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P14-15

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Revealed: DfE's doubts over £9m UTC BEFORE it opened

PAGE 12

New documents lay bare extent of failure at Schools Company Trust

- Board minutes reveal shocking state of provision at doomed PRU trust
- Deficit at trust, which catered for very vulnerable pupils, to rise to around £8m
- DfE denies 'positive' relationship with trust as it imploded

EXCLUSIVE

P8-10

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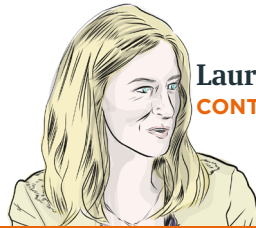
SCHOOLS WEEK

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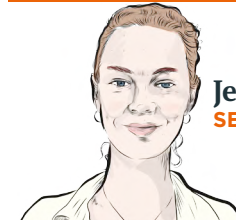
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Opinion



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Strategic director ITE
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**When a marginal gains approach to
teacher training is not enough**

Page 29



**ALISON
PEACOCK**

Chief executive,
Chartered College of Teaching

**Early years education: the gift to a
child that keeps on giving**

Page 30



**ANDY
DALY-SMITH**

Senior lecturer in physical activity and behavioural science
Leeds Beckett University

**Does the Daily Mile™ really
go far enough to get kids fit?**

Page 31



**SAM
BUTTERS**

CEO of the Fair Education Alliance

**Contextualised admissions: how do
we make them fairer?**

Page 32



News

Bright Tribe's Dwan 'frustrated' at scrutiny, ministerial letters show



Bright Tribe founder Michael Dwan withdrew his support from the ailing trust amid frustrations over government scrutiny and concerns that his efforts had gone unrecognised, previously unseen documents have revealed.

P 11

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Profile: Michael Merrick

P 27-28



TOP BLOGS of the week

P 34

1.5
MINUTE
READ

One quarter of Now Teach graduates opt to quit or defer

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Three in four of the older career-changers who joined the Now Teach programme, co-founded last September by Financial Times journalist Lucy Kellaway, are still standing and will graduate with qualified teacher status this month.

But 25 per cent of the cohort have deferred or quit, blaming schools' "data-led, assessment-heavy culture".

Kellaway left her glittering career as a columnist to start the Now Teach programme as a way to encourage high-flying professionals to switch into teaching.

The challenge was taken up by 47 people who left behind previous working lives ranging from pilots to doctors and diplomats. Thirty-six have now qualified, while six deferred or extended their training and five dropped out.

Kellaway, who trained as a maths teacher this year, said: "This has been the most exhausting and humiliating year of my life: it's also been the most stimulating.

"Even at my lowest point I was cheered and supported by the others who were doing the same thing. I am so proud of them."

Launched in 2016 with the support of the Ark academy chain, Now Teach operates in London and Hasting and plans to expand into East Anglia and the Midlands next year.

Now Teach director Katie Waldegrave said some trainees left after deciding teaching wasn't for them, while others found it too much of a "culture clash" or were juggling family responsibilities.

"We are trying to work with schools to make the transition easier, but the fact is the data-led, assessment-heavy culture isn't one they all feel comfortable in," she said. "Linked to that is the workload and flexibility issues that we all know so well."

The organisation has commissioned research with flexible working recruitment specialist Timewise to find ways to help schools retain employees with particular needs outside of work.

Now Teach set an ambitious target of 80 new trainees for 2018-19 and has signed up 74 so far, with a further 20 in the assessment process.

Maths is the most popular subject, with 23 trainees, followed by French with 11 and English with nine. Kellaway wished them all "the best of luck".

EXCLUSIVE

Old school rules: 15 years later, Teach Firsters return to teaching

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Teachers who trained with education charity Teach First when it launched 15 years ago are returning to the profession, after leaving it behind to try out different industries.

Data gathered by Teach First on trainees who joined the programme in 2003 and 2004 have shown that more of them were back in the classroom last year than were teaching in the years immediately after they qualified.

Teach First was founded in 2002 with the aim of addressing educational disadvantage by recruiting graduates fresh out of university with a 2.1 degree or above, and training them as teachers to work in schools in deprived areas.

After fulfilling a commitment of two years in their school they become Teach First "ambassadors", but only about half typically choose to stay in teaching jobs in the UK.

The first Teach First cohort in 2003 included 158 trainees, but in the academic year after they graduated just 48 were still teaching. By the following year, 2006-07, this had fallen to only 44.

But fast forward to 2017, and numbers had jumped up to 56, meaning over a third of the original group are back in the classroom.

For the 2004 cohort of 145 trainees the situation is similar; 62 remained in teaching in 2006-07, the year after they finished the Teach First programme, and in 2007-08 the figure was at 63.

But by 2017 it had risen to 69 graduates reporting that they were teaching again.

Tom Knott, assistant headteacher at Totteridge Academy in Barnet, is a Teach First ambassador who left the profession after completing his training.

He said that while he felt proud of the work, he had wondered if "the grass was greener".

"I tried two different jobs outside



of teaching and learned a lot from both, which I believe has made me a better teacher and leader. But I knew as soon as I left that I had to get back into schools."

He added: "There is nothing quite like the buzz and the rhythm of the school day, and the satisfaction you get from making a difference to children's lives trumps any other job perk.

"Personally, knowing all this means I'll be a more committed and satisfied teacher as my career goes on."

Russell Hobby, CEO of Teach First, said the charity wants to keep encouraging its trained teachers who are working elsewhere to come back to the profession.

"These teachers are bringing with them a new set of skills from other professions, and a reinvigorated sense of determination to support their pupils," he said.

Like Knott, some Teach First-ers have moved up through the system, with 28 now working as headteachers.

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of schools leaders' union NAHT, said encouraging teachers to stay in the profession is vital for creating a pipeline of "great school leaders of the future".

"On a good day, working in schools and education is one of the best jobs in the world," he said.

"The trouble is, there aren't enough good days. Our teaching workforce works longer hours than most of their compatriots in other EU countries and we've seen teachers' pay depressed over the last decade."

While teaching remains an "attractive proposition" for graduates, he added, we must make sure they want to stay on.

"The government bears just as much responsibility for that as schools do."

2.5
MINUTE
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EXCLUSIVE

T-levels: Will 'one exam board' trend catch on?

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

The new T-levels will be delivered by just one exam board to "protect the standard" of the qualification.

But assessment experts believe the change could be a dry-run for reintroducing single exam boards for A-levels and GCSEs.

Each of the 15 new Technical levels, intended as alternatives to A-levels, which will be taught in schools and FE colleges, will be delivered by a single exam board.

It marks a radical departure from the model for GCSEs and A-level, multiple boards operate.

Anne Milton, skills minister, defended the proposal in sister paper FE Week, citing recommendations in the 2016 Sainsbury report on post-16 vocational education, which suggested that boards compete to deliver each T-level, but only one chosen winner would deliver the highest-quality qualification.

However Paul Goddard, a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors, said the T-levels will be "watched closely" by those interested in future qualifications reform.

"If it goes ahead, everyone in the industry will be watching closely and seeing this as a testing ground."

At present, 17 schools are set to pioneer the T-level qualifications from September 2020. Three so-called "pathways" will be taught, involving courses in design, surveying and planning; software application development; and education. More courses will be rolled out from 2023.

The last time the government mooted a single awarding body, it was met with a backlash.

In 2015, schools minister Nick Gibb threatened to scrap all exam boards and replace them with a government-run one after a review of mistakes by exam board OCR.

Research commissioned by the DfE warned that a single awarding organisation for T-levels could create a "risk of system failure".

Rod Bristow, president of Pearson, which runs exam board Edexcel, pointed out that if an exam board folds or stops offering the qualification due to financial trouble, no other boards will have a specification ready to take on marooned pupils.

One advantage of a single-board model is that all the experts in a subject can work together on one exam board's qualification materials, said Goddard, who is also a senior examiner.

Expert assessors in subjects such as engineering are spread too "thinly" between different boards, she said, which can dilute the quality.

With regards to any new model

replacing A-levels and GCSEs, however, Goddard pointed out the current arrangements are so deeply established only a "really good argument" would ultimately dismantle them.

Earlier this week Ofqual launched a consultation about how it will regulate T-levels. The short window for responses, four weeks has drawn criticism from the likes of Meg Hillier, chair of the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee.

The exams regulator is asking for views on how it should frame its rules, including on issues such as how assessments should be set and marked, when retakes can be taken, and certification requirements.

Its mammoth consultation document is 71 pages long with 52 questions, but in the latest piece of evidence that the new technical qualifications are being rushed, it is only offering up time for responses until August 6 – half the usual period it sets aside. Ofqual itself recognised this was a short deadline.

Meg Hillier, head of the Public Accounts Committee, pronounced the timescale "ridiculous".

"It is a very short timetable and at the wrong time of year for educational institutions, which are just about to break up for the summer," Ms Hillier said.

"If you are going to introduce a new qualification, getting it right is really important. Rushing it through and risking getting it wrong could undermine it completely."



PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA_AK

Governance concerns at David Ross Education Trust 'unfounded', but financial position is 'vulnerable'

One of England's largest academy trusts has been cleared of wrongdoing following complaints about its governance, but school funding bosses remain concerned about its finances.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has ruled that concerns over board appointments at the David Ross Education Trust last year were "unfounded", but has urged the trust to improve its monitoring of its "vulnerable" financial position.

DRET, set up by Carphone Warehouse founder and Conservative Party donor David Ross, runs

33 schools across England.

Last January, DRET's chair, the former education secretary David Blunkett, stood down and was replaced by Ross. The trust's chief executive Wendy Marshall and two other senior figures also subsequently resigned.

According to the ESFA, the resignations were prompted by "perceived governance issues at the trust and relationships between the trust board, trust senior management and the David Ross Foundation".

A two-week financial management and

governance review carried out last spring found the appointments were made in compliance with the trust's articles of association.

