%

WJEC and Pearson saw their market share drop by two per cent, and OCR by three per cent.

A source familiar with the situation described such a significant change in market share as a "big shift", the likes of which haven't been seen before. Changes are usually "pretty small".

The removal of the English language and literature iGCSE from headline accountability measures caused many schools to move towards the normal English GCSE.

This has also hit OCR's level 1 and 2 English language qualifications, which fell dramatically from 22,025 to just 1,335 last year.

OCR declined to comment on the situation. AQA's reformed English GCSE at level 1 and 2 was popular however, as schools moved away from the iGCSE. It took 463,050 certificates last year.

Geoff Coombe, AQA's director of qualifications and markets, said the board was "really pleased" with the number of

schools "trusting" its qualifications.

All four boards have also been affected by a new trend in which schools enter pupils for fewer GCSEs, according to Jill Stokoe, a policy advisor at the National Education Union

Where until recently schools entered pupils for as many as 11 GCSEs, they are now more likely to restrict pupils to the seven EBacc subjects to fill the "buckets" for Progress 8, she said.

OCR already announced two years ago it would no longer offer modern foreign languages, after too few pupils took the awards to be viable. Last summer was the final year the board offered language papers.

As schools choose to enter pupils for fewer subjects, market forces mean boards may in the future continue to reduce the awards they offer, she said.

"It's cyclical, because schools respond to accountability measures, and then this will affect the commercial market. So schools could see even fewer awards become available."

## NEWS

## Who says teachers can't laugh at themselves?



## SAMANTHA KING

@KINGSAMANTHA\_

A host of comedians including the likes of Stewart Lee and Jack Dee roasted the teaching profession at a fundraising event for the Education Support Partnership charity.

An audience of 900 teachers and education professionals enjoyed a barrage of pedagogical ribaldry at 'The funny thing about teaching' earlier this week at London's Union Chapel in Islington.

The event was compered by Kerry Godliman, and also featured sets by Mock the Week regulars Hal Cruttenden and Angela Barnes.

There were also laughs from a couple of former teachers turned comedians, Rob Rouse and Jo D'Arcy, who shared anecdotes

and observations from their own times in the classroom.

"I'm delighted to have done this night to support teachers in crisis," said Rouse, a former geography teacher who has since appeared in *Upstart Crow*, a BBC sitcom. "Having experienced the job first-hand, I realised I didn't have the necessary metal to be a teacher, so became a clown instead."

"As a former teacher, I know a sense of humour is pretty essential to get through the day," added D'Arcy. "Teaching is a great, but it's a tough job and the stresses and strains are immense."

More than £21,000 was raised at the event through ticket sales, raffle tickets and donations, which will help the London based charity continue to support the health and wellbeing of the UK's education workforce,

through a 24-hour helpline, grants for financially struggling teachers and various outreach programmes.

"This was a night of laughter where we could share the humour of school and of education and help those who need it," said Julian Stanley, the CEO of Education Support Partnership. "We were delighted to have these great comedians on board for our first comedy gig. Their support is testament to the respect so many of us have for our teachers."



Kerry Godliman

## NEWS

## Unions at loggerheads with big-spending single-school trust

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

An academy trust in Manchester will hold last-ditch talks with unions after staff at its only school passed a vote of no confidence in trustees and threatened to go on strike.

The contretemps between staff at Parrs Wood High School in East Didsbury and bosses at its sponsor, the Greater Manchester Learning Trust, began after a series of upper-management appointments and recent threats of redundancies and pay cuts.

The trust announced a reorganisation at the school, which faces a six-figure deficit, in February. Proposals include redundancies for some teaching assistants and pay cuts for teachers.

At a meeting attended by 164 staff on February 16, employees unanimously passed a vote of no confidence in the trustees over the financial management of the school. The National Education Union, NASUWT and Unison have also threatened industrial action, and trust bosses have now scheduled crisis talks to be held next week.

The unions criticised the timescale of

a consultation on the restructure, which began on February 14 and ends in mid-March, meaning it was interrupted by half term, and want the process suspended.

Parrs Wood is currently the only school in the Greater Manchester Learning Trust, which was set up in June 2016. The school was rated 'good' by Ofsted in 2013, and the governing body made the decision to convert it to an academy in December 2015, despite strong opposition from some staff and parents.

The school has made a series of senior appointments in the past 12 months, but not all of them have gone according to plan.

In early 2017 Vicky Beer, the regional schools commissioner for Lancashire and west Yorkshire, who had approved the conversion, announced she would step down to lead the GMLT – but changed her mind only a week later.

Mark McElwee was appointed headteacher in March 2017, and it was announced in May that Damian Owen would become executive head. *Schools Week* understands that GMLT is also looking to recruit a director of finance.

Staff have "strongly disputed" the need for an executive principal, head of school and finance director for one school at a time of "financial hardship".

The trust's accounts for the year ending August 31, 2017 also show that £989,000 was spent on benefits for the trustees and senior management team for their "services to the academy trust".

"The reasons that have been given for the redundancies and cut backs are that there is a projected deficit of around £200,000 coming up in the next couple of years," said John Morgan, a Manchester-based NEU rep.

"The same staff who campaigned against the school becoming an academy are now saying 'hang on a minute, why do we have an executive headteacher and a finance director when you're making people redundant?'"

"There are other schools in Manchester where we've had similar situations recently where staff have reluctantly shrugged their shoulders because there's a funding crisis. This is different because it is clearly the result of them forming a multi academy trust."

## OFSTED ASKED TO INSPECT ITS OWN 8.1% GENDER PAY GAP

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Ofsted has revealed that men in its organisation are paid on average 8.1 per cent more than women.

Bonuses at the organisation are also heavily weighted in favour of men, who receive on average £196, or 20.6 per cent, more than women.

Ofsted's total workforce, 63 per cent are women. This is higher than the average for the rest of the civil service, which is 54 per cent, and higher than the UK average of 51 per cent.

Under new rules that came in last April, employers with 250 or more employees must publish details of their gender pay gap.

Despite making up almost two thirds of Ofsted's workforce, women make up just over half of top earners at the watchdog.

Ofsted's publication, released this morning, shows that women make up 64 per cent of employees in the bottom pay-quartile and 65 per cent of those in the lower-middle pay-quartile.

They also make up 68 per cent of those in the upper-middle pay-quartile, but just 54 per cent of employees in the top pay-quartile.

Ofsted said that although there are more women than men in almost all pay grades, there are more women in junior roles, which attract lower pay.

For example, there are 243 employees in the "B1 inspector" pay grade, which accounts for 16 per cent of Ofsted's workforce. Of these employees, 83 per cent are women.

"This reflects the demographic of the social care and early years sectors from which we recruit to posts in this grade," a spokesperson said.

The watchdog's average pay gap of 8.1 per cent is lower than the civil service average of 11 per cent, according to the Office for National Statistics.

"We are committed to fair pay irrespective of gender and to improving our gender pay gap," a spokesperson said.

Ofsted will continue to promote policies and initiatives "to support equal opportunities" for its entire workforce and support staff who have caring responsibilities through flexible working practices and procedures.

It will also ensure women "continue to have the opportunity to progress in their careers" through development conversations with their line managers, bespoke succession and talent management schemes.

The body also pledged to "increase the transparency" of how its performance-related pay is applied by publishing the distribution of awards through a dashboard, which will be shared with all staff.

"We will explore how we can attract more men into our workforce to create a more even gender balance, given that we have more women at most levels of our organisation. We will consider this specifically for our administrative, professional and technical workforce."

## FOURTEEN SCHOOLS AT RISK OF CLOSURE

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

Fourteen schools are under threat of closure in Northumberland despite warnings that it would devastate local communities, after the council released a consultation into the future of the county's schools.

The situation arose after the troubled Bright Tribe academy trust pulled out of sponsoring the 'inadequate'-rated Haydon Bridge High School, but the council says many other schools in the west of the county are also undersubscribed and running at a deficit, often in buildings needing "significant capital investment".

Bright Tribe announced it was walking away from Haydon Bridge last November, blaming a "significant and increasing financial deficit" at the 11-to-18 secondary school, which is currently run by a DfE-appointed interim executive board.

The regional schools commissioner for the north, Janet Renou, asked the council to assess the viability of the school, leading to fuller plans to reorganise education in the area.

Northumberland is one of three counties still running a three-tier system of education, where some pupils move between "first", middle and high schools at ages eight and 13 respectively, while others go to primary and secondary schools.

The council plans to close and merge many of the three-tier schools to create more of a two-tier system in the county. The consultation includes three options which involve closing between nine and 14 lower and middle schools. Only one option keeps Haydon Bridge open.

However, independent Northumberland councillor Anne Dale pointed to a population scattered over vast areas of land

in the west of the county, which means the three-tier system is more suitable, and warned that some children would be facing over an hour's journey each way to school if the changes go ahead.

She also criticised the decision to hold the consultation before the government has made a decision on whether the council will be allowed to take over Haydon Bridge and before the autonomous Hadrian Trust, which runs two schools in the area, has made its own decision about whether to become two-tier.

