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NEWS

NAO REPORT: INSPECTORATE UNDER SCRUTINY

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SPIELMAN: DON'T LEAVE 'OUTSTANDING' SCHOOLS TO THEIR OWN DEVICES

The government is under pressure from Ofsted to authorise more regular inspections of 'outstanding' schools, following complaints from parents.

Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector of schools, believes the quality of education at some schools currently exempt from inspection may have deteriorated, and has warned the Department for Education that the rule that protects them from more regular scrutiny is no longer sustainable.

The inspection exemption for 'outstanding' schools was introduced by Michael Gove in 2011 as a way to devote more of inspectors' time to failing schools and "free" top-rated schools from the burden of Ofsted.

Last year, a *Schools Week* investigation revealed that more than 100 schools had been ignored by Ofsted for over a decade.

But a damning new report from the National Audit Office has revealed that the number of top-rated schools uninspected for over a decade has now reached 296, and Ofsted is lobbying for a change to the law.

Luke Tryl, Ofsted's director of corporate strategy, said Spielman has been "quite clear in discussion with government that we don't think that exemption is sustainable".

"One of the things we do find is that a lot of parents question why there is a significant group of schools that we haven't been into for a very long time in some cases, and in particular that is the schools graded 'outstanding' which are exempt."

However, there is still some debate over the exact length of time that should be left between inspections of the highest-rated schools. Sean Harford, Ofsted's national director of education, said it should be no more than seven years.

"Our general view is that if you're a parent, you want to know that your school has been inspected at least once in the career of your child at that school. Typically in a primary school that would be every six years or seven years, and in a typical secondary, five to seven years."

Tryl claimed the government's decision would be over "what level of assurance they want to give parents about the quality of the school".

"We don't think the exemption is working at the moment," he said. "We know from our focus groups and work that it is one of the biggest factors undermining people's confidence in the reliability of our judgments."

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said the government already expects Ofsted to intervene where it believes an 'outstanding' school is declining.

Under the current system, the best schools are left to get on with their work, but can be visited if safeguarding or other serious concerns are raised.

"If Ofsted has reason to believe a school is no longer meeting its previous high standards, we would expect it to use its powers to carry out a full inspection – this has always been the case – and remains so," said Gibb.

OFSTED: MONEY'S TOO TIGHT TO MENTION

Ofsted is now "at the limit" of what it can do with its resources, a senior official has admitted, after the government's spending watchdog warned of "significant challenges".

Luke Tryl, Ofsted's director of corporate strategy, admitted he's unwilling to reduce the amount of time spent on inspections "any further", even as the head of the National Audit Office warned against inspecting schools on the cheap.

The NAO has found that Ofsted now spends 52 per cent less in real terms on school inspection than it did in the year 2000, meaning it can give less assurance about schools' effectiveness. And having struggled to retain inspectors in recent years, it has missed inspection targets.

The report examined whether Ofsted's approach provides value for money, and found that the inspectorate does not know if it is raising standards in schools.

Sir Amyas Morse, the head of the NAO, warned that although it is "making headway" against recent performance shortfalls, Ofsted needs "better information to be able to demonstrate that its inspection of schools represents value for money".

He wants the Department for Education to be "mindful that cheap inspection is not necessarily better inspection".

But Nick Gibb, the schools minister, defended the government's approach.

"Ofsted receives more than £40 million a year to provide a school inspection regime that is focused on the schools that need the most improvement," he said.



Luke Tryl

Tryl, a former adviser to education secretary Nicky Morgan, said that while Ofsted would "always calibrate" to meet the funding levels set by central government, "it's fair to say we are now at the limit of what we can do".

"You will know that the level of assurance that we offer, if we're doing a short inspection of a 'good' primary school, that will often be a single inspector for a single day. And we do not feel we should go any further than that," he said.

Ofsted's inspection model has changed significantly in recent decades. At the turn of the millennium, a 'good' secondary school would have received a week-long visit from

16 subject specialists. A school in the same position now will get a one-day visit by two inspectors every three to four years.

"We think we are doing better with less resource," said Tryl. "But we can't pretend that we're operating at the same level we were before."

His comments were echoed by chief inspector Amanda Spielman, who warned that any increase in activity "will quite simply require greater funding".

"Ofsted is only one lever in the school system, which is why it has proven difficult for the NAO to judge our impact and value for money," she said. "As we have made clear to the NAO, judging ourselves against school outcomes would inevitably create perverse incentives. We exist to provide an objective account of the quality of the nation's schools."

"The NAO's conclusion that we cannot prove the value for money we represent is explicitly not the same as demonstrating that we do not provide value, particularly considering that the costs of our school inspection work represents just 0.1 per cent of the overall school budget."

Union leaders have reacted to the report with dismay.

Dr Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the NEU, described the revelation that Ofsted does not know its own impact as "devastating".

"Ministers can't ignore this report and the time for root-and-branch reform of Ofsted is now," she said.

MORE FOR LESS? SIX OFSTED FACTS

1 EIGHT PER CENT OF NEW FREE SCHOOLS WEREN'T INSPECTED ON TIME

Since 2015, Ofsted has aimed to inspect all new schools within three years of opening. This was extended from two years after the watchdog missed the old target in almost 10 per cent of cases.

However, the NAO report reveals that the new target has been missed for 36 schools, 7.8 per cent of new schools inspected between 2015 and 2017. There were 12,100 pupils in those schools.

2 OFSTED SPENDS 52% LESS IN REAL TERMS THAN IN 2000

The full cost of inspecting the schools sector in 2017-18 was an estimated £60 million, less than half of the £125 million spent in 1999-2000 (in today's money).

But Ofsted does not have reliable data on the efficiency of its state-funded school inspections over time. The NAO estimates that the average cost per state-funded school inspection was £7,200 in 2017-18, but it was not possible to make the same calculation for previous years.

3 ALMOST 300 SCHOOLS HAVEN'T BEEN INSPECTED FOR A DECADE

There are now 296 schools which have not had an inspection in at least 10 years, far more than the 106 identified by a *Schools Week* investigation last January.

Of these schools, 195 are LA-maintained schools and 101 are early converter academies. 250 are primary schools and 46 secondary schools. 21, or 7 per cent of the schools, are selective.

All of these schools are rated 'outstanding', and do not need to be reinspected unless safeguarding or other serious concerns.

4 OFSTED CLOSER TO INSPECTION TARGETS

In 2017-18, the watchdog completed 94 per cent of planned inspections, compared with 84 per cent in 2016-17 and 65 per cent in 2015-16.

5 MOST HEADS THINK INSPECTIONS ARE FAIR, BUT FEWER SEE IMPROVEMENTS

Of headteachers surveyed by the NAO, 84 per cent said they felt the outcome of their school's most recent inspection was fair.

However, only 44 per cent said their most recent inspection had resulted in improvements, while 28 per cent said it had not.

6 LESS INSPECTORS MAKES IT HARDER TO HIT TARGETS

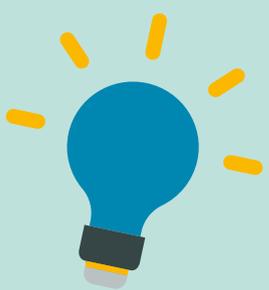
Ofsted has missed many of its own targets. For example, in 2017-18, the watchdog failed to meet its statutory target to reinspect schools within five years in 0.2 per cent of cases.

Between 2012 and 2017, Ofsted did not meet its target to reinspect schools graded 'inadequate', where the quality of education provision is most at risk, in six per cent of cases. And in 2016-17, the average gap between inspections of 'good' schools was 4.4 years, against a target of three.

Targets are being missed because Ofsted doesn't have enough inspectors. In March of this year, Ofsted had 30 (15 per cent) fewer directly-employed inspectors than it had budgeted for. There was also a shortfall in each of the two previous years.

Ofsted's move in 2015 to bring its contracting of external inspectors in-house, rather than using private companies, also left the watchdog with an "unexpected shortfall" of contractors because less than half met its standards.

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NEWS

Grammar schools could get cash for lowering the 11-plus pass mark

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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MPs grilled the schools minister Nick Gibb for almost two hours over the government's grammar school expansion plans, academy trust accountability and teacher pay this week.

Here are the five most important things we learned.

1. Selective schools could lower 11-plus pass mark to get expansion cash

Grammar schools hoping to get their hands on a share of the £200 million expansion could widen access by reducing the test scores needed to win entry, Gibb said.

The minister set out some of the proposals selective schools could include in their "fair access and partnership plans", which they must complete in order to bid for the cash.

"So it might be lowering the entrance



Nick Gibb

percentage mark on the entrance exam and so on," he said. "It might be enabling local parents to be able to see previous versions of the test. It might be helping parents prepare their children for the exam."

It's not the first time the idea of having different pass marks for poorer pupils has been discussed with the committee.

Two years ago, the Department for Education's chief scientist Tim Leunig admitted said it would be possible to "level the playing field" on the 11-plus by introducing different pass marks for pupils on free school meals, as pass marks often already vary depending on birth month.

2. Grammar school funding will only help 'a few thousand' pupils

Selective schools are being encouraged to apply for a share of a £200 million fund for expansion in exchange for taking on more disadvantaged pupils.

However, Gibb admitted that the move will only help "a few thousand" disadvantaged pupils get into grammar schools

"It's low because there are only 163 grammar schools, and we are only allocating £50 million to this fund, compared to the £1 billion [for schools in general] in 2018-19."

MPs criticised the narrow scope of the funding, and suggested the money would be better spent on revenue projects, like providing free 11-plus tutoring to poorer pupils.

3. The move to a two-year KS3 'worries' ministers

The government is worried about a move by schools to start pupils on their GCSE courses earlier, reducing the amount of time they can spend studying a wider range of subjects.

Gibb told MPs this morning that evidence that schools are ending key stage 3 at the end of year 8 "worries me hugely". The chief inspector of schools Amanda Spielman is also concerned, he said.

"I'm worried about the curriculum at key stage 3, I'm worried about key stage 3 becoming two years in some schools, which means that some children are missing out on a third year of history or geography or a third year of science. Even if they continue to do science at GCSE, they're missing a year's knowledge in that subject. That worries me hugely."

4. Ofsted's powers to inspect MATs are still 'under review'

Gibb was asked by Trudy Harrison, whose Copeland constituency has been home to a row over Bright Tribe's running of the Whitehaven Academy, how the government could "root out" bad trusts if Ofsted cannot directly inspect academy trusts.

At present, the watchdog can only do "focused inspections" of schools within a trust, but Amanda Spielman wants powers to inspect academy trusts as a whole.

"These are issues we keep under review," said Gibb. "They can certainly batch-inspect

a large number of academies in a particular chain, and then you get a feel for the quality of education in those particular academies in that multi-academy trust.

"We continue to keep the other issues, about whether Ofsted should be looking at the back office, the services provided by the multi-academy trust to those schools, under review."

5. Teacher pay scales will be out 'before recess'

Following the government's decision to list the one-per-cent cap on teacher pay rises, schools are still waiting to hear how large an increase the government will approve.

Gibb told MPs that he "remains personally of the view" that pay "must be a factor to some extent in terms of encouraging young graduates to come into the teaching profession".