However, there remains "significant concern" about the financial viability of DRET, which is in a "vulnerable financial position with limited revenue funds", found the review, which was published this week.

A spokesperson for DRET said the trust had appointed "a new and experienced executive leadership team and strengthened its board with new trustee appointments".

News: Schools Company Trust

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Exposed: Doomed trust's board minutes reveal extent of failure

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
@PIPPA_AK

Financial incompetency, appalling school buildings and close relationships with government have been revealed in the minutes of trustee meetings from the failed Schools Company Trust.

The trust ran three pupil referral units in Devon for vulnerable children who have been excluded or are otherwise unable to attend mainstream schools, as well as the Goodwin Academy secondary school in Kent.

In November 2017, its trustees were replaced, and in January an interim executive board took over the running of the trust. All four schools are now in the process of being given to other academy chains and the trust will be dissolved.

New documents covering the crucial period from July 2016 to April 2018, obtained by a freedom of information request, shine a light on the inner workings of the trust, which has been strongly criticised by both Ofsted and the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The minutes reveal unmonitored budgets, buildings in disrepair and concerns over the suitability of staff, as well as the new board's frustrations as it tried to work alongside the council and Department for Education to improve the schools.

A Schools Company Trust spokesperson said the new interim leadership has sought to "tighten safeguarding procedures" and secure "effective financial procedures across the trust".

"The interim trustees and interim CEO have acknowledged the unacceptable failures of financial management and



EXCLUSIVE

South and West Devon academy

unacceptably low level of educational provision in the Devon academies by previous trustees and senior leaders of the trust," he added.

"We have apologised to students and their parents and will work with the appropriate agencies in order to ensure that those culpable are held to account."

Thinking Schools Academy Trust is set to take over Goodwin Academy, and Wave, which specialises in alternative provision, will take over the three Devon PRUs.

1.5
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New CEO's 'huge concern' over standards of provision

Safeguarding breaches, unsafe premises and inadequate staff were among the failings identified at the three pupil referral units run by Schools Company Trust.

Although the trust technically ran three academies – North Devon, Central Devon and South and West Devon academies – these were divided into approximately 20 sites across the county.

The trust's interim chief executive Angela Barry expressed "huge concern about the provision being of a questionable standard and where the funding had gone for these children".

The strongest expressions of concern related to the Torridge Academy, a North Devon Academy satellite site that the trust had been hoping to open as a school in its own right.

However, the board shut it down almost immediately "because health and safety and safeguarding was so bad we couldn't allow it to stay open".

The minutes warn of year 12 pupils being allowed to mix with primary pupils, including "one showing high-level sexual behaviour", and only eight or nine pupils attending regularly.

There had been no health and safety

compliance checks and the building had broken water pipes, exposed wiring and smashed windows, with mouse poison left in reach of children.

"It has never been run in an appropriate manner, which is very evident not only through the building but also the staff running it," the minutes said.

The main site of the South West Devon Academy in Dartington should have had between 40 and 50 pupils, but it had only nine.

"The head was clear that he chooses the best nine to attend the site and the rest are put in other places or educated offsite," the minutes noted.

"The provisions have not been run on a diagnostic basis of the needs of the students. This process has never been adhered to. Effectively they get the funding but then put them somewhere cheap."

Attendance was low across all sites, with several either not taking accurate registers or not taking registers at all.

A "field school" set up as part of the South Devon provision was the farm of a personal friend of Patrick Eames, a former operations

director and executive principal at Schools Company Trust. No risk assessments had been taken before pupils attended.

Central Devon Academy's main site in Exeter should have had 80 students on site, but just four were in attendance when inspectors visited. There were both primary and secondary pupils registered, but the minutes warn that not enough was being done to try to return the younger pupils to mainstream education. One child, who had been in alternative provision for nine years, was "completely institutionalised".

One offshoot site, Chapel Street, was described as a potential "illegal outreach". The trust was three months in arrears with rent and there was no insurance and no gas or electrical testing. At another, the 100 Club, support staff from ACE Academy Trust arrived to help with improvements and found staff "watching Jeremy Kyle".

The North Devon main site in Springfield Court accounted for a third of all police callouts across the sites. In initial meetings with the interim chief executive, the principal "refused to accept that these children were his responsibility", the minutes found.

2.5
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News: Schools Company Trust

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Whitehall denies cosy relationship with imploding academy trust



The Department for Education has flatly denied that it maintained a "positive" relationship with the imploding Schools Company Trust and encouraged them to grow further, despite suggestions to the contrary in the trust's minutes.

Minutes from board meetings of the Schools Company Trust suggests there was a positive relationship with the team of Rebecca Clark, the former regional schools commissioner for the south west, until July last year.

At a meeting on July 3, as the trust's finances were seeking ever deeper into the red, former chief executive Elias Achilleos reported that "growth opportunities in south west are being encouraged by RSC so need to avoid financial notice to improve".

He told the board that a visit from the RSC in Devon was "very positive, looking at a range of classes, activities, reports, data etc. It was felt that all previous targets had all been met: very positive," and said the RSC team was "favourable" to the trust opening satellite site Torrridge Academy as a separate school.

Later that same month, the trust received the first of two financial notices to improve, and it was announced that Lisa Mannall

would replace Clark, who was leaving her role to work at academy chain Ark.

When an interim executive board took over the trust six months later, it closed Torrridge Academy because of serious concerns over health and safety and safeguarding.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education insisted that it had not offered any kind of encouragement to the failing trust, regardless of what may have been suggested in board meetings.

She said: "Claims that we encouraged Schools Company Trust to expand are untrue.

"Since 2017, we have declined all new free school applications submitted by the Schools Company Trust. In July 2017, we issued the trust with a financial notice to



improve. Failure to improve has led to the rebrokerage of all four academies."

Minutes from March also show that Kent county council had discussed Schools Company Trust running a new school in Thanet.

The documents noted: "This would normally have gone through the free school program but wave 13 of this has been delayed. Kent LA would like to work with Schools Company Trust and the RSC directly on this to fast track the process."

It also said the RSC was "keen for Schools Company Trust to potentially sponsor primaries".

Minutes also show the interim executive board was prompted twice to write to the RSC to express concern over the amount of time taken to rebroker the academies, as well as "concern over the safeguarding of the children and the current financial position of the trust".

The financial notice in July 2017 cited "significant concerns" about finances, including "short notice and urgent requests for additional funding". In February, a further notice from the RSC warned that the trust may have schools removed due to a "deteriorating financial position."



News: Schools Company Trust

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EXCLUSIVE

What next for under-fire academy trust?

A prominent academies "troubleshooter" has been brought in to help Schools Company Trust as it continues to face investigations from the government and scrutiny from Ofsted.

Angela Barry, a trustee of the Argent Trust, which helped to wind up the controversial Lilac Sky Schools Trust before it closed last year, is leading an interim leadership team at Schools Company Trust. She has also recently become a board member at the under-fire Bright Tribe Trust.

The new team has been put in place at a pivotal moment for Schools Company Trust, which must continue to support its schools until they are rebrokered.

According to its most recently published accounts, the chain is under investigation by the Education and Skills Funding Agency over instances of potential "material irregularity, impropriety or funding non-compliance".

This "series of investigations" by officials will also cover potential conflicts of interest and related-party transactions at the trust, accounts reveal.

In the minutes, the interim leadership team said it was unlikely that the completed investigation report will be received this year, but noted "there are a series of separate HR investigations running concurrently" which should be completed earlier.

Ofsted is yet to carry out a full inspection of the Central Devon Academy or the Goodwin Academy since they were taken over by the trust, but both the South and West Devon Academy and North Devon Academy have been rated "inadequate" across the board.

Minutes from a board meeting in March reveal that the interim board asked Ofsted to defer the inspection of the South and West Devon Academy, as "if it had been inspected, the academy would have been closed down".

From September, the Goodwin Academy will be sponsored by the Thinking Schools Academy Trust, and Wave, which specialises in alternative provision, will take over the three Devon PRUs.

Trust racked up £8m deficit through substantial overspends

The Schools Company Trust is expected to finish this academic year with a deficit "in the region of £8 million", according to minutes from trustee meetings seen exclusively by *Schools Week*.

The figure was predicated on the prior expenditure of the trust continuing over the past academic year. The trust overspent by an extra £800,000 in the four months leading up to December alone.

According to the minutes, former chief executive Elias Achilleos told his fellow trustees in December 2015 that the deficit faced by the trust should be wiped out "in five years" – despite its having taken on a school with a £4 million deficit.

In October 2017, he predicted a closing deficit of just under £2 million by the end of 2018. This estimate that appears to be only one quarter the size of the most current predictions.

The minutes note that the trust owes creditors around £1 million and that it had stopped paying invoices "for the last few months".

Budgets had not been monitored correctly, with inaccurate forecasts for expenditure on rent, and twice as much spent on professional services such as human resources as originally predicted.

The financial director originally employed by Schools Company Trust was not a qualified accountant, as the trust "wanted a business mind, not an accountant".

The trust's one mainstream secondary school, previously called Castle Community College, was operated by Achilleos' separate company Schools Company Ltd from 2014 until a full takeover by the trust in July 2016, when it was renamed the Goodwin Academy.

Rated "outstanding" in 2010, it merged with nearby Walmer Science College in 2013, but was deemed "inadequate" six months later.

Minutes from September 2017 reveal that Castle Community College had a forecast deficit of over £4 million, but the trust agreed to take it on after the Education and Skills Funding Agency said it would support it "through an understanding".

EXCLUSIVE



However, the minutes also state that the decision to take on the school "was based on assumptions about budget which have turned out to be wrong.

"With the known facts we would not have taken on the school unless the deficit was underwritten."

Although trustees discussed trying to hand back the Goodwin Academy, it was "felt to be unlikely. No trust would take on the deficit. The ESFA would not wish to write off the debt."