Local parent Helen Yates, who has two children in the three-tier system, set up a petition against the proposed closures on February 22 which attracted 1,000 signatures in less than 24 hours, and which currently has more than 3,000.

She said its success was "testament" to the frustration and concern of parents at the council's plans, and said the three-tier system makes "logistical sense" in a largely rural county which often faces inclement weather.

She added losing first schools in remote villages would be "devastating not just for the kids but for the community" and would result in young families moving away from some areas.

The council has warned that the west of the county has a 30-per-cent surplus of places across local authority schools, with roughly 5,000 pupils in space for around 7,000.

Of the 26 mainstream schools under local authority control in the area, seven have a predicted deficit by the end of this academic year, 10 are predicting one by 2019, and 12 by 2020.

However, the National Education Union's regional official for Northumberland, Russell Greig, is concerned that the proposed closures target schools in outlying areas, and said a full review of education provision should have included academy-run schools too.

"We have to accept there are a lot of schools which need a lot of capital investment but we've got to consider the future life of these communities as well," he said.

Greig was also highly critical of the way the council, Bright Tribe and the government have handled the situation at Haydon Bridge, claiming that none of them had "showered themselves in any kind of glory".

The consultation closes on April 9.

## UNDER THREAT: THE 14 SCHOOLS FACING CLOSURE

Haydon Bridge High School

Bellingham Middle School

Corbridge Middle School

Haltwhistle Middle School (Academy)

Hexham Academy (Middle)

St Joseph's RCVA Middle School

Greenhead C of E Primary School

Greenhaugh First School

West Woodburn First School

Wark C of E First School

Beaufort/Acomb First School

Whitley Chapel C of E First School

Whittonstall First School

Chollerton C of E First School

# NEWS: HEADTEACHERS' ROUNDTABLE SUMMIT 2018

**ALIX ROBERTSON**

@ALIXROBERTSON4

Insufficient funding, excessive accountability, poor teacher retention and limited school autonomy were the core issues which 200 heads tackled last Friday at the second Headteachers Roundtable.

The 2018 summit kicked off with opening remarks by the chair, Stephen Tierney, followed by *Schools Week's* very own Laura McInerney, who grilled Robert Halfon on his recent work as the chair of the Commons education select committee.

David Benson, the principal of Kensington Aldridge Academy, told the moving story of how he put his school back together in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy in June last year.

The rest of the day was filled with an impressive variety of workshops delivered by the big names in education.

The national schools commissioner Sir David Carter discussed ethical leadership, Dame Alison Peacock tackled professional learning, and Professor Becky Allen addressed the elephant in the room: why are so many teachers thinking about leaving?

The day ended with a passionate speech on "bold leadership" by Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the ASCL.

Here *Schools Week* picks out some of the best bits of the day for those who missed out on the fun.

Opening the summit, Tierney challenged

delegates to consider how they could "actually start to lead the agenda".

"We don't need permission to do some things," he said, reminding the room that "collectively we have massive experience and daily intelligence of what is going on that we can use to guide policy thinking".

A quote from Archbishop Desmond Tutu set the tone: "There comes a point when we need to stop just pulling people out of the river, we need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in."

For educators, the problems lurking upstream include the "the pernicious accountability system" and "systemic and systematic change".

In terms of accountability, he said, in a recent Twitter poll of 954 teachers over half said that more accountability was most responsible for increased workload.

He added that ministers must stop saying that there are more teachers and more money in education than ever before, without acknowledging that there are also more pupils.

"If we've got another 3,900 primary teachers, with 166,000 more pupils, that's one to 41," he noted.

But by working together leaders can start to address some of the problems their schools face.

"Let's consider the outrageous today for education and make that the norm," he said.

## Headteachers' Roundtable



Stephen Tierney

Dame Alison Peacock

Laura McInerney and Robert Halfon

## THE ART OF ACADEMY ETHICS

Academy trusts that "don't get it right" have problems with "values, beliefs and ethics" in common, the national schools commissioner has said.

Sir David Carter framed his presentation at the summit around the idea that "the standards you walk past are standards you accept".

Originally a statement made by Lieutenant-general David Morrison to the Australian army in 2013, Carter applied it to the responsibility he sees for headteachers to enact ethical leadership.

"If there is one thing that [academy] trusts that don't get it right have in common, it is around values and beliefs and ethics," he said.

He told the audience to consider which standards they are not willing to "walk past" and how they could "embody" these values, making them a good role model for other school staff. This in turn can "raise the expectations in the communities we serve".

Enacting a school's core values isn't just about having a mission statement or praising

examples of good behaviour; "our actions also make explicit our values".

Values should be taken into account when appointing and promoting staff, carrying out performance management, responding to challenging visitors to the school, and setting targets for the future.

It is important that school leaders do not see their staff as "robotic practitioners", and instead understand "the need to develop people professionally and personally".

Sharing good practice is an important way to achieve this, and multi-academy trusts in particular should be looking more towards



Sir David Carter

learning from each other.

"One of my really big challenges in my day job is that multi academy trusts are really collaborative within themselves but not enough with each other," he said.

He advised MAT leaders to think about how they present the values of their trust to different audiences.

While some CEOs "are really superb at managing that small interaction with eight or nine people talking about the vision", they struggle to get the same message across in a presentation to 200 people. Others "find it quite hard to get down to the granularity in the small meetings".

Carter's final advice to heads on ethical leadership involved four tests to stay on track.

Firstly, the sleeping test: if I do this can I sleep at night? The newspaper test: would I still do this if it were published in a newspaper? The mirror test: if I do this can I feel comfortable looking at myself in the mirror? And finally, "the killer one", the teenager test: would I mind my children knowing about this?

"I think if we have that at the back of our minds, with some of the other things from today, then that spirit and that embodiment of ethical leadership will live in our school system," he said.



Samantha Twiselton and Raj Unsworth



Shane Mann

Binks Neill



**SEE PAGE 18 FOR A SUMMARY OF BECKY ALLEN'S TALK ON HOW HEADTEACHERS CAN TAKE BACK CONTROL OF SCHOOL AUDIT CULTURE**

**AMY MITCHELL**

**HEAD OF CURRICULUM DESIGN, TEACH FIRST**



I was really interested in what Tom Sherrington said about the impact of assessment on workload, and how it can permeate through the school. There are small changes that you can make at a senior level that will impact on everything that your teachers are doing.

**IAN WILSON**

**HEADTEACHER, BISHOPS' BLUE COAT CE HIGH SCHOOL**



I've enjoyed being challenged and I enjoyed some of the inspiration from the Grenfell headteacher. I also thought the education select committee interview was illuminating. It has been good to challenge some of the preconceptions around the audit trail and assessment, those aspects were empowering.

**PETER SAINSBURY**

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PARTNER, GUILDSBOROUGH ACADEMY**



It was a really good session about the Chartered College of Teaching, with a lot of honesty and openness. It is something to promote the status of teachers justifiably, and that's well overdue. I think any efforts to raise the status of teaching in the eyes of parents and the community is very important.

## Creative ways to reduce the mark-load

**H**eadteachers and other school leaders focus too much on gathering information needed for accountability and not enough on what teachers need to improve the way they teach, according to one head-turned-education-consultant.

Tom Sherrington presented his practical solutions for lightening teacher workload, through more efficient approaches to marking and assessment.

He argued that leaders focus too much on gathering the information they require for accountability purposes and not enough on what teachers need to do to improve the way they teach their pupils.

"A lot of what goes on in schools related to assessment is autopilot; it hasn't been built from the ground up, it's just been done because of people thinking that's what you're supposed to do," he said.

"The role of assessment is about building knowledge, it's not about macro descriptors of how well we are doing. It's primarily about using information to tell you how well things are going, in order to teach more effectively."

Teachers under pressure to mark lots of work and regularly submit data to a central system end up guessing at the results because they are so short of time, he continued.

"It keeps everyone off your back. That's kind of how teachers think when they have to do something that doesn't help them. We need to be conscious of creating extra

layers of assessment data which are for leaders and managers, and not for teachers."

One solution is the benefit of whole-class feedback, in which the teacher collects the class' books and does a broad assessment of them all on the same day, looking for common errors and concepts that need reinforcing.

The teacher can then return the books the next lesson and address feedback to the whole group drawing out repeated errors, rather than writing out corrections for each child.

"Whole-class feedback works really well, but you need to validate it as a headteacher," Sherrington explained. "You then have to tolerate that you won't see marking in every book."

Overall Sherrington recommends a "diet of feedback". Teachers should aim, across several weeks, to provide a combination of in-class feedback through questioning, whole-class feedback, self-assessed quizzes, peer assessment and redrafting, in-depth marking of one of two selected pieces of work or tests, and checks of pupils' skills in presenting and organising their work.

Headteachers need to actively encourage efficient techniques such as whole-class feedback and self- or peer-assessment, to ensure their staff feel empowered to use these assessment approaches, Sherrington advised.

"Regardless of the system, every teacher needs to know the answer to the question, when someone is struggling in my subject, what do I do about it?" he said.