However, the minister did not say exactly when the government would publish details of the pay settlement for 2018-19, just that it would be out "before the recess", which begins on July 24.

"We rely on the evidence that the School Teachers Review Body look at. They're advised by experts. We will look at their report that's been sent to the secretary of state, and then later, before the recess, we will respond to that report."

Last year, the government's response to the STRB report, which confirmed the pay scales for 2017-18, was published on July 10.

OECD GENDER REPORT CASTIGATED FOR OUTDATED ATTITUDES ON GIRLS' MATHS

A major international report blaming girls' lack of self-confidence in maths as the main reason for their weaker results – without examining other possible causes – has been criticised for its "outdated" views.

The 2015 OECD gender report, which uses PISA data from the same year, reproduced gender stereotypes of "helpless girls" and "and self-orienting boys", according to a new critique published in the Gender and Education journal.

In doing so, it failed to acknowledge that "in the last decades females have drawn even, and in some states surpassed males" in educational attainment.

The report "blindly" accepted that girls' lack of self-confidence in science and maths leads to underachievement in these subjects, according to Markus Meiera from the Universidad Externado de Colombia and Heike Diefenbach, an independent social scientist.

Girls are "stereotyped as passively driven by parental, educational and/or general social forces beyond their control", they claimed.

In contrast, the researchers said the report highlighted boys' "literacy deficiencies", but suggested that these are "caused internally".

"The authors seem to reinforce the stereotype of boys being somehow naturally incompatible with schooling," wrote Diefenbach and Meiera, who writes for *Schools Week* this week on page 18.

They want OECD PISA authors to "define and justify" their use of concepts like gender, stereotypes or role models in future, and avoid "theoretical assumptions such as gender innateness" and "interpretative claims, such as speculations on causes".

LocatEd expands remit to 'site optimisation'

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Exclusive

A company set up by the government to find and buy sites for the free schools programme will now advise academies on how to "optimise" their sites.

The government is "broadening the remit of LocatED to provide more advice to multi-academy trusts on how to optimise your sites", according to Lord Agnew, the minister for academies, addressing a union conference.

"Things like that are easier in London, where per-square values are far higher, but don't think just because you're not in London these things don't work. There are some very exciting ideas being pursued at the moment."

The Department for Education confirmed Agnew's remarks, made at the ASCL conference for business leaders last Thursday, were correct, but refused to comment any further or explain what LocatEd's new "remit" is and whether it involves selling or leasing school sites.

LocatED referred *Schools Week* back to the DfE when contacted for comment.

In April, the DfE released guidance entitled 'Good estate management for schools' to help schools manage their sites and keep costs down, with advice on minimising energy and water usage, and tips on making the most of property assets.

The report said schools could "identify



opportunities" to acquire new premises and sites, dispose of surplus land and buildings, or grant third party use of land and buildings "including for the purposes of generating income".

It advises schools to contact LocatED "if you have land to dispose of, and have already sought and secured the appropriate consents".

Schools can seek government permission to sell off surplus land, including disused playing fields, but are usually obliged to use at least some of the proceeds to fund new outdoor education facilities.

In 2014-15, the DfE granted 23 land disposals. However last September *Schools Week* received updates for 14 of the subsequent projects to create new outdoor facilities. Of these, seven had not yet gone ahead and one had been abandoned altogether, at a cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The GEMS guidance also says the DfE is currently piloting small scale projects in collaboration with LocatED on the efficient use and management of their school estates.

Dr Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union,

warned that "school sites are not commercial assets to be optimised" and criticised the government for turning education into "a commodity".

"It is unacceptable to suggest that hard-pressed schools experiencing the worst financial crisis in decades should be encouraged to sell off or lease parts of their school estate," she said. "Parents, heads and teachers will be horrified by this proposal and rightly so."

Last year, *Schools Week* revealed that some schools were earning tens of thousands of pounds a year through inventive schemes including renting out wedding spaces, revamping a van to sell burgers and opening shops.

Malcolm Trobe, the deputy general secretary of ASCL, said schools receiving free or cheaper advice on optimising their sites could be a positive thing, but admitted it is "concerning" that the DfE and LocatED are not "being transparent" about the changes.

"We would be very keen to know exactly what the full remit of LocatED is," he said. "Schools would be very interested in knowing what LocatED is charged with doing now."

Earlier this month it emerged that LocatED had made an "urgent" plea for new school sites in London. The company is currently seeking 59 new sites across the county, including 24 in London. Nine of the London schools currently without sites are due to open this September.

NEWS

GRAMMAR SCHOOLS BENEFIT FROM DFE'S LARGESSE

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Exclusive

Grammar schools are getting proportionally more money from the government than comprehensives to spend on buildings, including brand new sports halls and laboratories.

Forty per cent of the secondary schools which received money from the Condition Improvement Fund over the past three years were grammars, a Freedom of Information request has revealed.

One school got six new classrooms at once and another won funding two years in a row – even though selective schools make up only five per cent of all secondaries in the country.

Heads of comprehensive schools have reacted with fury to the revelations, labelling the fund another example of grammar schools expanding by the back door.

Schools in challenging areas may lose out because only 'good' or 'outstanding' schools, which almost all grammar schools are, can apply to the fund, they said.

Two weeks ago, the government confirmed that grammar schools will have access to £50 million more each year until 2021 if they become more inclusive.

The Condition Improvement Fund gave £496 million to more than 1,000 primary and secondary schools this year alone.

The DfE refused to reveal how much money went to individual projects, but the anti-grammar-school group Comprehensive Future has discovered that most of the projects that have benefited in the past three years were for basic repair work like new roofs and windows, with just five per cent for building expansions in secondary schools.

But grammar schools got the best of the



deal. Out of 34 secondary schools to win expansion funding in 2015-16, a fifth were grammars; out of 39 to win expansion funding the following year, half were grammars; and out of 15 schools to win expansion funding this year, just over half were grammars.

Grammar schools have an unfair advantage when applying to the fund partly because they have better Ofsted grades, said Ian Widdows, founder of the National Association of Secondary Moderns.

Ninety-eight per cent of selective schools hold Ofsted's top two grades, compared with just 79 per cent of non-selective secondary schools.

"Why have millions of pounds now been put aside to allow this group of schools to expand when all the evidence suggests that they have already been expanding for some time?" Widdows asked.

Will Morgan, the principal of the Cotswold School in Gloucestershire, said that grammar schools' success with the fund is politically motivated.

The government is well on its way to "justifying the further expansion of grammar schools in a few years' time".

One school, Sutton Coldfield Grammar for girls near Birmingham, had six classrooms paid for last year. Pate's Grammar school in Gloucestershire got funding for two classrooms last year, and a "new block and refurbishment" this year.

The Crypt School, also in Gloucestershire, got funds for three classrooms, and the King Edward VI school in Warwickshire for science laboratories. The Blue Coat School in Liverpool got a new sixth-form centre, the Highworth Grammar school in Kent had a new sports hall, and Queen Mary's grammar near Birmingham got teaching rooms and laboratories.

But a spokesperson for the Grammar School Heads Association claimed selective schools had historically struggled to expand before the fund.

"Grammar schools, many of which had watched the schools around them expanding under the Labour administration, were able to bid for these funds on the same basis as everyone else," they said.

A DfE spokesperson said all applications are reviewed on published criteria based on the needs of the individual building, "regardless of whether they are a selective school or not".

Grammar school expansion money 'won't improve outcomes'

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Expanding grammar schools is "unlikely to bring benefits for young people" as they do not offer better social, emotional or educational outcomes.

Instead of encouraging existing grammars to expand, the government should focus its funding on improving education "for all young people", according to a new study.

Earlier this month, selective schools were invited to take advantage of a £200 million expansion fund, set up in 2016 to cover capital costs for new classrooms. In exchange, they must widen access to disadvantaged pupils.

However, analysis of pupils' attainment, engagement and wellbeing at school and their future aspirations by the UCL Institute of Education found that attending a grammar had "no positive impact" on pupils' self-esteem, attitude to school, future aspirations or vocabulary at age 14.

The study analysed data from 883 pupils in England and 733 in Northern Ireland

who had similar academic achievements at primary school and came from families with similar incomes and education levels. All the pupils selected were from the Millennium Cohort Study, which follows the lives of around 19,000 children born in the UK between 2000 and 2001.

Researchers compared the results of tests children had taken in English, maths and verbal and non-verbal reasoning at ages three, five, seven and 11 as well as a vocabulary test at age 14. Social and emotional outcomes were based on answers given to a series of questionnaires at ages 11 and 14 about mental health, engagement at school, well-being and interaction with peers.

Professor John Jerrim, the study's lead author, said the findings "suggest that the money the government is planning to spend on grammar school expansion is unlikely to bring benefits for young people".

"Even those children who are likely to fill these new places are unlikely to be happier,

more engaged at school or have higher levels of academic achievement by the end of year 9," he said.

The study's findings make it "increasingly difficult to understand the government's rationale for spending money or expanding selective education rather than on improving education for all young people", said John Hillman, director of education at the Nuffield Foundation, which funded the research.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said ministers want children from all backgrounds to "have access to a world-class education".

All selective schools applying for funding to expand "must not only be 'good' or

'outstanding', but must also make clear how they will increase their intake of disadvantaged pupils and work with local non-selective schools to improve outcomes for pupils of all backgrounds", the spokesperson said.



DFE DITCHES YEAR 7 'CATCH-UP TRAINING' FUND BEFORE IT EVEN OPENS

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A government scheme which promised schools up to £25,000 each to help improve the literacy and numeracy of year seven pupils has been unceremoniously scrapped, months after bidders were supposed to hear back.

Last autumn, the Department for Education invited bids from teaching and research schools for "year 7 catch-up training". Successful bidders would use the cash to work with schools identified as needing "additional support" with struggling 11-year-olds.

Bidders were supposed to hear back from the government about the status of their funding "shortly" after the assessment period, which ended on December 29.

The project created additional work for all the invited schools in the weeks running up to Christmas

But in an email to applicants, the DfE said it has now "decided not to proceed with funding for these 2017-2018 projects", and instead encouraged schools to apply for cash from its strategic school improvement fund.

Clare Hill, assistant head and director of maths at Twynham School in Dorset, is one of many teachers who spent time on a bid but was left disappointed.

"I created an exciting and innovative intervention programme for our regional schools most in need, largely using my own personal time as a consequence of the short time frame of the bidding process," she told *Schools Week*.

"The project created additional work for all the invited schools in the weeks running up to Christmas and I was extremely disappointed, on many levels, to hear that the grant had been revoked with no explanation given."

The cut has even prompted an intervention from veteran Tory MP Sir Desmond Swayne, who pressed ministers about the matter in a recent education questions session in parliament, and has written to the schools minister Nick Gibb demanding answers.

Headteachers' groups have also hit out, and were particularly critical of the government's expectation that schools use the "complex" strategic school improvement fund instead.

Malcolm Trobe, the deputy general secretary at the ASCL school leaders' union, said teachers had "undoubtedly spent time doing prep in anticipation of being awarded this money".