Despite having schools based in Devon and Kent, the trust had a main office in an upmarket part of central London, close to Chancery Lane station.

In September Achilleos said the trust would relocate to the Goodwin Academy to save money, but warned he had "potentially misled the board" and had signed an agreement to keep it open until May 2019.

Plans to restructure head office were "never going to materialise" as Achilleos had "never issued any redundancy notices", and the interim board has since been unable to find "any personnel files for head office staff or any information relating to the accounting officer".

According to the trust's accounts, which cover the period from September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017, the chain is now under investigation by the ESFA over instances of potential "material irregularity, impropriety or funding non-compliance". This "series of investigations" by officials will also cover potential conflicts of interest and related-party transactions at the trust.

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News: Bright Tribe

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Bright Tribe's Dwan 'frustrated' at scrutiny, ministerial letters show

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Bright Tribe founder Michael Dwan withdrew his support from the ailing trust amid frustrations over government scrutiny and concerns that his efforts had gone unrecognised, previously unseen documents have revealed.

The trust confirmed this week that Dwan's charities, the Helping Hands Trust and Adventure Learning Schools, have stepped down as controlling "members" of Bright Tribe and its sister organisation, Adventure Learning Academies Trust (ALAT), in early July.

It follows a turbulent few years for Bright Tribe, which is in the process of walking away from four of its five schools in the north of England amid a row over buildings, school failures, and a botched attempt to take on more schools.

Copies of letters and emails obtained by *Schools Week* under the freedom of information act have revealed that Dwan threatened to walk away more than two years ago, before "resigning" as an academy sponsor last September.

Dwan's letters to academies ministers Lord Nash and Lord Agnew have not been released to *Schools Week*, but the ministers' partially redacted responses reveal many of his concerns.

In a June 2016 letter, Nash reassured Dwan that he valued the "contribution" made by both Bright Tribe and ALAT "particularly with under-performing schools" after having received a letter about Dwan's "frustrations" over his trusts' position.

Nash said he was aware of Dwan's "personal role in that success", and spoke of his "regret that you feel it is necessary to have to consider your options as an academy sponsor going forward".

The letter shows Dwan was "very disappointed" when his bid to open a new free school in Manchester was turned down, and that he asked for assurances over information about him which might be released into the public domain through FOI rules.



EXCLUSIVE

Photo: The Bolton News

"I can assure you that the department considers carefully any request under the freedom of information act for the release of information in respect of its business," Nash wrote.

"Officials would make you aware if information about any of your trusts was going to be released into the public domain – as they would with any organisation in scope for such a request."

In September 2016, Nash sought again to reassure Dwan, this time over a Colchester Gazette article about related-party transactions between Bright Tribe and Dwan's companies. In his letter, he promised that all DfE communications would set out "quite clearly" that the trusts "operate under a strict system of oversight and accountability and are compliant within that".

November 2016 brought more bad news to Dwan when ministers confirmed plans to close his Greater Manchester UTC, and Bright Tribe's Whitehaven Academy was placed in special measures, prompting Janet Renou, regional schools commissioner for the north of England, to summon Dwan to a meeting.

The following September, he sent a letter of resignation to Lord Agnew.

"I am disappointed to hear that you consider your efforts have gone unrecognised," Agnew wrote in response. "That is not the case. I would like to assure you that the department values the contribution that you and the trusts you are associated with have made to the academies programme."

In his letter, Agnew said he recognised that Bright Tribe and ALAT "have been subject to scrutiny from the department for some time", and he understood why Dwan and the trust boards had "found this frustrating".

"I am sure you can also appreciate that the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) must consider all matters brought to their attention as part of their regulatory responsibility."

A spokesperson for Dwan said he had donated "considerable business skills and resources" to Bright Tribe and its schools, but that he "felt the trust and its schools would be best served by a renewed vision for the area provided by an alternative sponsor".

The Department for Education said it wasn't unusual for academy sponsors to talk regularly to ministers, but would not comment further.

4
MINUTE
READ

Did failed Greater Manchester UTC get 'free pass' despite warnings?

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The viability of the failed Greater Manchester university technical college was questioned by government officials even before it opened, but ministers still allowed the project to proceed, new documents have revealed.

Correspondence seen by *Schools Week* shows Department for Education bosses believed the state-of-the-art UTC, which cost £9 million to build, would only be viable if it recruited 173 pupils in its first year.

Yet records show it was allowed to open with fewer than 100, before it closed three years later.

Michael Dwan, a venture capitalist and founder of the controversial Bright Tribe academy chain, was granted permission to open the UTC in 2013 by education secretary Michael Gove. Documents show he was also handed a £300,000 grant to cover project development.

But the project was already unravelling by the following spring, months before the UTC opened on a purpose-built site in Oldham.

In a letter to Dwan dated May 8, 2014, an unnamed official from the Department for Education warned that only 65 pupils had been recruited to start that September, less than half of the "minimum viable number" of 173 agreed in the school's funding agreement.

The official warned that with such few pupils, Dwan could not "deliver the full educational offer that I know you aspire to".

Despite these warnings, the UTC opened as planned in September 2014. Its school census showed just 98 pupils on roll the following January. When the school closed in September last year, it still had fewer than the DfE-stipulated target of 173.

Lucy Powell, the MP for Manchester Central and a former shadow education secretary, accused the DfE of giving the school's sponsors a "free pass".

"It's clear now that even before this school opened, its future was bleak," she told *Schools Week*. "Officials signed off plans for this school despite knowing



EXCLUSIVE

that it was unsustainable from the outset, giving the sponsors a free pass even though they had fallen at the first hurdle.

"Unfortunately the DfE seems to time and again turn a blind eye when it comes to their 'preferred partners' or mates who run trusts. We have seen, and continue to see, this lack of accountability and rigour leading to failure."

Powell demanded "much more robust challenge and support" when new school proposals are being considered, "rather than the free-for-all which has seen serious failure bringing our schools system into disrepute".

Other documents obtained by *Schools Week* show that further concerns were raised by officials in a 2015 report from DfE officials. Although the report itself has not been released, we did obtain Dwan's response, outlining a series of changes made at the under-fire school, and criticising officials.

In a letter on Greater Manchester UTC-headed paper, Dwan said he was "disappointed with the tone" of the civil service report, and demanded more support.

"I expected a more supportive

approach to the challenging circumstances we have inherited and a greater recognition of the actions we have already undertaken, independent of your visit. I also expected a greater acknowledgement and acceptance of the reality and the data shared with you.

"We will provide you with further information relating to our action plan shortly but I would ask that you consider how you may be more able to support us more positively in our objectives."

A spokesperson for Dwan's office said he had agreed to sponsor the UTC because it was "seen by stakeholders as a viable model for provision for Manchester".

"In the first year of operation of a UTC, it is normal for losses to be made as student numbers rise to a level that can make a college viable and Mr Dwan personally contributed £500,000 to the operation of the UTC," the spokesperson said.

"It is entirely appropriate that DfE officials query and challenge expectations around the student roll as they do with all new schools and colleges. Mr Dwan remains disappointed that the UTC failed in its objective."

The Department for Education did not respond to requests for comment.

3.5
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News: Bright Tribe

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Revealed: How Bright Tribe's Cumbria growth plan crumbled

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Attempts by the Bright Tribe academy trust to create an "axis of improvement" for schools in rural Cumbria failed because it was prevented from taking on more than one school, it has emerged.

Copies of correspondence between Bright Tribe's founder Michael Dwan and the Department for Education reveal the trust's dismay at having its bid to run two more schools in the county turned down, and detail how Dwan even threatened to take the government to court if its wishes were not met.

In 2013, Bright Tribe set out plans to take over the failing Stainburn and Southfield schools in Workington, having recently adopted the nearby Whitehaven School.

But despite a vote by governors of Stainburn and Southfield in favour of joining Bright Tribe, officials ruled in 2014 that the two schools should merge to form a single Workington academy and move to Lakes Academy Trust, a chain set up by a local college.

This prompted a row between Dwan, the government and Cumbria county council.

Dwan wrote in June 2014 that Bright Tribe had provided improvement support at Stainburn and Southfield schools since 2013, and had the "local knowledge" and community support to run the schools following their merger.

He questioned the Lakes trust's experience, and insisted that ministers should overrule the decision, threatening legal action if the school was placed elsewhere.

"We believe we provided the best bid, we have the local knowledge and we had already gained the support of the community," he wrote.

"Should the minister decide to award the sponsorship of the new Workington academy to the Lakes Academy Trust, we need to advise that Bright Tribe would, as a matter of course, consider all options available to us including an application to



seek a judicial review of that decision."

A spokesperson for Dwan said at the time that Whitehaven Academy "had just achieved its best ever results having worked intensively with the trust for a year". The school was subsequently placed in special measures in December 2016, and Bright Tribe set out plans to walk away from the school last November, amid a row with parents over declining standards and the state of buildings.

"The vision and platform for local education improvement had always been envisaged as a closely working cluster as opposed to any school operating in isolation."

Dwan claimed Cumbria council had "delayed, obstructed and deliberately confused and in some cases threatened" the schools, and even told headteachers and chairs of governors "that they would not allow Bright Tribe to convert the schools and they were not having Bright Tribe in Cumbria full stop".

But the council rejected the criticism, and accused Bright Tribe of failing pupils at Whitehaven, which the trust will soon give up.

"We do not recognise the description of events contained in this correspondence," a council spokesperson said.

"Bright Tribe Trust has failed children in Cumbria; as a result the regional schools commissioner removed them as sponsor of Whitehaven Academy. The county council is now working to support the appointment of a new sponsor who can bring about the improvement so urgently needed."

In March, the government named the Cumbria Education Trust as its preferred new sponsor for Whitehaven. Ironically, it is the same trust that ended up running Workington Academy.

1.5
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DfE remains mum on £1m awarded to Bright Tribe

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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The Department for Education has made no attempt to claw back the £1 million it gave to an academy trust to take over schools, despite it failing to meet key targets.