"That should be the meat of departmental discussion. Who cares if you've got the data if you can't answer this question: 'so what?'"



Tom Sherrington

## SURVIVING IN THE FACE OF TRAGEDY

**T**he principal of a school in the shadow of Grenfell Tower has discussed how his team fell back on its "underlying mission" to serve a traumatised community.

David Benson (pictured), the principal of Kensington Aldridge Academy in London, spoke to delegates about how his school had recovered after the tragedy of the fire, in which 71 people including four of his pupils died, in June.

Pupils attending the school live within half a mile of the tower and the impact of what happened was huge; Benson and his team were on the ground from the early hours of the morning when the fire started. As well as the four deaths, the school's original site was unusable in the aftermath of

the disaster.

But it only closed for two days and managed to get going again in buildings belonging to a nearby school – amid the pressures of public exams.

"I think it helps that it's not selective and that it's an all-ability intake and a community school, because we really fell back on that underlying mission, to serve this community," he told the summit.

Benson cited three factors in keeping things afloat: the school's teaching and learning model, a thorough staff training programme, and non-hierarchical lesson observations.

The school has a handbook for teachers which is designed to be a "useable manual" to help staff when they are planning lessons or

schemes of work.

This clear model for teaching and learning meant that teachers could "walk in to a classroom that they'd never seen before and continue to deliver great lessons without really missing a beat".

Kensington Aldridge also provides 10 training days a year instead of five, alongside weekly twilight sessions, and there is "an understanding that training is for everyone". Much of this is video-based, from an archive of examples of KAA lessons.

"I think that's the minimum we need to get to the standards that we want, other education systems do a lot more than that," Benson said.

Thirdly, lesson observation "is not a top-down performance-management accountability tool", but driven by teacher requests to observe each other. Observations are graded, to ensure a "widespread understanding in the school of what outstanding practice is".

These three pillars ensured that alongside their personal commitment, staff "also had the expertise to continue to teach lessons in a very challenging set of circumstances".



### NAVDEEP SANGHARA

EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER, INSPIRE PARTNERSHIP



I liked what David Benson shared about responding to the Grenfell fire; how they had to be bold, brave and resilient. What they did was incredible, moving schools twice but still trusting the children and believing in them. David Carter also did a great session, with some valuable tools to take back to SLT.

### CHRIS ANDREW

HEADTEACHER, ST JAMES THE GREAT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



I appreciated Tom Sherrington's view on assessment. Having been in post for a year and a half as a head, our assessment systems aren't really fit for purpose – they are massively overwhelming for teachers. We are looking to change that around and I'll be implementing some of his ideas.

### DAME ALISON PEACOCK

CEO, CHARTERED COLLEGE OF TEACHING



It was a brilliant day, I loved the collegiality, the warmth, the energy. A year ago I spoke about what I was going to be doing leading the Chartered College, today I talked about what has happened as a result of so many good teachers wanting to join. Now I can take it to the next stage.

## What we learned at the HTRT Summit 2018

- In seven years, Britain has created more multi-academy trusts than America created in 30 years of the policy, according to *Schools Week's* contributing editor Laura McNerney.
- Robert Halfon, the chair of the education select committee, thinks there is too much bureaucracy around the work of the regional schools commissioners: "It needs to be much clearer and cut through the red tape."
- Teachers are happy with their lives more often than not, according to Professor Becky Allen, director of the Centre for Education Improvement Science, but the quality of leadership and management and a heavy workload of 55 to 59 hours a week are their main reasons for wanting to leave.
- McNerney outlined important findings from Teacher Tapp research on workload: 75 per cent of teachers surveyed spend three or more hours a week marking, 60 per cent do three or more additional duties, and 50 per cent run after-school clubs.
- Allen also pointed out that Ofsted's shorter notice period is driving workload because "inspection-compliant paperwork must be ready at all times".
- Schools face many challenges with recruitment, according to Helena Marsh, the executive principal of Chilford Hundred Education Trust. These include having to pay more for teachers in shortage subjects, being forced to collapse classes when teachers can't be recruited, and resorting to hiring non-specialists or non-qualified teachers to fill vacancies.
- A new building was erected in just nine weeks for David Benson's school Kensington Aldridge Academy after the Grenfell Tower fire, making "a mockery" of the usual pace of government school building projects.
- As a former grammar school boy, the new education secretary Damian Hinds is likely to push for greater selection in the school system, McNerney said. Keep an eye out for new grammar school satellite sites and post-16 selective schools.

## NEWS



## EDITORIAL

## Let's get a bit of national consistency on absence fines

The Supreme Court's decision to favour the Isle of Wight against Jon Platt, the parent who refused to pay absence fines for taking his daughter out of school without permission in 2015, sent the nation a message: these fines should not be taken lightly.

The schools minister also wrote to local authorities during the row, warning them not to refund parents fined for taking their own children out of school, nor to reduce the pressure on collecting those fines.

But despite these signals, some councils are still letting three quarters of the fines they do issue slide. They give plenty of justifications for doing so, with claims ranging from trying to protect vulnerable families to honouring a school's decision to withdraw the charge.

With so many fines going unpaid and so many reasons for allowing them to fall by the wayside, perhaps we should be asking whether this is the best way to tackle the issue?

Some councils have already decided to bypass the process: Warrington instead uses a fast-track to prosecution, whereby parents attend magistrates' court. Before this, instead of issuing a fine, the council works with the family over a nine-week period if their child's absence has fallen below 90 per cent.

On the other hand, if we do take the outcome of the Platt case as a sign that these fines are indeed an effective way to deal with unauthorised absences, they must at the very least be enforced consistently across the country. School leaders and parents in London should know that the consequences, and their enforcement, for an unauthorised absence are the same as they are for a parent in Birmingham or Newcastle.

It is promising to see local councils looking carefully at the best ways to manage unauthorised absences – but more than ever we need a decent standard of consistency across the country.



## Underinvestment in SEND must stop

As ASCL's Geoff Barton says, today's EPI report on the distance special-school pupils have to travel to learn is indeed timely.

What we're seeing is the culmination of years of underinvestment, both in special schools themselves, and in the council services set up to support them with things like home-to-school transport.

With pupil numbers only expected to rise, the government needs to stump up the cash for more than the small number of new specialist

institutions currently in development – and it must support existing schools financially. SEND pupils usually seem like an afterthought.

The 'Schools that work for everyone' consultation failed to live up to its own name when it ignored the most vulnerable pupils in the entire system. The government must not prioritise pet projects like grammar schools over the wellbeing of those with special educational needs and disabilities ever again.

## Just how much of a virtue is forgiveness?

The curious case of the St Barnabas Trust raises the question of just when trustees should be hung out to dry for "failing". Is it when all their schools move into special measures? Fair enough. When most of their schools are rated 'requires improvement'? Possibly. What if none are in special measures?

Slipping below the magic 'good' threshold reminds us of the critical difference between a 'strong' and 'standard' GCSE pass – it's close, but if you miss it, heads may roll.

Schools Week appreciates the

professional pride of directors is not the reason schools are run – but if the Church of England is going to support schools, it should emphasise that support rather than a zero-tolerance approach, or risk tarnishing its good name.



## 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](http://www.whiteroseacademies.org/careers). Should you wish to visit our Trust and our academies, contact Mrs Yvonne Hare at [Hare.Y@whiteroseacademies.org](mailto:Hare.Y@whiteroseacademies.org), who will be happy to arrange a tour at your convenience.

**Mulberry**  
Schools Trust

 **Green Spring Academy**  
SHOREDITCH



## Role: Executive Principal

School: Green Spring Academy Shoreditch    Borough: Tower Hamlets  
Age Range: 11-19    Start: 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto: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.*

## 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](mailto: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.



# CORE Education Trust is Proud and Happy to Welcome our New Schools



## Headteacher - City Academy Birmingham

We became the sponsor of these well established Schools on March 1st this year. As part of our new plans from September, we are pleased to announce an opportunity for an exceptional leader to join our new team as [Headteacher of City Academy Birmingham](#).

As leader of this dynamic, city centre School, you will have the opportunity to shape our new vision which will include a major strategic partnership with Birmingham City Football Club. You will also have access to our impressive network of national and regional partners.

CORE Education Trust's mission is to provide children with a high quality educational experience through its four CORE Values of [Collaboration](#), [Opportunity](#), [Respect](#) and [Excellence](#).

CORE was acknowledged last year by the National Governance Association in its annual award category of outstanding Multi Academy Trust and was hailed by Ofsted for its "powerful moral commitment to ensuring that pupils succeed not only academically but also to become responsible citizens" when it successfully removed two Birmingham Schools from Special Measures in 2016. One of those schools, Rockwood Academy, featured in the top 2 percent highest performing Schools in the country against the national Progress 8 headline measure in 2017.

[Apply by:](#) 12 noon Thursday 15 March 2018  
[Job start:](#) September 2018

[School Visits:](#) 6/13 March 2018  
[Contract term:](#) Permanent

[Interview:](#) 21 and 22 March 2018  
[Salary:](#) L30 – L36

Following the shortlisting of applicants, if you are selected to attend an interview you will be contacted by CORE Education Trust by email.