"I think there will be significant disappointment in relation to this, and pointing people in the direction of the strategic school improvement fund is not helpful. The SSIF bidding process is very complex and extremely time-consuming, and as a consequence you get a lot of people having to pay bid writers to put the bids together," he continued.

"The important thing here is to have a system that gets the funding to where it is most needed, not just to who can afford bid writers."

The catch-up grant is different to the catch-up premium, extra money given to schools to help them teach those who fall behind in reading and maths, which was paid out this year as planned.

The Department for Education was approached for comment.

NEWS

OFSTED ATTEMPTS PARENTAL CHARM OFFENSIVE

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

Exclusive

Ofsted wants to make its inspection reports more accessible to parents because they are its "most important education stakeholders", according to a senior official.

Amy Finch, its head of strategic development, said this week that when Ofsted's new framework comes into effect from September 2019, it will improve parental communication by using clearer language in reports.

"The level of technical jargon that we put in our reports specifically to communicate with school leaders, does not necessarily sit very well with parents," Finch said at an event on Tuesday run by the Centre for Education Economics (CfEE)

Inspectors "rehearse the key messages" of their reports when feeding back to school leaders at the end of inspections, so it is "not surprising" that reports are then written with school leaders in mind. These, she said, are not "equally useful to parents".

Parents have asked the watchdog to include more information about the "experience of going to school, and how the school that they send their child to is different from others".

"This is a clear gap in the information we provide...we will be looking at that," Finch added.

Campaign group Parents and Teachers for Excellence is hopeful about the shift towards making information more accessible.

"If they can find a consistent way to share useful insights on schools, that doesn't place a burden on staff during inspection, then we would welcome this as progress," said Mark Leahy, the group's director.

Stephen Rollett, an inspection specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, believes the move could help parents "dig into the detail" rather than just drawing them to headline judgments.

"The fundamental thing is to make sure the reports are valid and reliable, but if school leaders are getting feedback as part of the process and parents are getting an accessible product at the end of it that seems to be a reasonable thing for Ofsted to explore," he said.

Finch's comments are not the first from a senior Ofsted source to hint at changes to the inspection framework in the past week.

Gill Jones, Ofsted's deputy director for early education, also touched on the new CIF at the Teacher Development Trust's career progression summit on May 18, by reflecting on the impact of chief inspector Amanda Spielman's influence since she took over in January 2017.

Spielman has sought to steer the organisation's approach to rating school leadership away from the legacy of her predecessor Sir Michael Wilshaw, Jones said, for example by placing less emphasis on the need to get rid of heads when schools are struggling.

The new framework will reflect this more "collaborative" approach to leadership, in a move away from the "male-dominated" culture of the watchdog's past.

OFSTED CONSIDERS ITS OPTIONS ON LESSON OBSERVATION



PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA_AK

Ofsted is evaluating six international lesson observation models as it considers how to rate schools from next year.

Inspectors will follow a new inspection framework from September 2019, and the watchdog is currently critically evaluating its current lesson observation practice as it prepares.

Lesson observation is a "fundamental part of inspection that deserves focused attention" but must "keep pace" with "significant developments" seen in international practice in recent years, the inspectorate said.

Chief inspector Amanda Spielman believes the international models "provide a number of areas for Ofsted to investigate as we develop our new framework and refine how we evaluate quality of teaching".

The report notes that Ofsted does not grade teachers, but rather uses observation as part of an overall judgement, and said any change to lesson observation "needs to be done with this whole-school context in mind".

Although it looks at pupil learning, this measure is absent from all six international approaches which felt that learning is "invisible and happens over a long period of time. It is not something that can be directly observed."

The inspectorate will now "reflect further" before deciding how the models can "develop the validity and reliability of Ofsted's current observation model" and will test alternative lesson observation models in the summer and autumn terms this year.

The outcomes of the trials will feed into the 2019 inspection framework.

Classroom assessment scoring system

Originating in the US, CLASS is an "observational tool" that assesses the effectiveness of classroom interactions between teachers and students and how they promote social and academic development.

Rather than just evaluating teacher performance, CLASS links teacher

behaviours with student achievement. The models focus is on "enhancing the overall relationship between teachers and students and their learning".

It measures three types of interaction – emotional support, classroom organisation and instructional support – and involves four cycles of 15 minute observations of teachers and students.

Framework for teaching

Framework for teaching uses a "constructivist view" of learning and teaching and claims to be the most widely used definition of teaching in America.

Rather than an observation tool, the framework is a set of teacher standards focusing on planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction and professional responsibilities, all linked to pupils' learning.

Observers measure teacher performance on a four-point scale, ranging from 'unsatisfactory' to 'distinguished', as well as conducting teacher and student questionnaires.

International comparative analysis of learning and teaching

Originating in the Netherlands, ICLAT focuses on the link between teaching and academic achievement.

It includes a mixture of factual observations, such as how many times pupils give correct answers, and high-inference subjective judgements on teaching ability.

ICLAT focuses on six measures: safe learning climate, classroom management, clear instruction, teaching methods that motivate pupils to think about the topic, learning strategies and how well teachers meet individual students' learning needs.

International system for teacher observation and feedback

ISTOF was designed by an international team to work across borders and enable feedback on teaching as well as collecting research data.

Participating countries identified 11

areas for effective teaching: assessment and evaluation, clarity of instruction, classroom climate, classroom management, differentiation and inclusion, instructional skills, planning of single lessons, long-term planning, teacher knowledge, teacher professionalism, and how well a teacher promotes active learning and developing metacognitive skills.

Observations are carried out either in person or through video.

Mathematical quality of instruction

Another American framework, MQI focuses on assessing maths teaching. It does not measure areas like classroom environment as it argues that work that occurs in the classroom is "distinct from classroom climate, pedagogical style or using generic instructional strategies".

MQI measures how students engage with mathematical content, how teachers work with students and maths, the "richness" of maths teaching, teacher errors and imprecision, and how classroom work develops mathematical ideas.

Maths lessons are videoed and broken down into seven-and-a-half minute segments which are watched by two observers per segment, who provide overall teacher scores as well as scores for each measure. All observers are supervised weekly to ensure consistency.

Generic dimensions of teacher quality

Also known as "the German framework of three basic dimensions", GDTQ has no standardised rubric or training manual.

Rather than a uniform lesson observation model, the framework measures teaching quality. It focuses on many different subcategories, including disruptions and discipline problems, teacher-student relationships, and challenging tasks and questions.

Although it began with a focus on maths teaching, the framework has now been used for many different subjects, school types and educational systems and "provides a clear categorisation of a complex phenomenon (teacher quality)".

THE GREAT GET TOGETHER

SIGN UP TO TAKE PART IN THE GREAT GET TOGETHER AT YOUR SCHOOL!

On the weekend of the 22nd-24th June 2018, the Great Get Together will be taking place up and down the country. The Great Get Together is inspired by the MP Jo Cox who was tragically murdered in 2016 and is a weekend of nation-wide community events to celebrate all we hold in common.

This year, just as with last year, the Great Get Together provides an opportunity to bring together communities, neighbours, pupils and friends to celebrate all that we hold in common.

Your school can get involved by organising a Great Get Together event on Friday 22nd June. This could be anything that brings pupils together – for example an assembly, a sports day or a class activity. Please save this date in your diaries!

In collaboration with the PSHE Association, Youth Sport Trust and The Linking Network, a schools resource pack has been prepared and is available to download for free here:

www.greatgettogether.org/partners/schools/.

The pack includes assembly plans, sports activity resources and a video about Jo and The Great Get Together.

Schools across the country are already planning events which will kick start a weekend of community celebrations across the country. Your event will be part of a fantastic weekend, where thousands of Great Get Together activities and events will be taking place. Jo spent a lot of time in schools and truly believed in the importance of working with the younger generation to inspire them to be good citizens. Since Jo's murder, schools up and down the country have been taking Jo's message and putting it in to practice in their communities.

Be a part of spreading Jo's message that we have more in common than that which divides us. For more information please visit:

www.greatgettogether.org.

NORTHERN ROCKS

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ



Becky Allen

BECKY ALLEN: BEWARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUR TESTS

Commercial tests which compare pupil performance across several schools are fundamentally problematic, because not all schools place the same emphasis on the test's importance, according to Becky Allen.

Pupils' revision and persistence in tests are strongly affected by whether they or their teacher consider it "high-stakes", according to Allen, a professor of education at the UCL Institute of Education.

Her research, soon to be outlined in a blog, found that commercial tests taken by KS2 pupils in an Education Endowment Foundation trial one month before they sit their SATs did not effectively predict their final results.

Instead, KS1 scores are a more accurate predictor – a finding Allen described as "staggering".

The best explanation for the poor correlation was that "the commercial tests used are not really high-stakes tests to the pupils, and often not to teachers".

When pupils are told the test matters, and that their parents will receive the score, they revise more and are less likely to leave questions unanswered.

A school wishing to test its pupils must therefore be "very clear" to all teachers how they frame the test to pupils.

The discrepancy makes it difficult to compare results across schools on tests which are not presented in the same way across the board.

"If you want to use tests to make comparisons across schools, then you need to know how that test was framed in all the other schools. And that's really, really hard for you to control," she said.

Allen also reserved some criticism for primary school progress measures, as test results can be "very noisy".

Tests must be several hours long, or have multiple papers, for a reliable score.

However, progress is actually often measured on the basis of a 45-minute test. To make things worse, when teachers are held accountable for progress, they will "distort" how they mediate a test to ensure better results.

"So we've got a noisy measure at the start of the year, and a noisy measure at the end of the year – meaning we end up with a great deal of uncertainty about whether pupils made progress," she continued.

Finally, she pointed out that when schools use the same test year after year, the relevant curriculum will inevitably become distorted towards the test's questions. To avoid this, she recommends that teachers themselves are left uncertain about what will be in a test.

However, many schools compare the performance of one year's cohort to a previous year's. To do this reliably, the test would have to remain virtually unchanged.

"You've got an absolute dilemma there. If you want year-on-year comparison you're going to have to live with test distortion in your curriculum. You can't have both."

Schools should still use tests since they are helpful for pupil learning, retention and motivation. The problem is trying to measure pupil progress.

She joked that for Ofsted and senior management, it is perhaps "good enough" that schools merely pretend they take progress measures seriously – "even if we all know the metrics are complete garbage".

Mark Lehain



MICK WATERS: PUPILS ARE EXPERIENCING THE SAME LESSON OVER AND AGAIN

Pupils are experiencing the same lesson "again and again" because teachers too often use the same fixed format, according to a leading curriculum expert.

Professor Mick Waters, an education consultant who was formerly director of curriculum at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, said teachers are so busy trying to meet learning objectives they are forgetting the craft of creating an interesting lesson.

Teachers across the country are starting every lesson with "WALT – what are we learning today" – and letting it take up more time even though it is of no real use to pupils.

This is followed by an introduction to the subject, a "call-out drill" asking questions of pupils, and a written exercise "for evidence" before the end, he claimed after visits to hundreds of schools.

Teachers often skip experiments in favour of getting pupils to write in their

book to show the learning objective has been achieved, even though a practical is moment a lesson might actually come alive.