In late 2015, Bright Tribe was handed £995,000 from the government's northern fund to allow it to take on more schools in the north of England.

Government documents obtained by *Schools Week* show that the DfE warned Bright Tribe it could face having to return the money if it did not meet agreed "key performance indicators" for the cash.

But the trust, which is handing back all but one of its schools in the north of England, has blamed the government for the target failure, and claims it was not given enough opportunities to take on schools in the region.

The grant offer letter and contract signed by Bright Tribe show that the money was given on an agreement that a minimum of three academies – two of which had to have been rated "inadequate" by Ofsted – would join the hub by May 2016, and that arrangements for conversion would be put in place by the summer of that year.

But Bright Tribe did not take on any new schools until mid-2017, when it took over at Grindon Hall Christian School in Sunderland and the Haltwhistle Lower and Upper Schools in Northumberland, all of which it now plans to hand back.

In the documents, the DfE explained that it "may take steps to reclaim the grant" if the trust fell "significantly short of meeting any of the KPIs". *Schools Week* understands no such steps have been taken, despite demands from campaigners. The DfE would not comment on the situation.

A Bright Tribe spokesperson said the trust "entered the Northern Hub negotiations on the understanding that sufficient schools would be brokered to the Trust to allow a viable hub to be formed".

"Despite strong representations and proactive proposals being made by the Trust insufficient schools were brokered or offered to enable a viable hub to be formed."

2
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News: Faith schools

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Have some respect, Jewish leaders tell Spielman

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
@PIPPA_AK

Jewish faith leaders have urged the schools inspectorate to show more "respect" for faith schools.

Members of the Orthodox Jewish community raised concerns after inspectors placed a girls' school that censored teaching materials into special measures.

But chief inspector of schools Amanda Spielman denied that Ofsted has a "secular agenda".

Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girls' School in north London redacted passages from textbooks; censored images that showed men and women together, paintings by Picasso and bare skin on ankles, wrists and necks; and refused to teach pupils about animal or human reproduction.

An Ofsted report published last month said school leaders judged the Charedi school's effectiveness only "in terms of the school's own values, reflecting the expectations of their immediate community" and they were not taking into account statutory obligations.

The school was rated "inadequate" by the inspectorate, having previously been judged "good" in September 2014 and "outstanding" in September 2006.

But leaders insist the school's approach to teaching has not changed in that time and that Ofsted were always aware of the censorship.

Theo Bibelman, chair of governors at Yesodey Hatorah, said several Orthodox Jewish schools have been downgraded by the inspectorate in the past few years.

The Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School, an independent Charedi school for boys in north London, was rated "good" in November 2014 but downgraded to "inadequate" after an inspection this February.

The report said that pupils were taught well about their own religion and how to read Hebrew, but the secular curriculum did not "prepare them adequately for their future lives".

In November last year, Vishnitz Girls' School, an independent Charedi school in



Hackney, was judged "inadequate" after inspectors warned that too many pupils were attending the school and there was no real teaching of other faiths or different ways of living in modern Britain, even though outcomes for pupils and quality of teaching and learning were both deemed to be "good".

At its previous inspection in July 2013, the school was rated "good" overall.

Bibelman insisted Jewish schools are simply respecting the wishes of parents who do not want their daughters asked "if she has a boyfriend or about transgender issues".

"Ofsted seems to be enforcing a one-size-fits-all secularist approach, which displays a lack of respect for our faith," he said.

"It may be easy to brush aside our community based on the way we look and some of our traditions, but we have been an upstanding, contributing part of British

society for generations and it is naïve to try to manipulate us into their mould."

He added that Ofsted needed to work to "rebuild trust" with the community.

But in a speech to the Policy Exchange think tank in London this week, Spielman was defiant, describing the "increasing hostility" that Ofsted are facing from "conservative religious groups".

Spielman, who is 18 months into her tenure, insisted the inspectorate is not biased against faith schools, but warned of an "expanding sense of religious and/or cultural entitlement" that meant the preferences of certain groups are affecting what schools teach and what they are allowed to wear.

The chief inspector also urged opponents of the government's agenda to lobby MPs, and "not blame Ofsted for carrying out its duty".

When the report into Yesodey Hatorah

5.5
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News: Faith schools

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Jonathan Romain

was published last month, Bibelman said faith schools would not be able to meet inspection criteria "unless we agree with the secularist agenda of Ofsted London".

Spielman addressed the criticism directly, saying that she wanted to be "absolutely unequivocal" that Ofsted "has no anti-faith bias or secular agenda".

She called on the schools community to demonstrate "muscular liberalism", and warned that the "openness and tolerance" of British society must not be used to "accept models of education in this country that close minds and narrow opportunity".

While schools do not have to promote ways of life with which they do not agree, she said, they must teach that they exist and are protected by law.

Last month, thousands of members of the Charedicommunity gathered in north London to pray for protection for their schools from the judgements of Ofsted.

A spokesperson for the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the main representative body of British Jews, said that while there did not appear to be an "anti-faith approach across the board" at Ofsted, it acknowledged an "increasing confrontation with Charedi schools" which both sides need to resolve.

"Some of the inspections of Charedi schools seem to have been of an aggressive character and there seems to have been a lessening of tolerance for a socially conservative ethos, which will inevitably lead to a clash," he said.

"The current situation is in nobody's interests, least of all the children. We need to see a change."

David Collins, director of Jewish living at the United Synagogue, which represents mainstream Orthodox Jews, said a "relationship built on trust" between Ofsted and Jewish schools is needed.



Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girls' School

"Where there have been difficulties, we would hope that schools, communities and Ofsted are able to engage in constructive dialogue and rebuild that trust."

However, Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain, president of the Accord Coalition which campaigns for an end to religious discrimination in state schools, said Ofsted were right to no longer be "turning a blind eye" and instead "closing gaps and loopholes which should never have been allowed".

"Charedi and similar schools of other faiths will object, but in the end they will have to compromise on various levels, but still be able to maintain their core identity and ethos.

"There may be some bruising debates on the way, but in the end the children will benefit."

In her Policy Exchange speech, Spielman observed that most faith schools enjoy a

good working relationship with Ofsted and perform well, which demonstrates that it is possible for schools to follow a religious ethos "while respecting the requirements of equalities law".

A spokesperson for Ofsted said the inspectorate will run information sessions for leaders of independent Jewish schools later this month to provide guidance on how to meet standards on fundamental British values and protected characteristics, and added that faith schools "are entirely at liberty to teach the tenets of their faith on social issues.

"However, they must also comply with the law and ensure that pupils are properly prepared for life in modern Britain. The vast majority of faith schools see no tension in doing this.

"In fact, the vast majority of faith schools that Ofsted inspect are judged by inspectors as good or outstanding."

News: Careers

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1.5
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Support available to help schools bring in ex-pupils

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
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Nineteen secondary schools will get support to bring in ex-pupils to offer careers advice after a charity won almost £120,000 in funding from the Careers and Enterprise Company.

Future First has been given £119,940 to deliver its services in half of the areas identified by the government as social mobility "cold spots".

The charity will work with 19 secondary schools in Bradford, Doncaster, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, Hastings, Ipswich and Stoke-on-Trent.

Each school will receive services worth £5,997, including an alumni programme officer who will bring in ex-pupils to offer workshops, work experience and world-at-work days to current pupils.

The charity will also train staff on how to "successfully harness alumni experience" to advise pupils on their next steps.

The government is increasingly requiring schools to demonstrate a commitment to quality careers advice. Schools must already give training companies access to their pupils, and from September of this year they must publish details of their careers programmes, as well as have a named "careers leader".

By the end of 2020, schools will also be obliged to offer every pupil at least seven "meaningful encounters" with employers and meet all eight of the government-endorsed "Gatsby benchmarks" of good careers education.

The Careers and Enterprise Company is charged with improving access to careers advice and guidance in schools. It employs regional enterprise coordinators, who oversee a network of volunteer enterprise advisers, who work directly with schools.

It remains under pressure to prove its grassroots impact following a grilling by the parliamentary education committee two months ago over a "giant and confusing" structure and lack of transparency.

Matt Lent, chief executive of Future First, said the government "clearly recognised the value that former students provide in acting as relatable role models.

"If pupils see that someone who sat at the same school desk, perhaps had the same teachers and is from the same background has gone on to succeed, they are more likely to believe they can too."

Hinds gives £5m to 20 careers hubs to boost advice and job 'encounters'

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools in 20 areas of England will have access to funding to train staff to give better careers advice and offer pupils more "encounters" with employers.

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, has announced the locations of 20 new "careers hubs", which will share £5 million in government grants and work with schools to improve advice and guidance for pupils.

It follows a successful pilot of the programme in the north east of England.

Overall, 646 secondary schools, 15 sixth forms and 49 further education colleges will be linked to a hub, with each one involving up to 40 different institutions.

Under recent law changes, schools must do more to enlighten pupils about work and study opportunities, especially less traditional routes.

Schools are already required to give training companies access to their pupils, and from September of this year they must publish details of their careers programmes, as well as having a named "careers leader" in place.

By the end of 2020, schools will also be obliged to offer every pupil at least seven "meaningful encounters" with employers over the course of their school career. They must also meet all eight of the government-endorsed "Gatsby benchmarks" of good careers education.

The careers hubs, which will be set up by existing local enterprise partnerships,

are intended to help schools meet those requirements, and will offer bursaries to train careers leaders in schools. Of England's 38 local enterprise partnerships, 30 applied to join the initiative and 20 were successful.

Each hub will employ a lead to coordinate activity and build networks and funding for schools to improve employer encounters. There will also be a "central hub fund" equivalent to £1,000 per school or college, although it is not yet clear how that money will be spent.

The North East Local Enterprise Partnership piloted the careers hub model between 2015 and 2017, with the majority of its schools achieving all eight Gatsby benchmarks. The percentage of the region's young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) halved during the period, according to the Social Mobility Commission.