The Interview will be held across two days and will consist of an Assessment on the first day with a Panel interview and Media exercise to be undertaken on the following day.

For further enquiries please contact Maxine Whyte, Executive Assistant to Adrian Packer CBE, CEO on 0121 794 8558.

We are also inviting applications from other senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff for all our Schools. Specific vacancies can be found on our website.



# Head Teacher



**Courthouse Junior School**  
*'Respect, Enjoyment & Perseverance'*

**Date Posted:** 14th February 2018

**Contract Term:** Permanent

**Contract Type:** Full-time

**Closing Date:** 9 March 2018

**Start Date:** 1 September 2018

**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.

Courthouse Junior School are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All offers of employment are subject to a successful enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

**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](mailto:governors@courthousejunior.co.uk)

# Headteacher

**Marlborough Centre, Hoo St. Werburgh Primary School**  
**Leadership Scale L18 - 24 FT**



Are you a dynamic, passionate, and progressive leader? Do you have the skills and drive to lead a fantastic Primary School from 'Good' to 'Outstanding'? Are you passionate about achieving outstanding teaching and learning in every classroom? Do you want to inspire children through an engaging curriculum? Do you excel at developing your teaching and support staff to be the best they can possibly be? If so, then this could be the role for you!

We have an exciting opportunity for an enthusiastic, experienced and skilled individual to take on the role of Headteacher at Hoo St Werburgh Primary School, part of the Rivermead Inclusive Trust.

The ideal candidate will be expected to have a continuous presence within the school, be responsible for leading and supporting staff as well as collaborate with the Head of the Marlborough Centre which shares the site. Responsibilities will include the development of staff, relevant policies, training and the management of data as well as innovative leadership and being an outstanding practitioner.

Hoo St Werburgh Primary School & Marlborough Centre share the inclusive ethos of the Rivermead Inclusive Trust. We firmly believe that every child has a right to an education, no matter what barriers they have to learning. We aim to instil in our pupils an enthusiasm for learning and an interest in the world around them. We have high expectations of our pupils and staff and strive to provide a learning environment that ensures our pupils are challenged and make good or better progress in all aspects of their school life.

We celebrate every aspect of our pupils' learning from their social and emotional development and life skills acquisition to the national curriculum subjects of reading, writing, maths and more.

There are over 500 children on roll, organised into 24 classes, with two classes per year group in the main school as well as 3 mixed age provisions for children with additional needs. The Marlborough Centre has 6 classes catering for 65 children within the secure specialist setting. We also have a newly established nursery class attached to the school.

At a recent external inspection, the school secured 'Good' with several elements of outstanding. The drive for the new headteacher will be to secure 'Outstanding' across the school.

Visits to Hoo St Werburgh Primary School are highly recommended. Please email [hr@rivermeadinclusivetrust.com](mailto:hr@rivermeadinclusivetrust.com) for an application form or contact **Karen Watkin**, HR Manager: **01634 338348** if you would like to have an informal discussion with either the Director of School Improvement or the CEO.

**Closing date: 14th March 2018 noon**

**Interviews: Week beginning 19th March 2018**

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expect all staff to share this commitment.

All postholders are subject to enhanced DBS checks

# READERS' REPLY



EMAIL



TWEET



FACEBOOK



WEBSITE

## Revealed: The 5 schools investigated over severance pay

**Jane Eades, London**

Another example of the lack of control over and oversight of academy trusts. According to this article it is getting worse, not better, and not surprising when there are about nine times as many academy trusts as there are English LEAs. The current government's plan for education is clearly not fit for purpose (except for those pocketing vast amounts of money).

## DfE names underperforming private schools

**Mark Watson, Gloucestershire**

Well done for forcing the publication of these notices – there should no place to hide for poor behaviour. But what was the rationale for including comments from one person only, where that person is an avowed enemy of private schools and wants them all shut down. Who thought Melissa Benn would give objective commentary?

## How the schools community is learning to work with flexible time

**Fabians' Education Group // @EduFabians**

With teacher retention in the UK an issue, this sort of initiative is welcome. If other top employers are becoming increasingly flexible with regard to working times then how can teaching compete for the best recruits?

## Catholics 'cautious' over faith cap commitment

**David Pollock, London**

Canon law DOES NOT prevent the Catholic Church from opening schools under the present capped regime. This is a great con by the RC Church that the government is being duped by (Greening saw through it, I suspect) – or that Hinds is using as an excuse to do favours to his own church. There is nothing in canon law to this effect and the representative organisation for Catholic schools in Europe boasts that they are open and inclusive.

## Flexible working won't solve teacher workload

**Dave Cobb // @David\_C\_Cobb**

Can't agree with you here. All the evidence from workforce experts around the globe forecasts a need for flexible working. I can't imagine why UK schools should be an exception. There's also a need to give teachers the opportunity to earn and learn outside the classroom.

## Profile: Drew Povey, executive head, Harrop Fold

## REPLY OF THE WEEK



**Anne McNeill // @AnnieMain**

I for one can't wait to see *Educating Greater Manchester* back on our screens. Everyone needs to see the real challenges, tears, laughter and frustration facing all staff and youngsters every day. It should be compulsory viewing!

Reply of the week receives a *Schools Week* mug!



Two conferences this week and I got the now obligatory conference-chat about robots at both.

Andreas Schleicer, the head of the PISA tests and a perma-attende at conferences, showed a slide at the Whole Education Conference stating that "the kind of things that are easy to teach are now easy to automate, digitise or outsource".

The room nodded, enthralled.

But is it true?

Maths seems easy to automate.

Calculators are a simple form of computer. Yet sums are not easy to teach. Pupils spend around an hour a day doing maths for 12 years, but most would struggle to quickly divide 289 by 17, whereas it took google a fraction of a second to tell me the answer (it's 17).

Thinking about it more I couldn't help wondering what things really are easy to teach? Every child soon learns how to turn a handle, as my friends with toddlers are horrified to find. Hence we might imagine this is an easy thing to teach.

Robots, however, struggle with handles. Boston Dynamics recently unveiled a video of a "robot-dog" which took eight years to programme to – gasp – OPEN DOORS. Plus the rigmarole that poor botdog must go through to make its escape suggests that we are very far from translating things that humans find easy into things that robots can do.

All of which may explain the negative reaction at the second conference of my week. At the Head Teachers' Roundtable



## LAURA MCINERNEY

Contributing editor, *Schools Week*

## I for one do not give a stuff about our new robot overlords

Summit, Robert Halfon, the chair of the parliamentary education committee, said he was concerned that 30 per cent of jobs

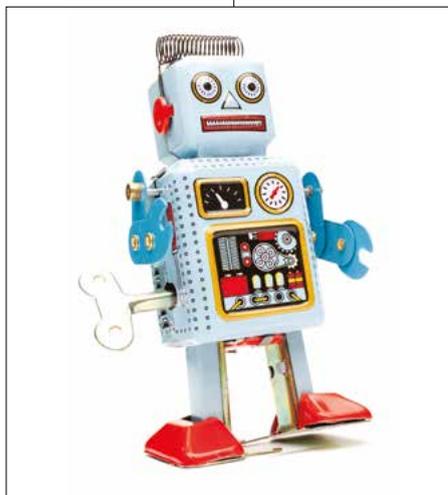
would soon be done by robots. You could almost hear a hiss in the room as the words left his mouth.

Yet in fairness to Halfon, there is evidence in his corner. Bernard Marr, an author and public speaker, who sells a lot of services prepping people for a digital future, recently released research

showing that 35 per cent of jobs are indeed at risk of automation.

But less-invested experts put the number lower. US market researchers Forrester guess six per cent, while McKinsey reckons that 60 per cent of jobs could see a third of their activities automated (which seems a roundabout way of saying that just 20 per cent of jobs are at threat).

But then McKinsey's report also says the number of people



needing to switch jobs will be between 75 million and 375 million. That's equivalent to everyone in the UK and Ireland losing their job at the lower end, and the entire US population losing theirs at the top end. It's so wide a prediction that it's basically useless.

Ultimately we don't know how the future will go. Daisy Christodolou, who wrote *The Seven Myths of Education*, tells the story of how her grandparents' handkerchief market stall, which they ran for 50 years, was wiped out in the 1990s by Sunday trading laws and Kleenex. No amount of worrying about the future when her grandparents were at school would have solved that problem.

Instead of gnashing our teeth and trying divine future worlds, I was pleased to hear Emran Mian, a senior civil servant at the Department for Education, talk about the National Retraining Scheme – one of the government's manifesto pledges last year. As Mian explained it, the scheme will look at areas where jobs are at risk of automation and create training packages to reskill workers. Job done, and not a single school policy needs to change.

Unfortunately, the line "we could retrain workers who lose their jobs" is not very natty as a conference slide or a soundbite. So here's my suggestion to everyone at the DfE: rebadge the National Retraining Scheme as the Anti-Robot Defence Plan. Everyone loves robots. It'll be the talk of the conferences in no time.