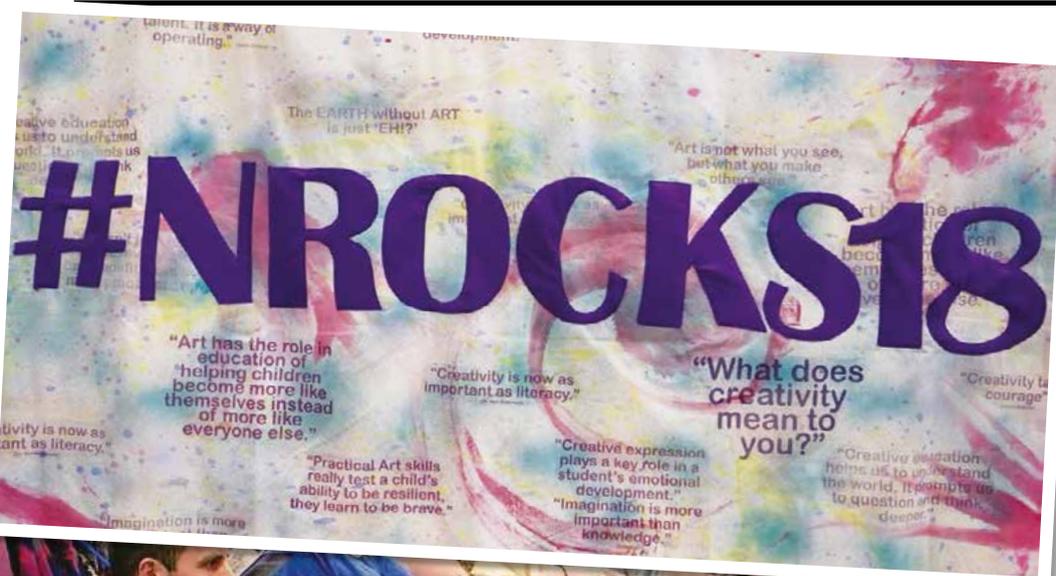
"I don't see half a lot of lessons that look the same," he said. "If you're a child, you move from lesson to lesson and see the same lesson over and over again. They may have a different subject or different colour exercise book, but it's just the same."

The repetitive format is also uninspiring for teachers, who teach it, "have a cup of tea, and repeat".

Many are still replicating the format for the numeracy and literacy hour advised by the government in the late 90s, he said. Teachers were told to slice their lessons into two 15-minute slots followed by 20 minutes' group work and a 10-minute closer.

"It was one of the first examples of the government in England ever telling the teachers how they should teach. What I'd suggest is at the minute we're not far off from that in many of the lessons I watch."

It's not the first time that Waters, a former



Mick Waters



headteacher and teacher-trainer who decided the contents of the national curriculum during his tenure at QCA from 2005 to 2009, has spoken out against political involvement in schools. In his book *Thinking Allowed*, he argues for a national council of professionals to run education instead.

Meanwhile his description of GCSEs as "diseased" won him no favours with former education secretary Michael Gove, while traditionalist educationist and assessment expert Daisy Christodoulou heavily criticised his 2007 curriculum reforms in her book *Seven myths about education*.

But Waters believes that the knowledge-based and skills-based debate has become polarised, and that a good lesson incorporates both repetition of concepts and practical

activity.

Instead, teachers are now "so busy producing evidence" they've stopped thinking "what the craft of teaching is about".

He outlined three main methods teachers can use: exposition, in which a concept is not just instructed but revealed to pupils through context or activity, as this helps them to remember it properly; problem-solving, in which pupils ask questions or interrogate what they're learning; and practice, involving repetition and feedback to make sure they grasp the concept.

"Any single lesson doesn't revolve around doing all of those," explained Waters. "You pick one of these tools from that repertoire, depending on what you're teaching. It's your toolkit for an interesting lesson."

Tom Sherrington



TOM SHERRINGTON: DON'T LET PUPILS REACH THEIR OWN ANSWERS

Too many teachers fail to recap knowledge properly, instead allowing pupils to "air" the answers among themselves, according to former headteacher Tom Sherrington.

Sherrington told the conference that teachers often feel they must "march through the curriculum" and so recap material too hastily or avoid checking if pupils have understood a new concept.

Many, for instance, go over material by asking pupils to say if they know the answer to a question and then saying: "Everybody got that? Yep? Brilliant!"

Or they decide "to air" the answer with the class, either by asking pupils to talk to one another or by asking pupils one by one in front of the class what they think the answer is.

"We might try to come to this good understanding by going around the room piecing together the answer, and use that as a judgment that we've got there," he said.

"But that's not good teaching. Teachers do this all day long – airing the answer. But it's not enough."

It's ineffective because the teacher never knows which pupils actually grasp the concept, he claimed. Instead, teachers must set aside more time during lessons to question pupils around the classroom, to explain an idea. This becomes more truly instructional because it's "interactive".

"Just because one person gave the answer doesn't mean everybody's got it. Ask three or four people to get an idea of how well the idea is understood," said Sherrington.

Telling pupils to recall a concept among themselves also risks "peer dynamics", namely that a pupil is strongly influenced by their classmates and will therefore be likely to remember incorrect information rather than the correct answer.

This process of misremembering is described by Graham Nuttall, who was professor of education at Canterbury University in New Zealand, in his book

Hidden lives of learners.

Sherrington wants teachers to consider Nuttall's work and other cognitive science research, because they reveal that pupils are influenced by numerous factors inside and outside the classroom, which mean they forget their lessons, and present ways the teacher can overcome these factors.

"I think it's really helpful to read cognitive science, because it makes you think hard about the fact everyone's brain is whirring away trying to make sense of this concept," he added.

But teachers are often as unwilling to change their ideas on how to teach no matter the evidence as "members of the Flat Earth Society".

They feel they can't continually check on pupil understanding because of the time pressure to get through the content.

"It's an investment. You can rely on that knowledge being more secure later."

He also praised a paper by educational psychologist Barak Rosenshine at the University of Illinois, called 'Principles of instruction: Research-based strategies that all teachers should know'.

The author identifies what the most effective teachers do for good pupil attainment, including spending five to eight minutes at the start of a lesson reviewing previously covered material.

Effective teachers also present only a small amount of new material and check pupils understand, before either teaching it again or moving on.

If teachers don't read this kind of research, he warned, they "will do the same thing tomorrow as they did last week, forever"



NEWS



EDITORIAL

Ofsted is right to speculate to accumulate

Ofsted's response to the National Audit Office's damning report into its school inspections was a masterclass in getting ahead of a story. Its bosses briefed journalists on every inch of the report. Many hours before it was officially published, their views were well known, and the following day, they were well documented.

As a result, it was the government rather than Ofsted that came off worse from the NAO's savaging of England's school inspection system. Ministers have starved the inspectorate of cash in recent years, and have now been forced to make a feeble defence the impact of austerity on the very body we rely on to quality-assure our schools.

We've learned a lot in the past week about what the next inspection framework will look like. There will be a more "collaborative" approach to leadership, parents will be made to feel more involved in the process, and alternatives to the current lesson observation system are being explored.

We've also learned that Ofsted is willing to fight for the resources it

needs. Our sister paper FE Week has discovered that the watchdog has won as much as £7 million in extra funding to cater for the inspecting of hundreds of apprenticeship providers.

More cash will be needed on the school side too if Ofsted is to get its wish to more regularly inspect the nation's 'outstanding' schools. It's a travesty that some schools have gone as long as 12 years without being visited by inspectors, but more frequent inspections will cost money, and right now Ofsted has none to spare.

Though scathing about the watchdog's failure to meet targets, the NAO's report on Ofsted comes at a convenient time for its leaders.

With a spending review and new inspection framework both coming up next year, Spielman and her team need as much ammunition as possible to make their case not just for new powers, but for extra funding to pay for them.

Their response to the report show the watchdog is willing to weaponise even the words of its critics to make a case for a better system.

Up the Amazon without a paddle

The inventiveness of schools using Amazon wishlists to ensure they get exactly what they need from donations should probably be applauded. It certainly seems like a good and sensible idea to direct parents and stakeholders who want to help to exactly which items are the most helpful. But the deeper issue here is what it shows about the state of school budgets.

Many teachers will no doubt find the Department for Education's confidence remarkable in its insistence that schools already receive enough funding for the resources they need. Perhaps

they will find it less remarkable that simple necessities like books, pens and paper appeared over and over again in the wishlists we looked at.

Basic resources for schools should not be classed as "wishes". The government needs to acknowledge the depth of the crisis hitting schools and take real action to address the deficit engulfing so many of them before it's too late. We work with an education system where the government can plough £50 million into expanding grammar schools while comprehensives have to literally beg for multipacks of glue.



Keeping it out of the family, but not very well...

Academy trusts will need to ask permission before purchasing services from any company "related" to its senior leaders and trustees from next week.

On the one hand, this is sensible. It is amazing how many chief executives have found it necessary and "economically efficient" to buy services totalling millions of pounds from a company owned by their husband, their children, or even themselves.

The long-proposed solution was a simple ban. But there's a problem. Take, for example, the graduate training programme Teach First. Many of its

employees sit on school governing bodies. Should those schools be barred from ever hiring a Teach First trainee? What if a trustee's husband works for Amazon – can the school never have a wishlist, per the editorial above?

So the permission system is a workaround, in which schools must put their hand up and wait to be told they're allowed to buy things. It's a fair compromise, if only the ESFA wasn't already busily dealing with 50 other concerns first. Let's hope everyone can contain themselves as they wait.

Correction

In an article in last week's paper entitled 'Inspiration Trust earns softer Ofsted report after four-month turnaround', we reported that the chain's trustees had complained about the original report's contents. In fact, it was trust staff who complained. We are happy to clarify this error.



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We are now looking to appoint a standalone Marketing and Communications Manager, reporting to the CEO. The successful candidate will be responsible to manage, develop, design and

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Visit our website at <https://www.isi.net/about/working-for-isi> for further information. If you would like to apply for this position, please provide a full and complete CV together with a covering letter outlining your suitability for this role, experience in your current role and salary expectations to natalie.venner@isi.net.

Closing Date: Thursday 31st May at 5pm



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The role will lead and develop a portfolio of more able educational projects including the production of education resources and the delivery of training and CPD to education professionals.

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To apply:

If you are interested in this role, please submit:

- A covering letter (to include detail of your salary expectations, available start date, preferred work location and hours)
- Completed application form
- Completed equal opportunity monitoring form

These should be sent via email to Sue Riley: sueriley@nace.co.uk

For an informal discussion about the role, please email NACE CEO Sue Riley: sueriley@nace.co.uk

No agencies.

Closing date: 6 June 2018

Interviews: 21 June 2018



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We would encourage potential applicants to arrange an appointment to discuss the role informally and visit our school. Please contact **Sam Adams**, to arrange a visit before the application deadline – sadams@dsatkibworth.org

For an application pack, please contact **Emma Perkins** – eperkins@discoveryschoolstrust.org.uk or telephone **0116 2793462**

Closing Date for applications: 25th June 2018

Interviews will take place on: 4th & 5th July 2018

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Our academies promote effective learning through inspirational teaching and challenging lessons, driving up academic standards and achievement rates well above national levels. Like all strong families, the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust seeks to offer mutual support to one another, develop shared learning and understanding, collaborate to achieve better outcomes, recognise unique qualities and differences, be positive and aspirational, focus on the successes of individuals and develop a culture of healthy competition.