Claudia Harris, chief executive of the Careers and Enterprise Company, said the creation of the hubs was the "next step" on a journey of improvement in careers advice.

"Careers education has come a long way over the past few years. The Gatsby benchmarks have shown us what 'excellent' looks like, and innovative work like the North East Hub pilot has set a model for local delivery."

Hinds said the hubs "will support young people with the right advice to help them make decisions about their future by building better links with employers and providing practical guidance and support to improve the provision of careers advice in schools".

2.5
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The 20 LEPs selected to run careers hubs

Cornwall & Isles of Scilly
Lancashire
Leeds City Region
Black Country
York, North Yorkshire and East Riding
Cumbria
Swindon & Wiltshire
Stoke & Staffordshire
The Solent
West of England
Buckinghamshire Thames Valley

Greater Manchester
The South East (East Sussex)
Leicester & Leicestershire
Heart of South West (Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay)
Humber
Tees Valley
Worcestershire
Liverpool City Region
New Anglia (Norfolk and Suffolk)

Grade four pupils shouldn't sit higher papers, says Ofqual

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

Pupils aiming for a grade four at GCSE - a 'standard' pass or the equivalent of a C grade - should only be entered to sit foundation tier exam papers, Ofqual has advised.

Speaking at the exam watchdog's summer symposium on July 5, Cath Jadhav, associate director of standards and comparability at Ofqual, said too much of the higher paper content will not be relevant to pupils working at this level.

"It's worth noting that a student aiming for a grade four probably should be entered for the foundation paper rather than higher, because much of the questions on the higher tier papers will simply not be aimed at those students," Jadhav said.

But some heads are dubious about the advice. Stephen Tierney, chair of headteachers roundtable and chief executive of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust, told *Schools Week* that making the call on which tier paper to enter a pupil for "really is a challenge" - particularly when the exams are still so new.

"You have nothing, literally nothing, to fall back on about what a level four might look like in these new exams, you are shooting in the dark," he said.

"In three or four years' time you'll have a bank of papers and using them you will



be able to make some kind of an assessment of where pupils are at a point in time, but this year, is it actually possible?"

Tierney added that a pupil who is working at a grade four at the time when their teacher chooses which tier paper they take may still improve significantly before they sit the exam, and it is important for teachers to consider how much progress could be made in this time.

Exam papers for the reformed GCSEs in French, German, Spanish, maths and the sciences are now all split into foundation and higher tiers. The higher tier papers are targeted at grades 9 to 4, while foundation covers 5 to 1.

In her speech Jadhav referenced concerns that were raised about the grade four boundary on the higher tier maths paper last year, when pupils needed only 18 per cent of the overall marks to achieve this grade.

"Last year schools that took a gamble on the higher tier paper actually benefited,"

Tierney said.

"Because of the high stakes accountability system that we have, there will be schools who will be thinking 'both the pupils and ourselves will be better off if we take a bit of a punt'."

Carolyn Roberts, headteacher of Thomas Tallis School in London said teachers must "make the right decision for the child", even if it conflicts with the school's interests.

"I'm not sure that different tiers of entry help and I'm certain that declaring a 'pass' grade is unhelpful in a progress-based system," she said.

"Given that we have tiers, students should be entered for the paper where they are likely to be able to demonstrate the most progress."

She added that some schools may be able to teach methods which enable pupils to answer just a small amount of the higher paper and get a better grade, while other students could be daunted by a higher tier paper that has AS-type questions in it.

"All students should be taught so they learn subjects and skills logically and can develop confidence. It is better to do a foundation paper from real knowledge and learning than tackle a higher paper just armed with exam tricks.

"But entry decisions partly depend on predictions, which are harder to make now, and high stakes accountability means schools are desperate to maximise their outcomes."

2.5
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ALIX ROBERTSON | @ALIXROBERTSON4

More academy trusts under the cosh over pay

The government has issued another warning to academy trusts over executive pay, this time asking those that paid employees more than £100,000-a-year in 2016-17.

The letter from Education and Skills Funding Agency boss Eileen Milner is the latest in a series of interventions by the government over largesse in academy pay.

Letters went out yesterday to all multi-academy trusts that were either paying a salary of £150,000 or more to one employee,

or salaries between £100,000 and £150,000 to two or more employees, in 2016-17.

It follows a series of letters about pay in 2015-16, sent between December last year and April this year.

For all employees with salaries of £100,000 and above, trusts must now give an overview of their roles and responsibilities, the rationale for setting the salary at this level, details of the trust's pay policy and process, and the "level of challenge" that

justifies the salary levels, such as financial or geographical difficulties for the trust. The percentage of time spent teaching must also be given.

For non-teaching staff - those who spend less than 25 per cent of their time on teaching - the trusts must provide details of remuneration and benefits packages in addition to base salaries, the length of notice required by if an individual wishes to leave, and the length of their probationary period.

News: Academies

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1.5
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UK above-average in International Baccalaureate results

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@ALIXROBERTSON4

UK pupils outdid the global average score in the International Baccalaureate this year, with one academy trust also successfully trialling the programme in an alternative provision school.

The International Baccalaureate diploma programme (IBDP) is a two-year educational programme primarily aimed at 16 to 18-year-olds.

Pupils study six subjects and complete an extended research essay, explore the 'theory of knowledge', and take part in community work, athletics and creative activities.

Across the UK, 111 schools delivered the IBDP to almost 5,000 pupils in 2018, achieving an average score of 34.39 compared to an average of 29.78 globally.

The TBAP 16-19 Academic Alternative Provision Academy in Fulham, London, entered its first cohort of pupils for the IBDP this year and all six are now set to go on to further or higher education.

Gemma Dixon, head of school, said the academy believes it is the first and only school to offer the IBDP in an alternative provision context so far.

"None of our learners leaving this year would have had access to an academic level 3 course, such as A-Level or equivalent, based on their performance at GCSE.

"All of them have overcome significant personal challenges to achieve their grades. The IBDP has been transformative for them - changing their life chances."

One pupil, Jordan Brightman Charles, achieved five passes in English, Spanish, maths, anthropology and sport science, which equalled the same number of UCAS points as three Cs at A level. He will go on to study journalism at the University Campus of Football Business, at the University of Buckinghamshire.

Other pupils from the cohort will study computer sciences at the University of East London, psychology and business at the University of Hertfordshire, and nursing and foundation art at Kingston College.

MPs' stern warning over 'incoherent' system and costly, risky academisation

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

A powerful committee of MPs has warned that the government failed to properly scrutinise the early stages of the academies programme and has not learned from its high-profile failures.

A report by the parliamentary public accounts committee into the government's record on converting schools into academies found the Department for Education "did not pay enough attention" to ensuring its scrutiny of applicants was sufficiently rigorous.

Although the government is now strengthening its examination of the financial viability and improvement capabilities of would-be academy sponsors, it should have addressed these issues "much earlier", the committee said, adding that recent interventions "do not go far enough".

The academies programme was introduced in the early 2000s under a Labour government, and expanded by Conservative-led governments since 2010. The idea centred on giving schools autonomy over their own finances, curriculums and standards.

By January this year, 35 per cent of England's schools were academies, teaching around 47 per cent of pupils overall. They comprise 72 per cent of secondary schools and 27 per cent of primary schools.

However, the rapid expansion of the programme in recent years has not been smooth, and the PAC report noted numerous and significant failings, both at individual academies and in multi-academy academies trusts.

For example, Cumbria's Whitehaven Academy, which is to be given up by its troubled sponsor Bright Tribe, has struggled with dangerously dilapidated buildings and limited budgets. Elsewhere, the Wakefield City Academy Trust is in the process of giving up all 21 of its schools because it lacks the "capacity" to improve them.

The committee is "particularly worried" that the DfE appears not to have learned from mistakes that proved "costly for taxpayers and damaging to children's education".

One-off costs to the DfE of academy conversions are estimated to have reached £745 million since 2010-11, but the PAC warned that academisation's total cost of, including spending by schools and local

authorities, is "unclear".

The DfE had to rebroker 2.5 per cent of academies to new sponsors in 2016-17, and the department has admitted it "created risks" by focusing on "increasing the number of academies quickly".

"The interests of pupils should be paramount in education, but the increasingly incoherent schools system is putting this principle at risk," warned Meg Hillier (pictured), chair of the PAC and Labour MP for Hackney South and Shoreditch.

The DfE must strengthen its scrutiny of prospective academies and sponsors, she said, and address the risk that pupils at poorly performing and smaller schools, which are less attractive to academy trusts, will be "left behind".

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said the report showed the government had "failed to provide sufficient safeguards and a coherent strategy".

"This has resulted not only in high-profile failures but a fragmented system in which oversight, as the PAC points out, is confusingly complex and burdensome, and schools are left in limbo because of a shortage of sponsors in some areas."

Local councils also backed calls for change.

Councillor Roy Perry, vice-chairman of the Local Government Association's Children and Young People Board, said the government must "recognise the key role councils can play in school improvement and place-planning".

"It is only by working with councils and giving them the necessary powers, rather than shutting them out, that we can meet the challenges currently facing the education system."



2
MINUTE
READ

Few leaders check on 'health' elements of EHCPs

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

School leaders have a responsibility to check on the quality of health and care services provided to their pupils outside school, but few do so, according to a senior Ofsted inspector.

Jonathan Jones, a special educational needs adviser at Ofsted, said the watchdog expected schools to look beyond the "education" elements of education, health and care plans (EHCPs), which dictate the level of support and funding for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

He told school leaders they are "responsible" for checking on the health and care aspects of EHCPs, which have gradually replaced statements since 2014, and warned most headteachers are unaware that local area SEND inspections looked for evidence that schools work in a "triumvirate" with health and care providers.

But schools leaders say local authorities rather than overstretched heads, should be responsible for checking if pupils are receiving the right support outside school.