# CLAUDIA HARRIS

CATH MURRAY | @CATHMURRAY\_

## Claudia Harris, CEO, the Careers and Enterprise Company

Claudia Harris, the CEO of the Careers and Enterprise Company, wants to give young people everywhere the kind of opportunities to network with employers that she was given herself during her teenage years at the prestigious St Paul's independent school in London.

"I was exposed to lots of very impressive-looking businesswomen who walked around and talked about their jobs and really inspired me to go and pursue the career that I did pursue, which is consulting and in business," she explains, insisting that it was these women, rather than her entrepreneur father, who inspired her.

Another of the reasons she feels passionately about this space is that her mum – previously a housewife – got her first full-time job at 50, as a lecturer at Kingston University. "She absolutely loved working," relates Harris. "And I just saw the impact that had on her personally. It's not just about your job, it changes your life. I've always felt that having a job you like is a really profound part of your human experience."

If employers were so keen to visit her school, they should be keen to visit more schools. "Why are they going to a few schools? It's a huge opportunity," she exclaims. "Why wouldn't you just make it easier for them to go to all schools?"

Which was precisely the founding idea behind the CEC in December 2014. The education secretary of the day, Nicky Morgan, envisaged it as an "employer-led" umbrella organisation that would improve careers education for children aged 12 to 18, support greater engagement between schools, colleges and employers, coordinate (but not provide) activities, and "work closely with the education and careers sectors". It would also eventually become self-funding – a goal they are currently working towards.

Applying for the CEO job was "a no-brainer", says Harris, who explains that she'd focused on employer engagement with schools during her time as a partner at the management consultancy firm McKinsey.

"The role came up and then someone told me about it when I was telling them what my great passion was, and they were like 'have you heard of this organisation? Maybe you should think about applying for it.'"

The government has been accused of squandering resources by running two careers services in parallel – the CEC and the National Careers Service – notably by the chair of the education select committee Robert Halfon.

So is there duplication? The history of national careers guidance policy is convoluted, with

four major changes since the Employment and Training Act first gave the secretary of state responsibility for ensuring that all young people had access to guidance back in 1973.

The most recent changes can be traced to the Education Act 2011, which devolved that responsibility to schools, a move that has been heavily criticised due to the perceived conflict of interest, i.e. that schools would prefer to hold onto their students rather than direct them elsewhere. Local authorities are no longer required to provide a careers service for anyone but young people deemed to be vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The NCS was launched in April 2012, and the CEC three years later, resulting in general confusion. But Harris thinks that apart from the names – she hasn't been able to persuade the NCS to enter into a joint rebranding exercise – the distinction between the two is "actually quite clear". The NCS, which is highly rated by customers, provides confidential and impartial advice over the phone, online or face-to-face, from qualified careers advisers, for anyone over the age of 13, including adults.

But no organisation had focused on putting employers in touch with pupils or creating "programmatic career support for young people", she explains.

The massively bumped-up role handed to the CEC in the government's December 2017 careers strategy did little to assuage its critics, especially given how much of the press to date – not least from this newspaper – had been negative, lambasting them for achieving little with their £70

numbers were wrong. We were just unbelievably careful about how we used the money."

The £70 million of government funding was stretched over an entire parliament, she explains, with between £5 and £6 million every year spent on careers coordinators and the same amount on programmes.

Over the past three years, they have built a network of careers coordinators across England, each of whom is responsible for connecting 20 schools and colleges with local businesses, employers, careers service providers, mentoring organisations and charities. Once the CEC has rolled out the programme fully, the 120 coordinators will have burgeoned to almost 200, and every single mainstream school and college in England will have access to a designated local coordinator.

Each school is also matched with one enterprise advisor – a volunteer from the world of work – to help the headteacher or careers lead develop a plan. This is based on an initial self-evaluation done through the CEC's online Compass tool, designed to assess how well the school is achieving the Gatsby good career guidance benchmarks – a set of eight standards defining world-class career guidance that were developed as part of an international study in 2013.

Their second major arena is programme support, and they provide funding to about 100 national and local projects that provide high-quality employer engagement activities for schools. Seventy-five per cent of their programme spend is concentrated in the designated social deprivation

"cold spots. Green Power is one example, an organisation that helps students to build and race kit cars. In the Humber region, the CEC paid for 30 cars for 30 schools, then on the back of that several businesses came in funded another 40 cars.

"So we had this huge race," she enthuses, having got to drive one.

The theory behind the CEC approach is simple: research by the Education Employers Task Force has shown that young people who have four or more encounters with the world of work earn 18 per cent more on average than those that don't, and are 86 per cent less likely to be NEET. This is why one of the eight Gatsby benchmarks states that every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer, "meaningful" being "one in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace". At the moment this is happening in only about 40 per cent of schools, according to their survey.

Harris speaks with an almost religious belief in the power of evidence-based interventions to improve outcomes. "The three things young

## "WHY WOULDN'T YOU JUST MAKE IT EASIER FOR THEM TO GO TO ALL SCHOOLS?"

million of state funding. Harris appears shocked that anyone would think this: "We are obsessed that we spend this money correctly. Obsessed with it. We know that money is tight and that you've got to have an impact."

The Education Endowment Foundation is currently running randomised control trials to measure impact on young people's motivation, engagement and ultimately, destinations, although this last one will obviously take a few years.

In the meantime, why didn't they make an effort to correct the negative media perception?

"We take feedback very seriously, and we listen to it all the time, and if there are things that we need to improve we work incredibly hard to improve them," she says. "We thought that some of it was just wrong. I mean, literally, some of the



people need are engagement with the world of work, information, and help making a plan," she assures me. "The schools who do best on Gatsby, the one thing they have in common is that they have a careers leader." Then again, she does have a story in her own past that could be interpreted as a Damascene conversion.

Early in her career, she spent a year in the prime minister's delivery unit, in the team tasked with reducing the MRSA superbug by 50 per cent in three years.

"This doesn't seem to be achievable," she announced in her very first meeting. "I've looked at all peer comparisons in other countries and there is no example of this ever having happened."

This was "not the right answer in government", she was promptly told. She left after a year to take up a fully-funded MBA at Harvard Business School, but the team went on to deliver and even surpass their target, and she has kept in touch with many of her colleagues from that time: "I just learned a huge amount from the people I worked with".

Harris is fortunate to have all the evidence at her disposal, with much of the groundwork having been laid by the Education Employers Task Force and the Gatsby Foundation. Confident in this knowledge, her company's message is simple: "Schools: do Gatsby, here's how. Employers: do encounters, here's how."

But what about those who fall through the gaps – surely one encounter per year is not enough? "We think you need more," she agrees, adding that young people have to be able to talk to the employer and ask questions.

"The theory of change is you meet the first person, they do nothing for you," she explains. "You meet the second person, you think, 'I definitely don't want to do that'. You meet the third and that's actually useful because you're like, 'I really don't want to do that! I've got to think about what I do want to do'. You meet the fourth person and they describe their job and you think 'that's something I can get excited about'.

"And the collective impact of it is that you

# PROFILE: CLAUDIA HARRIS

“THE THREE THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE NEED ARE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORLD OF WORK, INFORMATION, AND HELP MAKING A PLAN”



don't end up probably picking from what any of those people do, but you do end up thinking 'I'm going to take control of this situation'. And that is the theory of change, and that's why those multiple encounters work."

This is also why diverse mentors are vital, because if you meet somebody "for whatever reason, they don't have to look like you, they just remind you of you and they are doing something that you like to do, that creates a spark and a line between where you are now and where you can imagine being in the future."

Research shows that young people need to be able to visualise their future in order

to make plans and feel in control, she says: "so CSI causes a big uptick in forensics, like Bake Off and baking, because it's real and you can imagine it. It is just so much about the visual."

She loves to get out in the field and is herself an enterprise advisor for the same west London comprehensive that her dad used to attend in his day.

"Because how do you know anything if you're not on the ground? I'm a huge believer – and that's what I learned at McKinsey – that you've got to be in schools, talking to businesses, out and about, in the cold-spot areas, talking to those people, understanding what their challenges are, to be effective."

## CV

- 2015 – present:** CEO, the Careers and Enterprise Company
- 2008 – 2015:** Partner, McKinsey
- 2006 – 2008:** MBA, Harvard Business School
- 2005 – 2006:** Health team member, prime minister's delivery unit,
- 2003 – 2005:** Business analyst, McKinsey
- 1999 – 2002:** Politics, philosophy and economics, Oxford University

## IT'S A PERSONAL THING

### What's your favourite book?

This is not an easy one; I read a lot. Lately, I've enjoyed *Do not say we have nothing*, by Madelein Thien. It's a pretty intense novel and it's basically about multiple generations of people in China through the communist era. Also *Ready Player One*, a sci-fi book. It's amazing, I love sci-fi. And they're turning it into a Spielberg film in a couple of months. I'm really excited about that.

### What is a good gift for you?

I'm not very into things. Something thoughtful, like a nice book. If someone gave me a book that's good that I would enjoy, that is like the ultimate gift.