Our values and vision are based on the four key words of empower, motivate, aspire and transform. We want to make a real and lasting difference to the communities within which we work.

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At King Edward VII Academy. We believe that strength comes from togetherness; each individual plays a crucial part in our overall community and in our successes. We combine the unity of our traditional house system and its exciting enrichment programme with an uncompromising focus upon individual academic success. Our superb reputation for sports is a marker of the emphasis we place on developing well-rounded young adults. It also serves as a symbol of our wider aims – the pursuit of excellence in all things; pride in our academy; togetherness in all we do; fair play and outstanding behaviour and healthy competition. KES has a remarkable past and strives for an even more remarkable future. Our internal support structures and career progression opportunities mean that our staff are able to achieve their full career potential. Many of our former students have returned to work for us post-studies; proving the lasting impression we make as a provider of high quality education in West Norfolk.

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As Head of Mathematics you will inspire and motivate staff and students alike to ensure that everyone achieves their full potential.

The successful candidate will have proven experience as a leader, either as a Head of Department or a teacher with additional responsibilities.

You will maximise the enjoyment, engagement and outcomes of young people in mathematics. You will develop innovative, non-traditional approaches to the mathematics curriculum in order to ensure appropriate access and achievement for all students and facilitate and encourage learning which enables pupils to achieve the highest possible standards: to share and support the corporate responsibility for the wellbeing, education and discipline of all pupils.

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As Teacher of English, this is an exciting opportunity to join an Academy on a journey to excellence. The successful candidate will inspire and motivate students to achieve exceptional progress and reach their true potential both academically and socially.

The successful candidate will achieve high professional standards in teaching and learning within the Faculty in order to ensure that students' knowledge, understanding and achievement are of the highest levels within the specific subject.

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By getting to know every student well and providing the assistance each person needs to succeed, we create a strong community where our staff and students truly pull together.

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Full Time, Permanent - Starting September 2018

As Teacher of Art, this is an exciting opportunity to join us at an important time of our history; we are firmly on our way to achieving successful ratings from Ofsted with our sights set on becoming an "Outstanding" school.

The successful candidate will inspire and motivate students to ensure that they achieve their full potential you will be engaging, enigmatic and enthusiastic while maximising the enjoyment, engagement and outcomes of young people within the faculty. You will develop innovative, non-traditional approaches to the subject matter in order to ensure appropriate access and achievement for all students.

Teacher of Citizenship, Beliefs & Values - MPS/UPS - NQT/QTS
Full Time, Permanent - Starting September 2018

As Teacher of C,B&V you will deliver a blend of RE, Citizenship, PHSE and SMSC to KS3 students.

This is an exciting brand new role for our academy. You will join us at an important time in our history; as we are firmly on our way to achieving successful ratings from Ofsted with our sights set on becoming an "Outstanding" school.

The successful candidate will inspire and motivate students to ensure that they achieve their full potential you will be engaging, enigmatic and enthusiastic while maximising the enjoyment, engagement and outcomes of young people within the faculty. You will develop innovative, non-traditional approaches to the subject matter in order to ensure appropriate access and achievement for all students.

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It is essential that you are Degree qualified with passion, drive and enthusiasm within the relevant subject area for all of these roles. **Closing Date: 4th June 2018**

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READERS' REPLY

Reply of the week
receives a
Schools Week mug!



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Late-starting summer born-pupils don't get better phonics scores

f Caroline Esmae

It's about the emotional and mental wellbeing of our children not the scores on a phonics test, or any other test. It's about our children not having to catch up, not struggling to attain the same as their peers, not being overworked to get to the level of their peers.

PE apprenticeships solve Kent schools' levy woes

f Jo Haydon

Makes a total mockery of PE. As a PE teacher what can an apprentice often a coach add to education? PE is seen as the easy option and not an important subject area. PE is core to a child's development and academic achievement as well as health and well-being, yet schools put little importance on it. They wouldn't put an apprentice in English or maths so why PE?!

Delays to compulsory sex education are looking more likely

t Terence Higgins Trust // @THTorguk

We've campaigned for over 30 years for compulsory relationships and sex education in all schools. We urge the DfE to avoid further delays so young people are empowered to make informed decisions about relationships and sexual health.

Inspiration Trust earns softer Ofsted report after four-month turnaround

t Stephen Tierney // @LeadingLearner

You know that moment when something just doesn't smell right? How many schools believe they would have been treated the same as this? Ofsted's common standard is dangling by a thread. Great investigative work by Schools Week.

Lord Agnew's latest cash-saving scheme: Stop colour photocopying

f Claudia Sanchez

Colour? I get an allowance of 50 photocopies per month in black and white. When that's finished, nothing until the next month!

t Martin Compton // @uogmc

Why not insist on sepia tones while you're at it? What have children ever done that makes them need colour in their lives? Workshy ragamuffins

Chris McShane // @McShaneChris

Hasn't anybody told him our whole system has been reduced to black and white?

Poorest pupils miss out on arts access cash

t Leanne // @EducatingLeanne

And this is a shock why?

REPLY OF THE WEEK

You don't need facts to win a debate, you need confidence

t Fish 64 // @thefish64

History is littered with examples of people who won power with rhetoric rather than facts. What is worrying is that a headteacher seems to think that we should encourage it, rather than teach pupils enough knowledge so they can challenge empty rhetoric.

Dear Reader,

It's time to reveal some changes to Schools Week, which will be coming into effect from our next edition.

We've always been brave with our approach to providing you with high-quality, independent, investigative and balanced education journalism, ever since we launched in September 2014.

We've come a long way in these four years, and we wouldn't be here today without the support of our loyal and growing readership – so thank you.

Our website now receives on average half a million hits every month, while around 15,000 people read the weekly edition in print and online.

Since becoming interim editor at the start of the year, I've thought a lot about how we can improve our news services while maintaining a sustainable product. I've been working with our team on some exciting developments, which I hope you'll enjoy.

The most important of these is that today's edition is the last to be printed on paper. If you are holding a physical copy, keep it safe! There will be no more of its kind.

From Friday, June 8 we will launch a weekly digital version of the newspaper. I say "launch", but we've actually had a



SHANE MANN

Managing editor (interim)
Publisher of Schools Week and FE Week

digital-only subscription option for some time, and a high volume of subscribers have switched to it.

However, rising print and postage costs mean the print version is becoming too expensive to sustain. We could simply increase our prices, but at a time when budgets are tight for schools, we do not believe this would be a fair option.

We will therefore be switching everyone to the digital PDF version of the paper which goes out on a Friday morning. Many subscribers already read the paper using this method, and we have been working hard to perfect this digital edition to enhance our readers' experience.

We will be increasing the amount of extra content in the digital edition that exists exclusively for subscribers, and we will be launching a new subscription

pricing model for it: one year (37 editions) £40, one term (12 editions) £22, or four editions for £10.

Rest assured, however, that Schools Week will still be published each Friday during term time. We will also, where required, release additional free editions during holiday periods.

Over the past five months we've also been developing a whole new website and brand. We will be launching the site on Tuesday, May 29, alongside our new branding. The enhancements to the website will make accessing the Schools Week website easier for readers on all devices.

We are committed to keeping the site free of charge – there will be no paywalls.

Oh, and one more thing! Over the past 18 months, Schools Week's recruitment

advertising offer, Education Week Jobs, has grown in popularity. Our new publishing structure will allow us to significantly reduce the cost of advertising job vacancies. We recognise that recruitment advertising is costly, and we are committed to providing a cost-effective and affordable alternative. Recruitment advertising simply should not cost thousands of pounds.

So, from next month, our new pricing model will be launched: online job listings will be available from £95, adverts in the digital edition will start from £395 and will include free featured online job listings. Further information on how you can access this will be available in June.

Finally, we've buried the lede on the most important news of all: my time as editor of Schools Week will soon be coming to an end and I will be returning to my position as the publisher. I have appointed a new full-time editor for the paper, and they will take up the role in time for the next academic year starting in September. We will be announcing their identity in June.

I love Schools Week and am extremely proud of what we have achieved. Thank you for your loyal and continued readership. I look forward to watching the product grow over the coming years.

Once again thank you for your continued readership and best of luck in the final weeks before summer.

PROFILE

CAROLE WILLIS

CATH MURRAY | @CATHMURRAY_

Carole Willis, chief executive, NFER

Education researchers are a strange breed. While the think-tanks openly court the press, and even the university academics are starting to reach out these days, there's one megalith of British education research that seems determined to remain aloof.

I'm on a mission to find out why.

It's taken five months to score an interview with the chief executive of the National Foundation for Education Research, and I'm journeying to Slough on a sunny, after-the-rain kind of spring morning, more than a little curious to test out my various hypotheses.

Serendipitously, NFER has just emerged at the heart of the latest development in the baseline testing saga – and its boss Carole Willis is fully aware she'll have to field questions.

NFER employs 210 people over two sites, over half actively involved in research. There is also a "very flexible workforce" of around 1,000 test administrators, markers and research associates, who participate in specific projects, "which is good, given the ups and downs of research funding", Willis muses – once I've successfully navigated the site's sprawling gardens and we've settled in her office with mugs of tea and the promise of chocolate biscuits.

She is socially hesitant (the biscuits are mentioned, but never offered) yet gently determined, insisting on first telling me about the things she thinks matter: "NFER is so much more than baseline," she proclaims with a smile.

As she lists current projects, I get a better sense of NFER's pole position in the research evaluation field. "We do loads of work with EEF," she says, "we're their largest evaluator, I think."

NFER is also evaluating two large government projects: the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund and the opportunity areas, for which the target outcomes will likely include progress, attainment and even destinations.

I exclaim triumphantly (sensing that hypothesis number one will soon be confirmed) that if lots of NFER work feeds directly into government policy, it must feel less need to communicate with the public?

"No!" she responds. "Everything we do has some sort of impact, and where we are working for a client like the DfE, of course they have immediate access to the findings. So it feeds in through that route, but no, we're very keen to get much wider visibility of our research, because the more people know about what

we've been doing the better."

Stumped, I move onto the elephant in the room.

NFER has just won the government contract to run baseline assessment, which is to be administered to every reception-age child in England, and will feed into progress-based school performance measures.

The problem is that a different provider offering a different kind of baseline test had already been voted the firm favourite by primary schools in the first round – before the government changed its mind and scrapped the whole thing.

Why does she think so many schools chose the other model? "Misguided!" she blurts out with uncharacteristic directness, although not without a twinkle in her eye – having already referenced the fact that the national director of the company in question, Early Excellence, has been very vocal

designed by Durham's Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring and the NFER, were both "test-based".

The government scrapped the whole thing in April 2016 due to "comparability" concerns, and reissued the tender, changing the rules so that this time, observational assessments couldn't compete.

Neither Early Excellence nor CEM bid for the second tender.

Despite the lack of competition, Willis feels "confident that if there were 10 bidders we were still the best choice, because we brought such long experience in doing assessments".

"We've always done assessment work, it's a highly technical field and I think we've developed a brilliant assessment measure," she adds.