"As leaders in schools, you have just as much responsibility if you're not happy with the quality of the EHCP [as the other providers]," Jones told delegates at the National Association of Special Educational Needs annual conference last Friday.

"Don't just look at the education aspect:



look at the health aspect, look at the social care aspect.

If you don't think it's up to scratch, you need to challenge the local authority on them as well."

School leaders "invariably" admit they have not challenged weaker aspects of an EHCP when asked, he claimed. Meanwhile, social care and health providers should also be challenging the education provision.

Forty-two per cent of published local area SEND inspection reports have demanded that local authorities produce a written statement of action because inspectors have serious concerns.

This lack of joint strategic working between education, health and social care leaders, alongside poor provision and high rates of exclusion among SEND pupils is the main reason so many local authorities are being slapped with written statements of action, Jones claimed.

"Surely it should ultimately be up to the LA to challenge any parts, as they are the legal owners and issuers of the EHCP," a school leader, who wanted to remain anonymous, said.

Laxmi Patel, head of education at law firm Boyes Turner, agreed that local authorities and not schools are legally

responsible for checking the content of EHCPs.

However it is "always be considered good practice" for a school to flag up concerns about the health and care aspects of the plans, she added.

Schools are sometimes expected to communicate directly with care and health providers rather than the local authority, which is difficult because channels of communication can be unclear, said Anna Cole, inclusion specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders.

Schools have been left with the biggest "onus" for checking on EHCPs because they see the child on a daily basis, but care and health providers often work in isolation and so can be difficult to engage with.

Most schools won't be aware of Ofsted's expectation that they challenge the entire contents of EHCPs, Cole added.

Jacqueline Valin, principal at Southfields academy in west London, said she knew how to challenge the EHCPs because she had specific staff with the expertise to advise her. However, a lack of resources often means the required support for a pupil is not provided even after the school has intervened.

A spokesperson for Ofsted acknowledged there is no legal requirement on schools to check EHCPs, but said schools and other partners should have "professional curiosity" about them and challenge them where concerns arose.

2.5
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FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

School funding across England drops by 8% in 8 years

School funding in England fell by eight per cent in real terms over the past eight years, according to a new analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies which takes account of post-16 and local authority support spending for the first time.

Rising pupil numbers, increasing costs and flatlining funding have contributed to the real terms cut observed between 2009-10 and 2017-18, according to the IfS, an independent think tank.

The fall in spending in this week's analysis is more severe than previously calculated because cuts to money for sixth forms and extra support services provided to schools by local authorities have been taken into account.

Previous analyses only took account of the money going directly into schools for pupils aged five to 16, which has not fallen at nearly the same rate as other services.

Sixth form spending has fallen by 25 per cent over the past eight years, while LA spending on

services that help schools, like home-to-school transport, central administration and support for pupils with special educational needs, has been cut by 55 per cent over the same period.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education did not dispute the findings or comment on real-terms cuts in recent years, but instead pointed to cash-terms increases in school funding. She also said that if school funding is compared to its levels in 2000, then it is also higher in real-terms.

News: SATs

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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KS2 scores rise: 'fruits of reform' or the stuff of nightmares?

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Sixty-four per cent of pupils achieved the government's "expected standard" in reading, writing and maths in this year's key stage 2 SATs, up from 61 per cent last year, according to interim results published by the government.

The results show that the proportion of pupils reaching a scaled score of 100 or more rose in every discipline.

In reading, 75 per cent achieved the standard, compared with 71 per cent last year, while 76 per cent met the standard in maths, up from 75 per cent.

In spelling, punctuation and grammar tests, 78 per cent of pupils met the expected standard, up from 77 per cent, and the proportion meeting the standard in writing was 78 per cent, up from 76 per cent.

However, officials warned, changes to assessment frameworks for writing mean that neither the overall results for reading, writing and maths, nor the results specifically for writing, are comparable to those of previous years.

The government also published the marks pupils needed for the 2018 key stage 2 tests to achieve its "expected" scores.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, praised both teachers and the government's reforms for the results.

"A good primary education lays the foundations for success at secondary school and beyond," he said. "That's why we

introduced a more rigorous, knowledge-rich primary school curriculum – with an emphasis on reading and fluency in arithmetic – to ensure every child is helped to reach their potential from the moment they start school.

"Today's results and the rising standards we are seeing in our primary schools are the fruit of our reforms and a tribute to the hard work and dedication of teachers across the country."

But others have criticised the prominence given to the tests and the stress they create in schools.

On the eve of the results' publication, survey data from the National Education Union showed that nine in ten teachers believe SATs are damaging to pupils' well-being.

And new research by polling company YouGov for the campaign group More Than A Score found that one in four children believe SATs results will affect their future job prospects.

Julie McCulloch, director of policy at the Association of School and College Leaders, congratulated schools, teachers and pupils on their work and improved results, especially in the face of "harder tests" introduced in 2016.

"They have done a remarkable job in achieving such impressive results," she said.

"We are, however, concerned about reports of children crying and having nightmares about SATs. Schools do their best to protect their pupils from stress



and anxiety, but action is clearly needed to reduce the pressure of the current system.

"The problem is not the tests themselves, but the fact that they are used as the main way of judging primary schools and the stakes are extremely high. In reality, four days of tests out of seven years of schooling can never provide anything more than a snapshot."

She urged the Department for Education and Ofsted to "attach less weight to a single set of results and to treat these tests as just one element of the story of a school".

The National Association of Head Teachers also praised schools, but general secretary Paul Whiteman warned that test and exam data "are only part of the picture" in assessing either a school's effectiveness or a pupil's performance.

"As they approach the end of primary, it's important that all the skills and achievements of each child and their school's contribution is fully recognised. Parents understand this and the

government is beginning to understand it too," he said.



Errors in SATs data dump spark confusion

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ

Results data for some pupils weren't factored into the government's initial SATs data dump on Tuesday morning, leading to inflated overall scores and confusion for schools.

Teachers vented their frustration on Twitter after the blunder saw data on pupils who didn't sit the tests missed out.

This year the Department for Education calculated the overall results for all pupils in each school, something which teachers

previously had to work out for themselves based on individual pupil scores.

Some pupils, such as those with special educational needs, are not required to enter because they are considered to be working below the standard of the tests. However, they are still meant to be recorded in official data using code B.

But an automated system used by the government's national curriculum

assessment tools website, which schools use to access their results, didn't account for these pupils. This meant schools were given a higher overall score than expected.

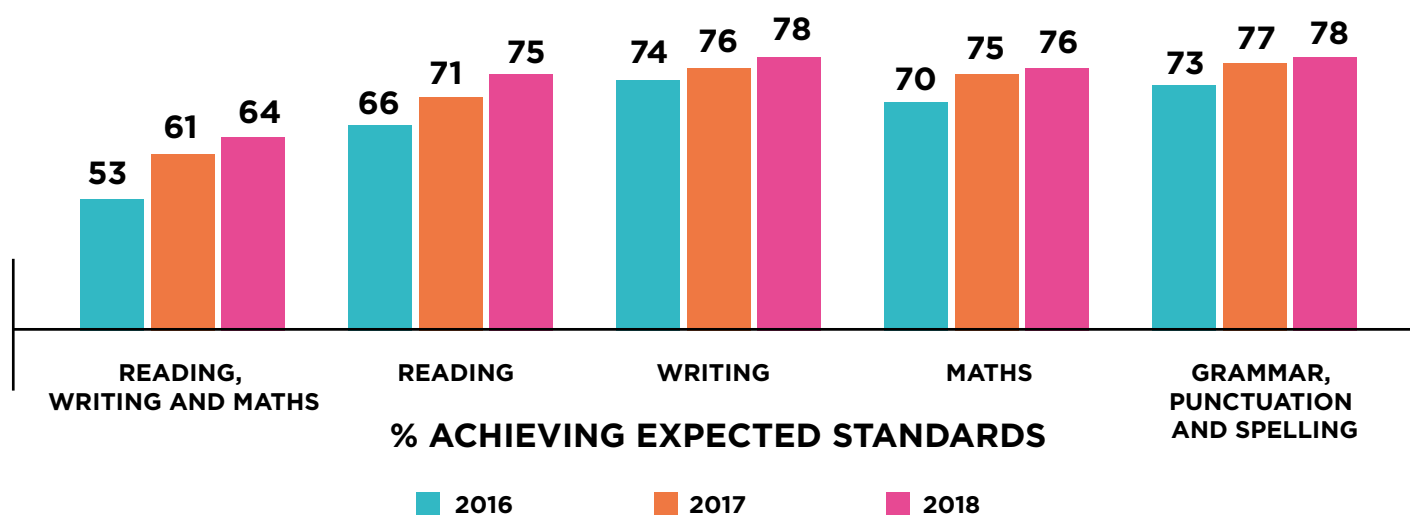
School staff spotted the mistake when overall results provided by the DfE did not match up to individual results.

Schools Week understands the incorrect results were subsequently removed from the system and the error corrected.



SATs stats: DfE figures show increases over time

Key stage 2 SATs results, 2016-18



FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Orpington grammar school 'put institution above pupils', probe finds

A south London grammar school which forced pupils out at the end of year 12 because of their AS-level grades "put the institution above the pupils", an independent inquiry into practices at the school has found.

The probe, commissioned by Bromley Council, found St Olave's in Orpington unlawfully prevented pupils from continuing into their second year of sixth form for several years, and detailed how a move to toughen the entry criteria for year 13 last year left pupils crying in the school car park.

The school has accepted the findings of the inquiry, carried out by prominent education adviser Christine Whatford, and said it has "already taken a number of proactive steps" to address the concerns raised.

Year 12 pupils were being forced out of the school as long ago as 2011, after existing admissions rules were misinterpreted, the inquiry found.

But matters came to a head last summer when an investigation by The Guardian revealed that teenage pupils were left in tears after being told to leave following end-of-



year exams. Threats of legal action ultimately forced a U-turn on the controversial policy.