### What would you have done if you hadn't taken this career path?

What would I have done? I did once want to be a journalist. I edited my school newspaper.

### What was your position in the family hierarchy growing up?

I was the elder sibling of two. I'm very close to my little sister, she's amazing – she's a lawyer now and is about to get married. She's three and a half years younger than me. She was cooler, I was less cool. In that sense 100% per cent typical!

### What motto would you put on a billboard?

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## OPINION



## REBECCA ALLEN

Director of the Centre for Education Improvement Science, UCL Institute of Education

### Headteachers: How to take back control of the school audit culture

**The endless papertrails modern school life seemingly requires are now actively making things worse for our overworked teachers. Becky Allen explains how to change all that**

Teaching should be the best job in the world. It has all the components of a satisfying profession: autonomy, impact, purpose and a sense of human connection. So why are teachers leaving in droves?

I believe one of the reasons is the high-stakes audit and accountability culture that undermines so many teachers' senses of autonomy and purpose.

It's entirely understandable why it's come to this. Required to prove at a moment's notice that they know their schools' strengths and weaknesses, senior leadership teams develop a cascade of policies to mirror what kind of evidence they reckon Ofsted will be looking for. This audit culture means that, in many schools, the teacher no longer gets to decide how to prepare and deliver lessons, mark pupils' work, or assess and record learning.

But this audit culture has displaced a culture of trust in schools.

And it hasn't improved educational standards, not least because auditing teaching and learning isn't really possible.

The links between what we observe through auditing activities and the quality of learning is simply unproven.

Auditing isn't necessary for talented, well-motivated teachers, and in fact it can undermine their intrinsic motivation, thereby making things worse. Auditing doesn't work for weak teachers who lack the capacity to improve or who don't care. In fact, it only works for the small subset of teachers who are a little bit lazy and unfocused but who with hard-edged accountability will push themselves to get on with their work.

I don't want to be dismissive of teacher underperformance. Where it happens it literally wastes days or years of children's lives. But my fear is that, in trying to fix this problem, we have made life intolerable for those who were always doing a great job.

So many systems of control in schools today presume that we have the scientific evidence to support top-down policies telling teachers how they should teach. I wish we did, but we simply don't. Teaching remains a complex and poorly understood endeavour, so we need it to be a prestigious profession with competitive entry and sufficient supply, so headteachers are able find staff in whom they have confidence. We need teachers who

thrive in trust cultures, rather than those who rely on systems of control.

The following points, therefore, make up my call to school leaders.

#### Take control of the audit culture

You can survive an Ofsted inspection while implementing autonomy-supportive leadership, but only if you take care how you do it. First, educate yourself and make an official plan to show you are purposively making management changes. Second, do this as part of a gang with other heads – there is safety in numbers and it makes it look like a "proper" programme. Third, do it scientifically so that you can show Ofsted how you are measuring the impact of your changes on workload, teacher satisfaction and time freed for development activities.

**“ We have made life intolerable for those who were always doing a great job**

#### Reduce workload in a purposeful way

Carry out an experiment for a couple of weeks. Set school hours (e.g. 8am - 4:30pm) outside of which teachers aren't allowed to do any work. This will allow you to reappraise which parts of their job are essential and which can be ditched.

Read the Ofsted Myths to devise workload-saving changes to school practice that are consistent with the current inspection framework.

#### Better triage of underperforming teachers

Stop managing everyone the same way: give professional autonomy to your good teachers and triage the others appropriately. Could this teacher get better with a lot of support? Then give them the support they need. Another teacher can't or won't get better with a lot of support? Then create the audit trail to begin capability procedures.

Teacher shortages make it easier than ever for teachers to move schools. Teachers can and should seek out working cultures that promote autonomy so they feel fulfilled at work. Make sure your own teachers can find this in your school so they don't seek it elsewhere.



## MARTIN MATTHEWS

National leader of governance

### Five ways to take the lead on improving governance

**A few things Damian Hinds could do to improve education governance that would cost him nothing, as suggested by Martin Matthews**

Every time we get a new secretary of state for education we begin another round of competition: the various educational interests vying for attention, each trying to shove their pet issue higher up the to-do list. Lobbying is after all as much a part of politics as breathing in.

Governance has no vested political, financial or regulatory interest in lobbying politicians. That could be why our issues rarely make top 10. But that doesn't mean they're not problems that should be heard. Here are five simple changes to governance that I believe would cost the Department for Education nothing, and have a positive impact on education.

#### Choose to be either a member or trustee

This is as simple as it sounds. We should make it so that a person can either only be a member or a trustee of a multi-academy trust. That would split accountability cleanly into different layers. It could be achieved by changes to statutory regulations, something that is within the gift of the DfE. It would eliminate a common conflict of interest and improve accountability, and would in turn sharpen the board – as they are accountable to the members.

#### Choose to be either a trustee or supplier

Again, this is as simple as it sounds. People choose either to supply goods and services to a MAT or to be a member/trustee. Again, this can be achieved by a change to the regulations, and issues with MAT spending, occasional embezzlement and perceived conflicts of interest would be completely removed. A supplier could legitimately apply their profit margin to all clients and the board would be freed from any perceived or real problems. Dispensing with yet another of the "noises off" allows more focus on educating children.

#### Give the DfE the authority to automatically change articles of association

It's not often you will see me write this – but we need to give the DfE additional powers.

The way every MAT behaves is stated in its articles of association (AoA). The first academies were started in 1997, so we have

over 20 years of AoA variations, of which there are possibly thousands. And doesn't that make you wonder about the whole "we can't cope with two tiers of maintained and academy schools" thing?

If a clause were added to the next education act, giving the DfE powers simply to reissue AoA each time they were updated, it would resolve all the problems with variants. Every trustee, director, member and school in a MAT would know exactly where they stand, simplifying the whole system.

**“ It's not often you will see me write this – but we need to give the DfE additional powers**

#### Make governance expertise essential to every MAT board

This is as simple as it sounds. Like legal, HR, risk and audit, we should make governance an essential skill which every MAT board must have. You guessed it, the DfE can change the regulations to enforce this.

#### Direct communication to every chair of governors, offering free NLG support

Every chair of governors at a maintained school should already have signed up to "get information about schools", or GIAS. The DfE should start to use this as a means to share relevant information about national leaders of governance. We offer free peer-to-peer support to almost any state-funded school. The question is, how many governing boards know we are out here or how to access support?

Now for the reality check. I've watched enough episodes of *Yes Minister* and *House of Cards* to know that what we hoi polloi see on the surface is not what happens behind closed doors. There is bound to be an abundance of persuasive arguments and warm words being whispered into Damian's ear about why this can't or shouldn't be done. Will things actually change? I couldn't possibly comment.

**Tough conversations with colleagues and subordinates are an unfortunate but necessary aspect of leadership. Sonia Gill, an expert in such talk, explains how to make the best of them**

If you're like some of the school leaders I've met, you'll find difficult conversations tend to come at you from every angle many times a day.

However, teachers and school leaders are not always trained to cope. When I moved from a school to working in a corporate environment, I couldn't understand why I could easily talk to children about their behaviour and attitude, but struggled to tell a member of staff to arrive on time.

The good news is you can learn to be really good at handling difficult conversations, whether they land on you or if they are, essentially, feedback you need to give to someone. You can do this with adults, with regards to their performance and behaviour, just like you naturally do with children.

After years of management training, I can navigate difficult conversations well and with a good degree of success, but it doesn't mean they are perfect. Any exchange that could have gone better is an experience to learn from and improve on, just as with teaching.

I've witnessed a lot of difficult conversations, and there are three common problems I see repeatedly, no matter what the topic.

1. The person doesn't hear your message
2. It gets emotional
3. No change happens



## SONIA GILL

Author of *Successful difficult conversations in school*

### Tips for helping school leaders tackle difficult conversations

Here are some basic ideas heads and leaders can start thinking about.

**Structure: Make sure your message is heard**

When someone doesn't hear your message, it's usually because that message is unclear. I know you might feel that you have been crystal clear, but I've seen hundreds of school leaders who believe they have a clear message when they do not. In fact, it is the single biggest mistake I see in around 70 per cent of such conversations.

**Emotional management: Stop the conversation becoming exhausting**

Emotions are exhausting and can derail a successful conversation, and they can occupy too much of our thoughts before and after a conversation. They are, however, an inevitable part of these conversations, so learning how to manage our own and the

other person's emotions is crucial.

**Trust: Increase the likelihood of positive subsequent action**

When the other person doesn't take action from the conversation, whether they said all the right things or not, is due to a lack of trust. I'm not talking about the trust that you might have built from knowing someone for a decade, or having grown up with them.

I'm referring to the trust in the interaction itself. Often we inadvertently sabotage trust through our non-verbal communication and this reduce the effectiveness of our conversation.

One of the key shifts for any team, from the senior leadership team, to the middle team or year-group leaders, is that when they understand these three components of successful difficult conversations, they can reflect and analyse the interaction more

effectively, because they have a framework and language for them.