So was the DfE not itself horribly misguided to have given schools the choice in the first place?

"I'm not sure about 'wrong to give them the choice'," she contends, approaching the subject tactfully. "What surprised me was the very different nature of the organisations that were accredited to deliver the baseline. I was surprised that an observational measure was one of those suppliers. I think, for fairness to schools, as well as the quality and robustness of the data, having a standardised assessment is really important."

But let's say, hypothetically, that the way the government proposed things was misguided, and that the other big organisations had pulled out for exactly that reason. Given the massive amount of funding that will flow from this, wouldn't there be a huge temptation for NFER to bid for the contract, even if it didn't believe in it academically? "Absolutely not, is the quick easy answer," she counters, suddenly impressive. "Maintaining [our reputation] as well as doing the right thing for schools in terms of policy, is far more important to us than any one particular contract. We will guard our independence jealously, and if there's ever any suggestion that, whoever our client is, they're trying to distort the findings in any way, I immediately step in. Our reputation would be undermined. We wouldn't have bid for this if we didn't think it was doable, sensible and actually the right thing to do. I think it is an important part of the accountability system."

Thrown by this change of tone, and having ignored several of her attempts to refocus the interview away from my dull questions and onto a box of cute plastic teddies, I finally relent.

"This is one of the reasons why it's useful

"WE WILL GUARD OUR INDEPENDENCE JEALOUSLY"

on the subject and she doesn't want to make this a personal spat.

Her follow-up answer is more politic: "I think it's partly because the Early Excellence model was observational, and that is what teachers in the early years or in reception year were used to doing as part of the early-years foundation stage profile. So it was closer to what they did generally."

It was a shambolic tender process that stirred up unnecessary animosity in the early-years community.

To clarify, there's one wing of the resistance that will persist come what may: those who believe four-year-old children simply shouldn't be tested, and consider baseline yet another step in the pernicious datafication of childhood.

The controversy that could have been avoided, however, was over what type of assessment would be used.

Originally, primary schools were allowed to choose between a handful of approved providers, and over 70 per cent chose Early Excellence's teacher-observation test. The two next most popular assessments,



LLIS

"I NEVER THINK PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE TOO INTERESTED IN WHAT I HAVE TO SAY, OR THAT I'M NOT CLEVER ENOUGH"

for children with special educational needs and for EAL children," she explains, tipping them out on the table, "because it's not all speaking and reading. So you've got these little teddy bears that they count with, which have proved incredibly popular."

They also have coloured shapes for sorting. The test is 20 minutes per child, administered by a teacher, and will measure the key predictors of later academic outcomes – basic literacy, numeracy and even maybe "self-regulation", although they haven't quite worked out how to measure that yet.

Mostly, Willis caveats her statements and presents as a thoughtful academic, which in many senses is what she is. Although she's worked mostly in government, she's been an economics researcher all her life, first in a private economic research company, then in the civil service, including five years at Work and Pensions and another five at Education.

This last was her favourite "because it's like the baseline for everything else. I would say apart from climate change, it is one of the longest-term issues in public policy in terms of how that feeds through into people's lives. If they get a bad education it's really hard for them to come back from that. If they get a good education that sets them up for life."

She speaks from experience. Her parents – greengrocers on the Isle of Wight – pushed her academically, something she describes as "brilliant and awful at the same time".

"They had very high expectations of me. They were very proud of the fact that I was good at school and was able to do things they weren't, so they always told me I was going to university – so that's what I did. But of course, it's a curse as well, because now I've set myself very high standards in terms of what I can achieve. It's that voice in the back of my head saying 'you've got to do more!'"

When I ask her to reveal a flaw, she uses her answer to finally address the question I've been trying to get to the bottom of.

"It's that visibility piece. I never think people are going to be too interested in what I have to say, or that I'm not clever enough, or I don't have the big ideas," she admits. "So I'm always a little bit wary about saying or pushing myself forward – and I think, as the head of this organisation, I need to do that for NFER, so that is something I will need to work on."

PROFILE: CAROLE WILLIS

CV

2013 - present	Chief executive, National Foundation for Educational Research
2008 - 2013	Director of research and analysis, and chief scientific adviser, Department for Education
2004 - 2008	Head of pensions analysis, Department for Work and Pensions
2002 - 2004	Head of strategy unit think-tank, Department of Trade and Industry
1997 - 2002	Economics and resource analysis unit, Home Office
1990 - 1997	National Economic Research Associates
1990	Economics MSc, London School of Economics
1988 - 1989	World Bank
1984 - 1987	Economics, Nottingham University

“WE’RE VERY KEEN TO GET MUCH WIDER VISIBILITY OF OUR RESEARCH”

IT’S A PERSONAL THING

What’s your favourite book?

I don’t get much time to read other than research reports, but I am in the middle of a book called *Midnight in Sicily* by Peter Robb. I was out in Sicily last summer and fell in love with the place. He’s a travel writer, but he weaves in amazing descriptions of Sicilian life, and all the colours and the smells, and lots of history, and he’s tracking the growth of the Mafia. So it’s actually quite scary in terms of up until very recently how big an influence the Mafia had in Sicily. But it’s an amazing book. The only problem is it’s written in very small print, so I have to get my extra strong glasses to read it!

If you could escape for a month somewhere, where would you go?

Possibly Sicily. I like hot places where there is exotic wildlife, like tree frogs in Costa Rica! We started off in the capital San Jose, then went up to a volcano where there are natural thermal pools with a cocktail bar in the pool.

Then we went down to an amazing beach on the west coast and got a boat across the peninsula to the wildlife park where they’ve got lots of sloths. We were there over Christmas. I just remember walking out onto this mile-long beach and it was completely empty.

It was the first non-westernised country I had been to, and it’s just such an amazing experience. I just felt such a sense of elation, and seeing flying fish on the boat going across to the peninsula...

What was your place in the family growing up?

I was the oldest of three. My sister would probably say I was quite bossy. I’m sure my staff don’t, though!

If you could put a motto on a billboard, what would you say?

“Life is short – enjoy it.”

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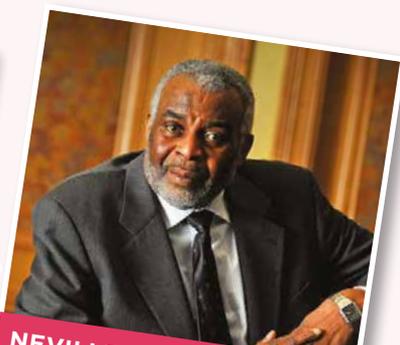


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SCHOOLSWEEK



RUSSELL HOLLAND

Barrister, Michelmores

Schools need more help to handle vexatious complaints

There may not be many of them, but one or two unreasonable parents can make running a school very tough indeed, writes Russell Holland

As an education lawyer, I see it as my job to help schools get on with the most important job, teaching children, by making legal issues as simple as possible to deal with. Coming from a family of teachers, it was almost inevitable that I should be drawn into this area of law.

It is with increasing concern that I have lately been spending more time advising teachers with the legal issues that arise when managing difficult parents. As a result of my work, I have come to the opinion that reform is needed.

I want to be clear that the overwhelming majority of parents are completely reasonable. Concerns can be addressed effectively, which can help strengthen the relationship between parent and school. The problem I am talking about is the ability of a determined but unreasonable parent to take up completely disproportionate amounts of a school's time and resource by pursuing vexatious complaints. The present policy framework does not do enough to protect schools in such a scenario.

There is nothing to prevent an insistent but unreasonable parent from sending multiple e-mails, making multiple complaints, demanding that the matter be considered by the chair of governors and subsequently by a full panel (including an independent member). This will often involve vast quantities of paperwork and can include endless e-mail trails full of inappropriate commentary or personal attacks on staff - not to mention on social media.

When such complaints fail, a new complaint can be made to Ofsted, the DfE, the ESFA, the local authority or MP, and anyone else they can get to listen to them. This can be accompanied by a Freedom of Information or subject access request and the occasional threat of legal action. The whole process can become utterly morale-sapping, and means time and resource become too focused on one or two unreasonable individuals at the expense of the wider school.

While a school does have power to class someone as vexatious and can therefore limit contact (or potentially even ban them from a school site), this doesn't prevent it from having to respond to further enquiries from third-party agencies. I have had examples where a parent dissatisfied with how a member of staff

spoke to their child unreasonably raises the situation as a safeguarding concern, leading to an unpleasant call to the school from a government agency demanding answers without apparently even considering that the complaint might be vexatious.

I believe reform is needed to the law and policy in relation to complaints. The overriding principle behind that reform would be that teachers and governors should be trusted to treat people fairly and reasonably in a straightforward and proportionate complaints framework.

The complaints policy should consist of two levels: firstly a complaint to the head, but if a person remains dissatisfied, they should at a second juncture be entitled to a written response from the chair of governors or trustees. That should be it.

If I was not happy with a supermarket, could

“**There is a far greater risk of unreasonable parents doing very real harm to schools than there is of schools making serious errors**”

I demand my complaint be considered by the manager, a company director, or even at a full panel hearing with the board of directors? Of course not.

Schools and government agencies must be given clear guidance that vexatious complainants should be dealt with swiftly and proportionately. Schools should be actively encouraged to take robust steps to protect staff and avoid spending disproportionate amounts of time on unreasonable parents. There is a far greater risk of unreasonable parents doing very real harm to schools than there is of schools making serious errors.

Teachers and governors are well intentioned people who want to educate children. They need and deserve to be respected and supported in performing this vitally important role. A reformed complaints process accompanied by appropriate guidance could go a long way to helping them do the job without having to worry about the damage an unreasonable parent can do.



MARKUS MEIER

Education professor, Universidad Externado de Colombia

The methodological errors and bias of the PISA gender report

The OECD's analysis of the gender gaps in education simply regurgitates centuries of educational bias, and it's wrong, writes Markus Meier

The PISA studies are received by the scientific community and the general public alike as a kind of educational verdict, distributing bragging and blaming rights. There has been a lot of criticism, sure, but it has not really damaged the PISA brand, with its image of impartial political advice derived from scientific inquiry.

We want to shake these implicit assumptions of political impartiality, scientific rigour and methodological consistency and show that the new OECD-PISA gender report is indeed politically biased, scientifically unsound and methodologically wanting.

The authors invoke pernicious gender stereotypes: while girls' maths shortcomings are caused externally - hence they need pedagogical intervention - boys' literacy deficiencies are caused internally, meaning they need personal transformation, which is regarded as largely unattainable by way of pedagogical intervention.

The tone on boys in the gender report is cold, distant, disconnected and defensive, and invokes a "mythological pedagogy" with an archaic image of boys at its core, who are robust and autonomous, naturally advantaged, resistant to good pedagogical advice, but successful anyway in a world dominated by them.