Overall, 16 year 12 pupils had their places withdrawn last year on the grounds that they did not perform well enough in their AS-level exams. This followed a move by the school to change its policy to require three B grades at AS-level, rather than three C-grades, to justify continued study.

Statutory school exclusion guidance stipulates that it is "unlawful to exclude a pupil for a reason such as academic attainment/ability", while the school admissions code insists schools "must

not withdraw a place once a child has started at the school unless it was fraudulently obtained".

The inquiry found that Aydin Önaç, the school's former headteacher, who resigned last November, was not told "that what he was doing was illegal".

However, as headteacher, "it was his responsibility to know that it was illegal to withdraw a child's place on academic grounds".

The report is also highly critical of the way the school communicated with pupils who were told they couldn't stay on. It describes "distraught pupils, both boys and girls, crying in the car park", with angry parents "who had not been invited in to support their children being given the bad news".

Paul Wright, the school's new chair of governors, said: "We welcome the report and fully accept its findings and recommendations. We have already taken a number of proactive steps to address many of the issues raised, particularly around governance and student welfare."

2.5
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News: SEND

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Meet the SEND specialists set to network

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

SEND specialists across England have been tasked with creating a network of 10,000 schools over the next two years to spread best practice for pupils with special educational needs.

Nadhim Zahawi (pictured), the children's minister, met with newly-appointed regional SEND leaders last week to talk about setting up support hubs across the country.

It was hoped that more than 7,000 schools will join the network by March next year, rising to 10,000 by March 2020, he told the National Association of Special Educational Needs annual conference last Friday.

The eight leaders and their deputies will bring schools together in regional "hubs" to share knowledge and resources, as well as make sure specialist provision is "embedded" within school improvement plans.

"They're not trying to re-invent the wheel. They're taking best practice, and we are going together to scale it up across England," Zahawi said.

Jane Starbuck, deputy leader for east Midlands and the Humber, told *Schools Week* the move was an

acknowledgement from the government that the current "outcomes agenda" in schools has pushed SEND pupils to one side.

"Working in SEND can be a lonely world sometimes. That's what this network is addressing."

The regional leaders are part of the government's new SEND school workforce programme, which will build a "community of practice" across the country. The £3.4 million contract will be delivered by the Whole School SEND consortium and led by Nasen over the next two years.

Regional leaders will take one day a week from their school jobs and schools will be reimbursed for the cost, according to Anne Heavey, national director of Whole School SEND. Thirteen out of 16 leaders starting in September have been appointed.

They will meet with headteacher networks, SENCo forums, teaching school alliances and other groups. Schools will be supported through 'peer-to-peer' practice, signposted to a website with additional resources called SEND Gateway, and also receive support from the leaders.

Malcolm Trobe, former director of SEND at multi-academy trust Academies Enterprise Trust, will support the southern regions and Simon

Knight, former director of Whole School SEND, will support the northern regions.

Trobe will also develop best practice across multi-academy trusts, and Knight will support 10 local authorities flagged by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission as having poor SEND provision.

Meanwhile researchers at University College London will assess current SEND training and continued professional development, as well as provide biannual reports on the workforce programme.

The national award for special educational needs co-ordination (SENCo), which is held by teachers with particular responsibility for pupils with SEND, is also under review.

The government wishes to "ensure the qualification provides the right training", said Zahawi. He also said the "drift" of special educational needs pupils away from mainstream schools into special schools needs addressing.

Government data shows a 10 percentage point rise in pupils with SEND plans or statements entering special schools over the last decade, despite the proportion of pupils with plans or statements remaining stable.

Mainstream schools should be "rewarded" by Ofsted for inclusive policies, Zahawi added.



The regional leaders

National director:
Anne Heavey

National SEND leader (southern regions and academy trusts):
Malcolm Reeve

National SEND leader (northern regions and local authorities):
Simon Knight

Regional leader for north:
Hugh Steele, headteacher at The Dales Specialist school in Northumberland

Deputy:
not appointed yet

Regional leader for Lancashire and west Yorkshire:
Angela Holdsworth, headteacher at Tor View Specialist Learning Community near Manchester

Deputy:
Lidia Cattrell, headteacher of Crosshill Special school in Blackburn

Regional leader for east Midlands and the Humber:
Judith Smith, executive headteacher at Talbot Specialist school in Sheffield

Deputy:
Jane Starbuck, inclusion lead at Newark Schools near Nottingham

Regional leader for west Midlands:
Nicola Davis, deputy head at The Bridge special school in Shropshire

Deputy:
Amanda Wright, SEND lead at Thomas Jolyffe primary school in Warwickshire

Regional leader for south-central England and north-west London:
not appointed yet

Deputy:
Katherine Walsh, assistant headteacher and SENDCo at Brookfield primary school in north London

Regional leader for east of England and north-east London:
Deborah Lamont, director of Inclusion at Thrive partnership academy trust in Essex

Deputy:
not appointed yet

Regional leader for south east England and south London:
Jackie Partridge, headteacher at Springwell special school in Southampton

Deputy:
Amelie Thompson, deputy head at Gipsy Hill Federation in south London

Regional leader for south west:
Erica Wolstenholme, SENCo at the Olympus academy trust in Bristol

Deputy:
Samantha Gilronan, assistant headteacher for SEND at the Lampard Community school in Devon "expected" scores

News: Grammar schools

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Funding bids show 35 selective schools are hoping to grow

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

One fifth of all grammar schools plan to apply for cash to expand, new analysis shows.

Thirty-five of England's 163 grammar schools have claimed in consultation documents on their websites that they are applying for a share of the £50 million-a-year selective school expansion fund.

The figures were obtained by anti-selection campaign group Comprehensive Future, which warned today that comprehensive schools risk becoming "de facto secondary moderns" if neighbouring selective schools get their hands on the cash.

The 35 proposed expansions would collectively place an additional 1,089 year 7 pupils in selective schools, the group claims. A further four grammar schools want to expand their sixth forms by a total of 243 places.

These are interim figures, as the bidding round remains open until August.

Will Morgan, the principal of The Cotswold School, a comprehensive school in selective Gloucestershire, called the motivation for expansion "almost purely financial".

"Grammar schools might say it's due to demand, but they are mostly trying to break even in some shape or form."

Some of the schools, such as Sir William Borlase's Grammar School in Buckinghamshire, which is applying for 60 more places, say they want to "reach out to children from disadvantaged backgrounds".

Another, Highworth Grammar School in Kent, says in its proposal it will double the current average intake of disadvantaged pupils into year 7 to 18 per cent.

In contrast, Wilmington Grammar School for Girls in Kent says it "does not wish to become a large school", but is "financially vulnerable at a time of continued austerity and financial pressure".

Selecting children for academic ability can have a devastating effect on nearby comprehensives that are also struggling financially, Morgan said.

"The top 40 per cent of pupils will be at

Year 7 expansion applications ●

Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School - 32
Bournemouth School For Boys - 60
Bournemouth School For Girls - 14
John Hampden Grammar School - 30
Sir William Borlase's Grammar School - 60
Wycombe High School For Girls - 18
Colchester County High School for Girls - 32
Chelmsford County High School for Girls - 30
Ribston Hall High School - 30
Cranbrook School - 30
Wilmington (Dartford), in Wilmington Grammar School for Boys - 30
Wilmington Grammar School for Girls - 30
Tunbridge Wells Grammar School For Boys - 30
The Skinners' School - 60
Tiffin School - 60
Skipton Girls' High School - 34
Devonport High School for Girls - 60
Devonport High School for Boys - 30
Kendrick School - 32
Adams' Grammar School - 30
Stretford Grammar School - 32
Queen Mary's High School - 30
Queen Mary's Grammar School - 30
Lawrence Sheriff School - 30
South Wilts Grammar School for Girls - 20
Wolverhampton Girls' High School - 35
Highworth Grammar School for Girls - 33
Westcliff High School for Girls - 30
Nonsuch High School for Girls - 30
Altrincham Grammar School for Girls - 37

Sixth form expansion applications ●

Colyton Grammar School - 30
Herschel Grammar School - 123
Marling School - 50
The Crypt School - 40

grammars. That could result in a lack of an aspirational culture in other schools.

"Then people won't send their children to grammars because they really want to, but because of a fear of the alternative."

He added that teachers might also prefer to teach in grammar schools, thereby increasing the recruitment challenges for comprehensive schools.

Liam Collins, headteacher at Uplands Community College in Sussex, said he was "dismayed" to find a nearby grammar was applying to the fund.

"Comprehensives benefit everyone in the community, while grammar schools are almost 100 per cent socially engineered," he said.

Jim Skinner, chief executive of the

Grammar School Heads Association, said the need for a significant increase in secondary school places was the result of growth in the pupil population.

"Most selective schools are already heavily oversubscribed," he added.

"It is right and proper that selective schools are given the opportunity to expand to meet these demands."

A Department for Education spokesperson said the bidding round for the selective school expansion fund is "still open", and that analysis of bids was "complete speculation".

"We will not know how many additional places will be proposed or how much funding will be bid for until the bidding round closes in August."

2.5
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EDITORIAL

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Transparency should come before the fall, not after

The minutes of the shamed Schools Company Trust make for shocking reading. But it's also shocking that it takes an FOI request for the extent of their failings to be made public.

The fact these vulnerable children were put in unsafe and unsuitable buildings - it would be exaggerating to call them 'schools' - and then forgotten about while the leadership team pursued other dreams and deeper debts is simply appalling.

Whether or not the DfE had a positive relationship with the trust, there are some serious questions to be answered about how this could ever have been allowed to happen. We should all be appalled.

When it comes to T-levels, are Hinds' plans for single exam boards a signal for GCSE & A-Levels?

Damian Hinds has placed a great deal of his political capital on the table when it comes to T-levels.

It is commendable that the government has a vision to align a set of vocational qualifications alongside A-levels - but should this question the integrity of existing qualifications?