Without this knowledge, the analysis of a conversation tends to be less helpful, taking the form of "I said", "he/she said" or "perhaps if you'd said", none of which enable you to have more effective conversations.

To draw a parallel, this is like deciding what you can do when you've observed a lesson in which you know what was or wasn't working, and can explain clearly. This is the level teams get to once they understand the mechanisms at work.

“ **Managing difficult conversations successfully can help make great schools** ”

Managing difficult conversations successfully can help make great schools by creating positive change, both quickly and kindly.

Conversely, not having these difficult conversations is a barrier to school improvement. Not only does the issue remain unresolved, you may also lose staff members if they get frustrated at school leaders' unwillingness to have the conversations that are required. Ultimately, the real loss is for the children and the quality of their education.

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## REVIEWS

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OF THE WEEK

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Harry Fletcher-Wood is associate dean at the Institute for Teaching @HFletcherWood

### On writing essays people actually want to read

@TLPMSF

Rebecca Foster marked a set of essays, and read "time and again that 'in Shakespeare's Macbeth the witches are presented as...' Originality and flair may no longer be in the mark scheme, but she still wanted her students to demonstrate such things.

So she banned formulaic starters like "In Shakespeare's Macbeth..." and received responses like "isolated, manipulative and physically repelling, the witches are the most mind-contorting characters with their complex plotting and foreshadowing of events" and "like mischievous puppeteers, the witches manipulate Macbeth and drive the plot forward". In this impressive account of the effect of changing her teaching, Foster goes on to show how she helps students improve paragraph openings, and the get-out clause she offers if they really are stuck.

### Teacher-led disruption

@RosalindPhys

Rosalind Walker begins by reassuring us that "this is not some ghastly new 21st-century learner beanbag initiative. It's a blog about some things that I used to do before we had our behaviour system, and why I don't do them any more".

She used to "compliment a pupil on their hair or bag in lesson, ask a pupil how their baby sibling/dog/BMX is getting on, tell hilarious jokes". This improved behaviour because "pupils thought I was funny (or felt sorry for me because I was labouring under the crippling delusion that I was funny) and behaved for me because they liked me".

However, with an effective school-wide behaviour policy, her actions become an impediment to student learning: "They go against the principles of our behaviour policy, that every second counts and that we should be professional at all times. So I've stopped myself from doing them."

### Getting found out

@Grumpyteacher17

The Grumpy Teacher considers how easy or difficult it is to be found out in various areas, from sales and warehousing (if the numbers, or the pallets, stack up, you're good) to art and literature (are you a bad writer or an unappreciated genius?).

"But where does teaching sit on the spectrum of art to warehousing?" he asks. You "can't measure the performance of a teacher the way you can measure the performance of a salesman or a hedge fund manager" by explaining a career of anomalous results. His colleague's AS results with the same group were better, for example, but why? The colleague was a better teacher, but more importantly, the time split was uneven, his own paper was sat immediately after his colleague's and he was teaching foreign history - which is harder for students than British history. All good explanations, but as a deputy head, would you "assume I was telling the truth? Or would you assume I was making excuses?"

I'm tempted to carve a single line from this post in stone: "just because there's a problem doesn't mean there's a solution."

### Conflict vs mistake

Scott Alexander

Why do we disagree so much in education and in politics - even to the extent of disagreeing about our disagreements? Scott Alexander distinguishes between "mistake theorists" and "conflict theorists". The former see us as doctors "standing around arguing over the best diagnosis and cure. Some of us have good ideas, others have bad ideas that wouldn't help, or that would cause too many side effects."

The latter see politics as war: "Different blocs with different interests are forever fighting to determine whether the state exists to enrich the elites or to help the people." The author differentiates further, between "easy-mistake theorists" who think our problems come from "very stupid people making very simple mistakes" and "hard-mistake theorists" who believe that "the questions involved are really complicated and require more evidence than we've been able to collect so far".

Likewise, perhaps "easy-conflict theorists" think our problems come from "cartoon-villain caricatures wanting very evil things", while "hard-conflict theorists" think they reflect "clashes between differing but comprehensible worldviews".

It's a long post, but I found it helpful to place myself on the author's spectrum and to recognise how my interpretation of events and debates has changed as my position on the spectrum has changed.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Leadership for tomorrow: Beyond the school improvement horizon

By Malcolm Groves, Andrew Hobbs and John West-Burnham

Published by Crown House Publishing

Reviewed by Dr Kate Chhatwal, chief executive, Challenge Partners



When *Leadership for Tomorrow* was delivered shortly before half-term, I was filled with anticipation: here was a chance to glimpse the future and prepare to lead it, particularly useful as I was about to embark on my first CEO post.

I'm sorry to say I was disappointed, though by the style rather than the substance, and the lack of empirical evidence and practical tips, which could have brought what is mostly pretty dry theory and over-complex writing to life.

In a quirky "futureword" at the end of the book, the authors imagine the year 2040, and a day in the life of "the executive coordinator of Ash Valley Learning Community", whose day starts at 4.30am with a meeting of holograms. So far so sci-fi, but it's effective in illustrating the point that we are preparing our pupils for a future that is hard for us to imagine.

By contrast, the book's format and style took me firmly back to the twentieth century, and the textbooks and journals of university. My Pavlovian response was to get out a highlighter and scrawl some marginal notes. If I weren't committed to writing this review, my even more instinctive reaction would have been to put the book down and leave it there. That would have been a great shame because it contains plenty for outward-looking, forward-thinking leaders to chew over.

The core proposition is that we need to move beyond the narrow view that school improvement hinges on the things we can control in schools because "the tragedy of school change is that only about 30 per cent of the explanation for variations in school achievement appears to be attributable to factors in the school". To better serve our children, we need to appreciate that change will be organic and non-linear, shaped by a range of influences both in and outside

schools, that it is our job as leaders to nourish and connect.

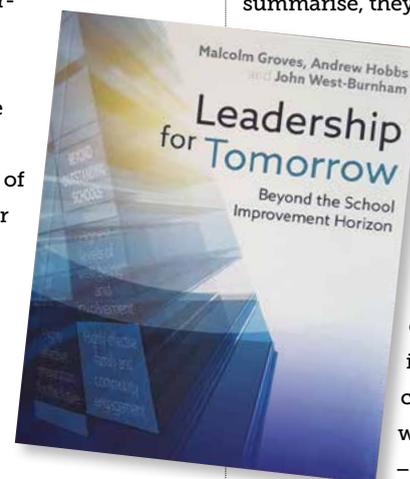
The truth of this argument is demonstrated every day in schools working hard to meet the complex needs of disadvantaged pupils as individuals, by connecting with their lives beyond school and the different agencies that can help. For these schools, children and communities, what the authors propose is important for now as much as preparing for tomorrow.

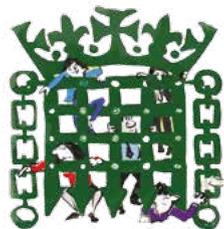
At times the book could have been bolder. In a chapter that will appeal to anyone disillusioned with the narrowing curriculum and the emphasis on what can be measured over what matters, the authors argue to define achievement more broadly. They encourage us to use the communities we serve so our schools are rooted in the local area.

Given the fascinating global trends they summarise, they could have gone further to articulate a definition of achievement that's also rooted in these. Similarly, while I agree schools should strive to secure the "highest levels of wellbeing and involvement", the book could be braver in championing them for their intrinsic value, rather than a connection with achievement, which - while intuitively right - isn't proven in the book.

Part three seeks to debunk the myth that there is a single right way to be a successful leader and describes the six "defining characteristics of leadership for tomorrow": a clear sense of values and personal authenticity, a commitment to fostering quality relationships, an understanding of complexity allied to a deep sensitivity to context, a commitment to meaningful collaboration, a focus on building community capacity, and "a loose-tight leadership balance which combines empowerment and agency with clear values, a shared purpose, and joint accountability". Jargon aside, these are certainly behaviours that I, like many leaders, aspire to.

But herein lies my final concern: while the converted will find much to hold onto in this book because it aligns with their values and beliefs, it provides neither sufficient evidence nor the clear and compelling arguments needed to win over the sceptics. That matters because our children and communities deserve more leaders rising to the challenges the book describes.





# Week in Westminster

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

## FRIDAY:

What's the collective name for a lot of headteachers all facepalming the desk at the same time? From now on, let's call it "a Halfon", after the education committee leader who upset the Headteachers' Roundtable Summit by breezily telling them how great it was to be at the "Headmasters' conference" – ouch. Not only is that the name of a totally separate private school conference, it isn't even its full title, which is actually the "Headmasters and mistresses conference". Eep.

Halfon later publicly tweeted an apology and seemed achingly embarrassed about the whole thing, at least. Bless.

Elsewhere Nick Gibb was giving a talk to Commonwealth leaders but when the speech text was printed to the website there was a curious addition...