Three implicit "compensation hypotheses" permeate PISA's argument:

1. Arguing that boys should compensate for historical shortcomings of girls' education today is not only logically questionable, but empirically wrong - they have been doing so since the late 1950s!
 2. Arguing that boys' dramatic disadvantage in literacy is compensated by the fact that relatively few girls perform at the top in maths also lacks logical consistency: these are different phenomena of very different magnitude and relevance.
 3. And arguing that these same dramatic male literacy shortcomings may or may not be compensated for later in life seems cynical in a school assessment, more so in a gender report about educational gender sensitivity and responsibility. Instead of questioning the stereotype of the "naturally advantaged boy" the authors reinforce stereotypes, even if their own data outright contradicts them.
- PISA claims the importance of positive

female role models that fight negative stereotypes in maths, paving the way to STEM jobs. Nevertheless, daughters of STEM mothers perform lower in maths than those of non-STEM mothers. Hypothesis falsified and abandoned, one may expect. PISA chants the same liturgy regardless.

Interestingly, it does not recommend raising self-confidence or implementing positive role models as a path to success for boys, but instead fantasizes about - literally - "mysterious" innate behavioural barriers that prevent boys from performing on a par with girls in literacy. This sort of Manichean dichotomy is not supported by any data, and should be sent back to where it came from: mythopedagogical innateness mysticism that permits to abandon boys to their fate instead of asking why compulsory state education is unable to meet their needs, and what should be done about it.

This whole palava about girls and STEM too often hides that fact that maths is indeed important in some highly paid jobs, and dispensable in others. On the other hand, a linguistically secure performance, confidence in one's own reading and writing abilities, and the ability to detect linguistic nuances in oral

“**We need to abandon the stereotype of the robust male**”

or written communication offer important benefits in many school subjects, as well as in private and professional life. These are very difficult to compensate for, and boys lack them much more often than girls, especially at the lower end of the performance spectrum.

What went wrong? Instead of meandering between pressure-group interests and the personal preferences of individual authors, a gender report based on empirical data should cut to the chase. We have a severe problem with boys in our schools - or rather boys have a severe problem with our schools, and the more gender-equal countries get, the bigger this problem becomes.

Instead of fantasising about girls and computers, we need to abandon the stereotype of the "robust male". It has never worked, less so for schools, it does not work today, and it will work so less in the future. Gender science needs to address the issue, urgently. PISA missed its chance.

OPINION

Hundreds of police officers are now based in schools but we don't know enough about the work they do, or the impact their presence has on pupils, insists Dr Amanda Henshall

The presence of officers in schools is part of a massive package of surveillance measures, including more CCTV in schools, that make children and young people perhaps the most surveilled in England.

Seventeen police forces in England deploy officers in schools, often within safer school partnerships (SSPs), an initiative implemented in 2002.

The objectives of SSPs are ostensibly benign, including ensuring pupil safety, early intervention with pupils at risk of offending, and reducing antisocial behaviour both in the school and the community. However, there are some big, unanswered questions.

Published in 2009 by a working group of government and police representatives, the safer schools guidance – which formed the basis for many of the existing local partnerships – referred to officers gathering and sharing intelligence on young people and their possible criminal, gang or extremist affiliations. However, we don't know what happens to that intelligence, how it is stored, who has access to it and the possible ramifications for the young people concerned.

And what about effectiveness? Evaluations of the early days of the SSPs showed small improvements in measures such as truancy



DR AMANDA HENSHALL

Senior lecturer in education and community, the University of Greenwich

Are police officers based in schools a force for good?

rates, but the data was too weak to show improvements in school-level offending. Pupils did, however, report feeling safer in the intervention schools relative to comparison schools that were not part of SSPs.

“**Police are more likely to be based in schools with higher levels of pupils eligible for FSM**

This chimes with findings from the US, where police presence in schools has been

more thoroughly researched. It is also more intensive: some schools have security staff or officers from local and national specialist teams. Yet although pupils may feel safer from external threats or peer violence, when officers intervene in school discipline, heavy-handed confrontations with pupils can spiral out of control. Minor misdemeanours have mutated into a police matter, resulting in summons to court for minors. There have been reports of officers in Texas using tasers on pupils.

I have focused my own recent study on London, where at the time of data gathering in 2014, 182 schools had police officers working in them either full or part-time. In the US, police tend to be deployed in schools in poorer, urban areas. So I looked at the

levels of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) in schools with an onsite officer, and found that police are more likely to be based in schools with higher levels of pupils eligible for FSM; that is, with a more disadvantaged population of pupils.

Of the 27 schools that at that time had 50 per cent or more pupils eligible for FSM, 24 had an onsite police officer deployed. The fact that the percentage of schools with a police officer increases as the percentage of pupils eligible for FSM increases indicates that this is not a coincidence.

So why are police officers more likely to be stationed in such schools? It could be due to a range of factors, for example, that schools may have particularly high levels of truancy. But isn't it also possible that these pupils may be viewed by police as risky populations, at risk of offending or of being radicalised? It may well be that some are rescued from becoming offenders by police officers who encourage them to get involved in more productive extracurricular activities, but what about those who end up labelled as a cause for concern?

Given growing concerns over the radicalisation of pupils in the light of 2017's terrorist atrocities and the current high levels of knife violence amongst young people in London, it is possible that more officers will be deployed in schools, along with other measures such as metal detectors. Before this happens, we need much more data and a much better understanding of how such measures affect pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, against whom the deck is already stacked.

STA Travel Education are giving one school £10,000 to spend on a trip

STA Travel Education have broken traditions, to help make school trips more accessible, they are offering one lucky group the opportunity to win their next trip, to the sweet tune of £10,000! The company are so dedicated to sending schools away, that they're handing out freebies.

STA Travel, the self-confessed 'round the world' experts have turned their efforts to something a little closer to home, educational travel. The company has over 37 years' experience in the industry and have now added the string 'Educational Travel' to their bow. The team is made up of on the road experts who offer face-to-face advice to both schools & universities, on everything from destination inspiration and itineraries to personalised trip goals. Back at base this on the road team is supported by an experienced team of experts, the classic travel obsessed that they just don't make anymore!

We spoke to director, Ellen Rayner, about the movement "No funny business, we're just passionate about inspiring the next generation. Travel educates as well as inspires and we want to make school trips a more realistic opportunity for many students" Ellen went on to comment on the standard of school trips for many "A lot of our clients come to us with small budgets and are restricted to domestic travel, we want to make sure one of these groups has the opportunity to realise a new culture, somewhere further flung!"

STA Travel Education have risen to educational fame as a member of the School Travel Forum (STF). Some serious noise is being made around the company who work with local schools right through to the big red bricks! To go hand in hand with their STF accreditation, STA Travel Education have recently been awarded a LOTC badge for their efforts in encouraging students to go beyond the classroom.



To find out how you and your school can win, go to <http://grouptourtravel.statravel.co.uk/win-your-group-trip.htm>

REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS
OF THE WEEK

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



Our reviewer of the week is
Andrew Old, a teacher and
blogger @oldandrewuk

Annoying things controlling schools still do that have no basis in evidence
@teacherhead

As the title suggests, this post looks at what schools do even when there is no reason to believe they will help. This includes grading individual lessons, writing target grades on books and requiring a set frequency of written marking comments. A sensible case is made against each annoying thing.

Rethinking planning – what if we plan not to finish?
@missdcox

This post contains a seemingly obvious idea that I don't think I've heard anyone else suggest before (although many teachers, including myself, have often ended up doing it). It suggests that you should plan around activities that do not have to be finished in the lesson where they were began. An activity can last for as long as it is needed, and students are forced to re-engage with previous lessons, which benefits retention of knowledge.

The recent story of me
@StephenDrew72

A former headteacher explains how he came to leave his position and why he chose to return to the classroom. It is a brave post with remarkable honesty about how being a headteacher did not work out: "The job is incredibly difficult to get right, and is getting harder by the year. I remain in awe of so many of the headteachers and senior leaders I have met or worked with in my career. If I can ask one thing at the end of this blog, it is that we all take a few moments to consider the skill, passion, care, determination and dedication that the senior leaders in our

schools show."

The best form of feedback is more teaching educontrarianblog.wordpress.com
An exploration of the meaning and derivation of the term "feedback", which explains how feedback that is aimed solely at students is likely to fail. A student's work is not simply a product of what an individual did, but a product of the whole process of teaching and learning. Therefore it is more important to gather feedback that can inform teaching, than to tell a student what they did wrong.

Listen: Teachers can use more signalling to increase their clarity
@DKMead

A few simple ideas for good, clear explanations. Ideas include "signposting" what you are going to say and using written cues for drawing students attention to what they need to know.

Hands down! Why we shouldn't allow pupils to ask questions whenever they want to
@bennewmark

This post makes a case for limiting when students can ask questions. It describes how questions can sometimes derail lessons or distract from learning. It makes a number of suggestions as to how the pitfalls of answering student questions can be avoided, for instance, by not allowing pupils to raise their hands while somebody else is asking a question, or giving a particular slot in the lesson for questions.

The ethics of "teaching to exams"
@NWMaths

A recent article in The Economist suggested that some social divisions can be explained in terms of differences between those who have passed exams and those who have not. This maths teacher explores this point further, arguing that if exams have a serious effect on opportunities, then teaching your students to pass exams is not some tedious distraction from the important parts of teaching, but a moral obligation.

Something that helped with killing the PRP monster
@amymayforrester

Amy Forrester introduced me to an idea I haven't heard before: performance-related pay in her school revolves around teachers completing a personal professional development project. Teachers explore a change in their teaching, judge the impact of it, and write up what they found out. She argues it has improved teaching and teacher retention.

BOOK REVIEW

The working class: Poverty, education and alternative voices

By Ian Gilbert

Published by Independent

Thinking Press

Reviewed by Lee Peachey – Assistant headteacher, St Mary's Catholic High School, Manchester



As a senior leader who has been championing equality for disadvantaged pupils since stepping into education, you can imagine how excited I was to get my teeth into this book. There I sat, one cloudy afternoon, marking a set of year 11 assessments, when I heard the distinctive sounds of a delivery driver wrestling a package through the letterbox, followed by a deep thud. This was the first hint that I was going to have to invest quite some time into what turned out to be a 517-page tome.

Thankfully, the preface alleviated my worries. Ian Gilbert highlights the fact that this book is collaboratively produced and encompasses the voices of many people who are passionate about this field of work. It does not follow a traditional linear path; rather, it is an eclectic mix of extracts, poems, personal experiences and infectious, passion-filled stories about social injustice.

This book, which certainly doesn't play to the chords of Progress 8, is not a dummies' guide to creating social equality in your school, nor even a checklist for reducing the attainment gap. It offers a new way of thinking, and challenges the status quo of recent educational stereotypes linked to "disadvantage".

He breaks down the idea that being from a deprived background automatically labels you as a drain on society with no aspiration or intention to work. The stereotype of "the feckless poor" is completely blown out of the water when one contributor, Chris Kilkenny, describes having to work two jobs and sleep only a couple of hours each night to put food on the table for his son. This is not a man with low aspirations but someone with a ferocious work ethic, who wants to improve his situation.
The working class sets the moral

compass of why we should be going above and beyond for children from challenging backgrounds. In its early chapters it looks at challenging "neoliberal orthodoxies" and passionately unpicks current educational policy. The later chapters investigate other turbulence factors such as hope, family, belonging, solidarity of communities, shame, agency and diet. All these vital elements are then woven ingeniously through current research to give deeper understanding to the reader.