2012, the first year of the Phonics Check, just 58% of 6 year olds reached the pass mark of 32 out of the 40 correctly read words. So over (he doesn't say over, he just says 40% but given that over is statistically correct are we fine to just leave this in the text version?) 40% were failing. This year, 81% of 6-year-

## MONDAY:

We drank gin. So much gin.

## TUESDAY:

The public appointments commissioner today put out his report about the way Toby Young "earned" his place on a new higher education advisory board.

Apparently the Department for Education wasn't very helpful during the commissioner's investigation: it was late sending information which, when received, was incomplete and sparse.

Colour us surprised! The DfE obfuscating documents and delaying their release? Imagine that!

In the end, the commissioner found that

Young did not have the same level of due diligence carried out on him as others had received during the same process.

MPs are now wondering whether the New Schools Network, the free-schools advocacy body also led by Young, has also been granted any favours by the government. This would be the same NSN which back in 2010 received its initial funding without a tender for the contract and refused to say who its other financiers were? Tobes has issues, but NSN's backroom deals far predate his tenure.

## WEDNESDAY:

SNOW DAY. But that didn't stop the education department announcing that it was to DOUBLE the maths premium which will funnel cash to schools for each "additional" pupil taking A-level maths.

Such generosity was a puzzle given the government keeps acting like it's strapped for cash.

And then it became clear: the current chief secretary to the Treasury is She-

Who-Used-To-Be-Schools-Minister-And-Who-Only-Ever-Talked-About-Maths, Liz Truss. Word on the ground is that she still wants to be education secretary one day. Is this her way to start sweetening up the DfE?

## THURSDAY:

Another a snow day, which was likely problematic for Ofqual's annual National Reference Tests for 16-year-olds ahead of the GCSEs which were due to take place this week.

Luckily the exams watchdog recently released guidance on what to do in emergencies. Unfortunately it mostly relies on waiting for advice from the DfE.

By current trends it'll be May before Ofqual hears what to do – and even then half of the advice will be missing. Time to pull a Halfon?

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEELIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



**Name** Johnny Manning

**Age** 31

**Occupation** Managing director, Manning's Tutors

**Location** London

**Subscriber since** June 2016

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



## FLY ON THE WALL

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

With a cup of tea (earl grey if it's after 3pm) on the comfy sofas.

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

The news! *Schools Week* is essential in ensuring that our tuition agency keeps its fingers on the pulse of education.

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

I would like to see classes limited by law to a maximum of 20 pupils (with the necessary funding provided to schools to facilitate this).

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

The ongoing reports on teacher workload. I've not yet come across any profession which expects so much of its workforce. The argument for long holidays doesn't serve to counter it. Something's got to give.

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

Pass it straight onto my colleagues so we can discuss the most interesting articles.

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

Probably make a pig's ear of things. Mathematicians shouldn't be trusted to edit a publication.

### Favourite memory of your school years?

The intellectual in me wants to reminisce about Mr Stubbs' inspiring science classes, or Mr Bell introducing me to trigonometry in primary school. However, the child in me is screaming passionately about the 3pm finish and the seemingly endless sunny summer afternoons.

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

I would be a snowboard instructor, but I guess that would still be education? Perhaps I'm destined to always work in education.

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

David Benson, the head of Kensington Aldridge Academy. I'm full of admiration for his swift, calm and efficient handling of the Grenfell disaster. I think there are some incredibly valuable lessons in management style that could be learnt here.



# School Bulletin *with Sam King*

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



## Beating homelessness with immersive theatre

### FEATURED

An independent school in Essex is working closely with a local homelessness charity to educate people on the realities of sleeping rough. Brentwood School has teamed up with Chess Homeless, a Chelmsford charity, while researching homelessness for a school play, where year 11 and sixth-form students played homeless characters situated around the school site in a piece of promenade theatre.

Based on real-life stories from rough sleepers and information received from the charity, the immersive production, entitled *Change Please*, ran for three nights, and £912 in proceeds from ticket sales and a retiring collection was donated to the charity, along with physical donations of toiletries, food and clothing.

"The audience was split into different groups which rotated around all the different 'homeless people' that we'd staged around the school," explained drama teacher Rachel Worth. "We also set up our school hall as a homeless shelter so at the end, the audience members came in



Attendees interacted with "homeless" pupils



Scenes from the show

and had a hot chocolate or a hot tea, as the homeless people would that use shelters in reality."

Following the play, Chess Homeless is keen to use the school's budding actors for a new project, in which it will make a film to challenge and develop young people's

perceptions of the homeless, which will be shown at schools, colleges and universities.

The charity is also working closely with pupils at the school to discuss ways of engaging a younger audience with tackling and raising awareness of homelessness.

"Our students had a lot of ideas around social media campaigns and things like that, and short films and videos," Worth added. "This started out as creating an impact for an audience and helping out the charity, but, I feel this has made our students so aware and conscious of how big of an issue homelessness is. They will remember this for a long time."



The coveted Gold Plato trophy

## NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR BRITAIN'S 'TEACHING OSCARS'

The annual Pearson Teaching Awards are now open for nominations.

This is the 20th anniversary of the awards, which celebrate the work of teachers, teaching assistants and heads across the UK.

Categories teachers can be nominated for include 'outstanding new teacher of the year', 'special needs teacher of the year', 'teaching assistant of the year' and 'headteacher of the year' both at primary and secondary level.

Finalists at the so-called "Oscars of the teaching world" will receive a 'silver teaching award', and a selection of awardees will be considered for a coveted 'gold award'.

Gold award winners will be announced at a London ceremony in October 2018, which will be broadcast on BBC2.

"The work of teachers has unique outcomes for the health, wealth and welfare of every single person in this country. As a nation we should be fantastically proud of them, I know I am," said Lord Puttnam CBE, founder of the Teaching Awards Trust.

The deadline for entries is 5pm on March 16. To nominate a colleague, visit: [www.teachingawards.com/enter](http://www.teachingawards.com/enter)

Joe Clarke with pupils



## Going for gold

Pupils at a London primary school have been visited by an Olympic gold medallist as part of a scheme to inspire children to be more active.

Joe Clarke, a slalom canoeist, visited Riversdale Primary School to discuss how he made history at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, when he won gold in the men's K1 event for Team GB.

His visit was organised by the Active Kids Do Better programme, which helps teachers find ways to get pupils to be more active before, during and after school through training days,

workshops and online resources.

"Our pupils absolutely loved having Joe Clarke here. He gave an insight into how he has been inspired and how he hopes to inspire others to follow their dreams and achieve the very best that they can," said Jason Dass, a teacher at Riversdale Primary. "The kids got a lot out of that and they loved seeing his gold medal."

"Sport has given me so much and it's enriched my life. If we can help and inspire teachers to help kids to get moving, it would be fantastic," Clarke added.



Bruce Carnegie-Brown and Shenice Osisioma

## This six-former really means business

A sixth-former has quizzed the chairman of Lloyd's of London on how students can boost their employability at the annual City of London Corporation education board dinner.

A student at the City of London Academy, Shenice Osisioma, was selected to sit on a panel with Bruce Carnegie-Brown for a discussion on employability so delegates could hear the perspective of a student and a business head.

In front of an audience of business leaders and pupils from across six London schools, she raised concerns that young people need more clarity from schools and firms on which skills are valued in the workplace, and

more guidance on how to secure top jobs.

During the debate, Carnegie-Brown suggested students should get meaningful work experience, be aware of how they come across on their social media profiles and develop a good work ethic to maximise their employability.

"Schools and businesses need to have strong relationships so young people can enjoy the best opportunities for their future," said Henry Colthurst, chairman of the education board. "This debate underlines the reason why schools and business need to understand each other better, and that if they can bridge that gap, then young people can benefit."



## BARRY LAKER

Principal, Coombe Wood School

**START DATE:** April 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Deputy headteacher, All Hallows Catholic School

**INTERESTING FACT:** Barry played professional and semi-professional football for several years, notably with Sutton United and Stevenage FC.



## GRAHAM HILL

Headteacher, Pilton Community College

**START DATE:** September 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Deputy headteacher, Ilfracombe Academy

**INTERESTING FACT:** Graham used to be a semi-professional basketball player and coach, representing Great Britain in the World Student Games.

# MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new



## DANIEL BAXBY

Principal, Witchford Village College

**START DATE:** June 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Vice principal, Wrenn Academy

**INTERESTING FACT:** Daniel sang a song with Cilla Black on *Surprise Surprise* when he was nine years old.



## AMY CHAPMAN

Headteacher, Derby High School

**START DATE:** September 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Deputy headteacher, Derby High School

**INTERESTING FACT:** Amy featured on a Sky One documentary about life at a boarding school when she worked as a housemistress at Gordonstoun School in Scotland.



## ANNIE JORDAN

Deputy headteacher, Derby High School

**START DATE:** September 2018

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Assistant headteacher, Derby High School

**INTERESTING FACT:** Annie worked for the Magistrates' Court Service and Birmingham Midshires Bank before moving into teaching.

## Get in touch!

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

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## SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty: **EASY**

### Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty: **EASY**

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

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

Solutions: Next week

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

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

## Spot the difference to WIN a Schools Week mug



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