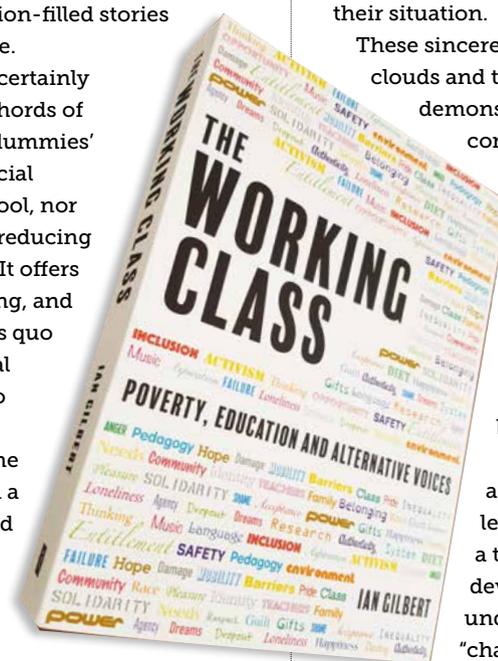
The most moving and engaging parts are the personal and heartfelt anecdotes from people who are from communities of high deprivation, providing a brutal, no-holds-barred insight into what it is really like to come from one of "those estates". This passion is clearly visible in Jaz Ampaw-Farr's section, "A message to my teachers", where she eloquently describes her struggle through education, as a pupil from a very deprived background being taught entirely by middle class teachers.

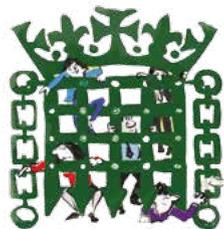
Kilkenny, in 'Down but not out', explains the mental exhaustion of being raised by a mother addicted to heroin. This story not only brutally highlights how hard life it is for some of our pupils, but also shows how an awful start can ignite a fire of hope within someone and become the catalyst for them to better their situation.

These sincere tales are not all grey clouds and thunderstorms, but also demonstrate the strength of community, the loyalty of family, and the unwavering work ethic of people from challenging backgrounds.

In short, this book drills down deeper than the superficial label of being FSM or Ever6.

Read this book if you are an NQT, a senior leader, a governor or a teacher. It is about developing empathy and understanding for the "challenging" students in your care. It will help identify the broader and commonly unvisited barriers to learning so that you can help them break them down. It reaffirms the fact that we all should be championing equality at every opportunity in our schools. Finally, as a legacy disadvantaged pupil myself from an estate on the outskirts of Greater Manchester, this book resonates strongly with me and my upbringing.





Week in Westminster

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

MONDAY:

Is it the bank holiday yet?

TUESDAY:

The schools minister Nick Gibb is clearly a sucker for punishment, because this week he was back, back again, in front of the education select committee for another knockabout with angry MPs.

But poor Gibbo came unstuck when he tried to lecture MPs on the difference between revenue and capital funding, only to be reminded that his own department had blurred the lines less than 12 months ago.

Asked whether the £200 million grammar school expansion fund could be better spent on something like assisted tutoring for poorer kids, Gibb insisted it was capital funding, and capital funding is only for buildings.

Luckily, the committee has a decent memory, and reminded him that his former boss Justine Greening transferred hundreds of thousands from DfE the

free schools budget to form part of the £1.3 billion revenue funding handout for schools last year.

Oops!

WEDNESDAY:

Breaking news! Milburn appointed to lead Social Mobility Commission! No, not that Milburn, another one.

Finally, five months after the vacancy was created when Alan Milburn (yes, that one) resigned in high dudgeon, the role has been filled by Dame Martina Milburn (no relation).

But the government has snubbed demands from the education select committee to give the body extra powers.

The committee wanted the commission to have the power to publish impact assessments on social justice in legislative proposals. MPs also want a social justice minister appointed, and said the commission should be renamed "the Social Justice Commission".



The results of the consultation and the Department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in February 2016.

But according to the DfE, government departments are "best placed" to consider the impact of policy and legislative proposals on social justice, "as they are the experts in their policy areas".

Remember, these are the same "experts" who failed to open a single social mobility opportunity area in the north-east of England.

THURSDAY:

The DfE has outdone itself this time. And we're not talking about the record for the number of times a minister can say "1.9 million more children in 'good' or 'outstanding' schools."

No, we're talking about the department's record on responding to its own consultations.

This week, the DfE issued a response to a consultation that was first published not under

Staffing and employment advice for schools

Government consultation response

May 2018

the last secretary of state, but under her predecessor.

Nicky Morgan's department published the consultation on staffing and employment advice for schools back in December 2015, which seems like DECADES ago in education policy terms, and promised a response in February 2016.

The delay to this response lasted almost as long as Morgan's flagship coasting schools policy. Think about that for a second.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEELIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



Name Karen Wespieser

Age 38

Occupation

Education researcher

Location South East

Subscriber since

January 2017



FLY ON THE WALL

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

The headlines on my phone whilst doing the school run, articles during the day on my laptop, and the long reads when I open the hard copy later in the week.

Which section of the paper do you enjoy the most?

A Week In Westminster – I love the gossipy tone! Stan Dupp's cartoons are also a fave!

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

I think Ofsted should inspect multi-academy trusts.

Who is your favourite education secretary of all time?

Kenneth Baker, his 1988 Education Act (regardless of what you think about it) was the most evidenced and consulted of all acts before or since.

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

The profile of David Benson last November was incredibly powerful writing.

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

I keep it on a shelf near my desk in case anyone else wants to read it or I need to look something up (I am a bit of a hoarder).

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...

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

Pay rise for all reporters!

Favourite memory of your school years?

On reflection, I didn't enjoy school very much. When I was 16 I went to an FE college and that worked much better for me.

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

I worked for the BBC for two years; it was very glamorous, but not as important as education.

Favourite book on education?

How not to be a hypocrite: School choice for the morally perplexed parent by Adam Swift

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

An edu-agony aunt.

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

A school secretary – the stuff they have to deal with is astonishing! I think a day on their wall would help me keep my job in perspective.

Ask
Freddie

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



The educational benefits of puppy love **FEATURED**

A Manchester primary school has recruited a full-time therapy dog to help boost pupils' self-esteem and wellbeing.

George, a four-year-old chocolate Labrador, has been working at Radcliffe Primary School for three weeks, helping put pupils at ease, solve disputes and act as an incentive for well-behaved pupils, who get to take him out for a walk.

The new recruit belongs to Radcliffe Primary School's assistant headteacher Rebecca Kenyon, who brings him in to the school every day. He lives in executive headteacher Nicola Nelson's office while on duty and joins pupils on the playground during break times.

"We read quite a lot of things about how dogs in schools create a calmer atmosphere, and give children an opportunity to take some responsibility that they perhaps might not have in their home life," explained Kenyon.

"Having George here has helped calm some situations down much quicker. If a child has been upset or fallen out with their friends, he's been a really good distraction. The children will talk about what happened, almost as if they're telling George and not us, really. He has had an absolutely brilliant effect already in just a short

George being the centre of attention



Bonding with pupils

space of time." Since starting in the role, following a full risk-assessment and health and safety checks, the pup has become a local celebrity.

"We made sure he had all his vaccinations and jabs up to date and consulted parents as well to check for any phobias or allergies," Kenyon added. "He's been received so positively in school,

not just with the children, but with parents and the staff."

A daily dose of dog isn't the only strategy the school, which is a member of the Bury College Education Trust, has in place for helping with pupil (and staff) wellbeing: an in-house counsellor is available for pupils and teachers three days a week.



Time for a walk...



ON THE BALL

The National Literacy Trust has released free teaching resources themed on the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia to inspire pupils to get writing.

The online materials were created in partnership with Walker Books, the publishers of the *Football School* series, and include practical classroom activities which guide key stage 2 pupils to write their own football-themed lesson plan for their favourite subject.

Alongside classroom activities, bookmarks, posters and certificates are also available to download ahead of the World Cup, which kicks off in June.

"These resources promise to spark children's creativity and nurture a love of writing, as pupils are inspired to become journalists, statisticians, historians, explorers and even musicians in their quest to write their very own World Cup football school lesson," said Jonathan Douglas, the director of the National Literacy Trust. "The tournament brings together such an incredible range of nations, each with their own fascinating history, culture and traditions."

To access the resources, visit: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/football-school>

163 red paper roses for Manchester



The rose production line

Mohamed Maxamed with a tray of finished roses

Students at a Manchester secondary school have been making origami roses to commemorate the victims of last year's terrorist attack at the MEN Arena.

Groups of pupils at Manchester Academy crafted 163 red paper roses which bore the names of the 22 people who lost their lives.

The creations were given out to members of the public on May 22 during a vigil marking the one-year anniversary of the attack.

The school teamed up with the Rio Ferdinand Foundation, which helped to

fund and organise the project, the brainchild of former student Mohamed Maxamed, through its youth leaders programme.

"All the students who took part worked very hard – I'm very proud of all of them. They made a total of 163 roses, which is well over the 100 we were expecting, so that was a brilliant effort," said Aysha Knanom, the school's RE coordinator.

"We were very proud to see Max return to his old school to lead his project and become a role model to the younger students," added Nikki Carlin, a programme coordinator at the Rio Ferdinand Foundation.

Children's authors in novel reading initiative



Anne Fine reads to pupils

A primary school in London is inviting a host of children's authors in to read their books to pupils in an exciting English initiative.

The 'Authors at the academy' programme has been running at Harris Primary Academy Philip Lane since February, and has so far seen pupils visited by Children's Laureate Anne Fine, the author of *Madame Doubtfire* and *Flour Babies*.

Most recently, the school received a visit from award-winning author SF Said, who read passages from his novel *Varjak Paw*, which won the Nestlé Smarties Book Prize,

to pupils in years 3 to 6.

"The fact that our pupils are being read their very favourite books by the people that wrote them is simply fantastic," said Emma Penzer, principal of the school. "The effect of these visits has already been demonstrated in our pupils' English lessons. We want to nurture a love of reading and writing for pleasure."



A visit from SF Said



ANDREW MORRISON

Headteacher, Furze Platt Senior School

START DATE: September 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Headteacher, Bradon Forest School

INTERESTING FACT: Andrew plays squash and tennis in the Oxfordshire leagues.



MIKE BUCHANAN

Executive director, Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC)

START DATE: November 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Headmaster, Ashford School

INTERESTING FACT: Mike is a governor at several schools, a trustee of a children's charity and a part-time farmer.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new



DR LAWRENCE FOLEY

Executive headteacher, The Bobby Moore Academy

START DATE: September 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Director of education, Future Academies

INTERESTING FACT: Lawrence grew up less than a mile away from the Bobby Moore Academy site.



AMY DIAS

Head of school, Freshwaters Primary Academy

START DATE: April 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Head of school, Magna Carta Primary Academy

INTERESTING FACT: Amy is a huge Disney fan.



NATHAN JENKINS

Headteacher, The King Alfred School

START DATE: September 2018

PREVIOUS JOB: Principal, Abertillery Learning Community School

INTERESTING FACT: Nathan is a qualified rugby coach.

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

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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

Spot the difference to WIN a **Schools Week** mug



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

Difficulty:
EASY

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM



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