This vision of a vocational learning revolution is slowing stumbling into murky waters - there may well be trouble ahead.

Besides a recommendation from the Sainsbury review in 2016, there isn't much of a substantial argument for why a single exam board approach is imperative to ensuring quality. Even DfE commissioned research claimed it would risk a system failure.

And what does this say of the current multi-exam board system operated for GCSE's and A-levels.

When it comes to T-levels Hinds seems very comfortable ignoring advice from officials and storming ahead. It would be terrible to see the T-level vision become a failed vanity project. Could we see a repeat of the previous Labour government's Diplomas? Before we know that, the DfE will certainly have to endure lengthy and costly legal challenges. Of course that would provide a convenient excuse to delay its ambitious implementation schedule.

SCHOOLS WEEK



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LAURA
MCINERNEY

Contributing editor

Sum ingenuity required: can Hinds do the maths on pay?

Over the past few weeks, the education secretary Damian Hinds has been trying to solve a complicated maths problem. He's likely to come under public pressure from the independent School Teachers' Review Body, which is expected to recommend a substantial pay rise of about 3 per cent.

If he refuses, Hinds will face an autumn of discontent from the teachers' unions – particularly the National Education Union, which has sucked in the previously non-striking Association of Teachers and Lecturers and created one heck of a protest machine.

If he accepts, the money must be found. And this is where things get tricky. The Conservative government has said repeatedly that the vaults are empty: although they've cobbled together some cash for the NHS, we still don't know where it'll come from. If they start sprouting pounds for other public services, though, they'll fall foul of their general election pledge that "there's no magic money tree". Hinds will have to solve the problem of teacher pay another way.

Back in the late 1990s, a similarly

thorny problem faced a young Jon Coles, now chief executive of the United Learning academy trust. Coles was the civil servant tasked with implementing Labour's pledge

not to have infant class sizes exceed 30. A few years ago I interviewed Coles about how he managed it, and he said he thought of it as an algebra equation that simply had to be solvable. "It means that once you see the solution, you can't unsee it."

The reason salaries have to rise is because teachers' pay is no longer sufficient to attract or keep as many as are needed. The situation is particularly pronounced in some subjects, and more acute for early career than later career teachers (who tend to take lower-paid jobs when leaving the profession, which suggests pay isn't the main factor).

One solution would be to



change the relationship between salary and take-home pay. Teachers' pension contributions have rocketed. Student loan repayments take a chunk, and so does national insurance and tax. Unfortunately, pensions and tax are part of long-standing government commitments, and a scheme to halt student loan repayments for those

“ Maybe the solution lies in thinking about what teachers use wages for”

working as teachers is already being trialled.

Maybe the solution lies in thinking a little harder about what teachers use their wages for. Teachers face the same killer budget items as most workers: housing, childcare, transport. But unlike many professionals, teachers can work almost anywhere. Schools are spread reasonably evenly around the country. If house prices are too high, teachers will simply move, and this is likely driving the terrifying drop in trainee primary teachers in London. The geographic spread also means teachers can keep transport costs down by working in a school nearby. If the prime minister hikes

petrol prices in the autumn to pay for the NHS, this effect will kick in even harder.

However, the exciting thing for Hinds is that each of these variables is within the remit of government. Housing, childcare, transport: all of them affect how far teachers' wages go, but all of them can be manipulated by ministers, too.

Back in 2015 when Nicky Morgan was education secretary, she suggested giving teachers salary advances for housing deposits, or one-off lump-sum bonuses instead of the "responsibility points" that come with permanent pay rises. She also suggested that all schools should offer wraparound childcare; if onsite creches were free for teachers, it would be a huge potential saving.

The other way around the problem, however, would be for Hinds to start cutting elsewhere – and this is the big cause for concern. Cash set aside for alternative provision and special needs within the Teaching and Learning Improvement Fund and free schools programme is hanging in the balance. If there's one sector that can't afford to lose out, it's this one. The way high-needs funding has been gutted is outrageous, and a column for another day.

If there's one thing that should give us hope, it's that before Hinds became an MP, he spent over 20 years in hospitality consulting, with a particular focus on pricing and revenue management. He's a man who understand a maths problem when he sees one. Let's hope he finds an optimal solution.

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Profile

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Michael Merrick

Deputy head, St Cuthbert's Catholic Community School

Eight years ago, Michael Merrick and his wife moved from St Andrews, where he was partway through a PhD and the family were eating "beans on toast" every night, to Carlisle, where he took up a teaching job in a local Catholic secondary school. They've lived in the town ever since, and he's now deputy head of a tiny Catholic primary, St Cuthbert's.

The Merricks' four school-age children – they have six in total, which explains why I was picked up from the station in his "taxi" – attend the city's other, larger primary. In fact, it was the headteacher of that school, St Margaret Mary, who persuaded Merrick to give up his secondary school teaching

job and take on what seemed to be an impossible challenge.

The move was "career suicide," says Merrick cheerfully, and his executive head Chris Wilkins jokingly concurs. St Cuthbert's hadn't been Ofsted "good" for 17 years. It was leaking middle-class children and achieving zero per cent combined attainment at key stages 1 and 2, and it had gone through six heads in eight years. "They were crying out for consistency," recalls Luke Denny, deputy head of St Margaret Mary and the third member of the St Ninian Catholic Federation's senior leadership team.

Sitting in a meeting room surrounded by icons, we're discussing serious topics after an initial warm-up act from the trio, in which West-Cumbrian Denny played the

joker, Merrick the academic, and Wilkins had the final word.

After a call was put out to local Catholic schools, the governing board of St Margaret Mary – a historically successful school of which Wilkins was then headteacher – agreed to form the federation with the struggling primary and combine their governing bodies. "It was part of their mission that they had to say yes," Wilkins says. "Catholic schools are hugely disproportionately in more deprived areas, and it's precisely because of what we call 'preference for the poor,'" explains Merrick, whom Wilkins recruited along with Denny.

There's only one direction to go from zero, and St Cuthbert's pulled it off, shooting up to 40 per cent of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and

Profile: Michael Merrick

maths in the first year, and in 2018 this tally has risen to 55 per cent. Last autumn it secured the elusive “good” rating from the inspectorate, just 15 months after the federation took over the school.

Understandably, it’s been a long journey to build relationships with parents.

“We were delivering leaflets a few weeks back,” relates Merrick, “and we came across one parent whose child used to come here, and gosh, did she have some strong words about the school! We just had to do what you do in these situations. You know, they’re talking to the suit, so to speak. Slowly we were able to say, ‘Okay, we understand why you’d be angry,’ and all the rest of it.

“There is no magic bullet. It’s just grinding it out and trying to be decent.”

Carlisle’s Catholic community is tightly knit. The three men all attend the same church, which has a social club (read “bar”) and Denny and Merrick previously worked together at Newman Catholic School, a secondary whose pupils have been on a temporary site since the 2015 floods.

Cumbria is now home to Merrick, who had an itinerant childhood as an army kid and spent time in a boarding school in Kent. He loved school, and came to see education as a way to rise above his working-class roots.

Social mobility is a subject of much contemplation for the sometime RE teacher. After publishing a blog on its downsides last summer, Merrick was invited to share his thoughts on Radio 4’s Four Thought programme. He gave a moving speech that’s well worth a listen, in which he lamented the alienation of a world where “to be educated too often means not being like your mum or dad”.

He acknowledges the tension parents feel between wanting to open up opportunities for their children and keeping them close to home. As school leaders, “we want the children to experience as many different things as they can; things that they wouldn’t have had the chance to. What they then do with them is ultimately, as far as we’re concerned, a matter for them,” he concludes. “If a kid wants to go and be a mechanic he should still know a bit of Shakespeare.”

Merrick’s boss seems less troubled by



“There is no magic bullet. It’s just grinding it out and trying to be decent”

the idea of education causing a brain drain. “This isn’t the barren wasteland that gets described sometimes,” says Wilkins. “It’s a lovely part of the world; people love to come here. Why not get young people who are good enough to go away, really get upskilled and bring their skills and strengths back to Cumbria and regenerate it?”

The team is on a mission to enrich the curriculum across both schools, an endeavour doubtless boosted by the fact both deputies come from a secondary context. “We brought a lot of year 9 texts into year 6,” says Denny, citing Shakespeare and Charlotte Brontë.

But is Jane Eyre really accessible to 11-year-olds — and at that age wouldn’t an author like David Walliams be more appropriate? “I wonder if we’d ask

that question of Eton Prep School or Cheltenham Ladies’ College,” Denny retorts. “Do we just assume those schools’ pupils could access it? Because if they can, I’d guess we would say our children are entitled to that same education.”

Not so long ago, they had kids performing Hamlet from the top of Carlisle Castle.

“That’s my ultimate aim with the job,” says Merrick. “Seeing children learn, and how they are so enthusiastic and passionate

about it, and trying to remove the idea that because they’re only 9-year-olds they can’t do it. Yes, they can! You know, before hormones kick in, if you give them the opportunity they will do absolutely anything.”

He references the slogan “Knowledge is power”, used by a section of the charter school movement in the US and becoming increasingly popular in England. “I know that a few prominent schools use it as a slogan, but knowledge is also a virtue. Intellect is a gift from God. We are Catholic schools, and we believe there is a virtue in developing and growing and nourishing that intellect. We don’t need to have a justification for children learning things that aren’t related to their CV or to their future career path. Just learning is a virtue in itself, and that’s fine; that’s okay.”



Opinion



DAVID SPENDLOVE

Strategic director ITE
University of Manchester

When a marginal gains approach to teacher training is not enough

Short-term tinkering after a decade of disruption will not reverse dwindling numbers, warns David Spendlove. The government needs to think hard about why the profession is becoming less appealing

The recently published School Workforce in England data for 2017 showed a continuation in the downward trend, with 5,300 (1.2 per cent) fewer teachers than the previous year. Moreover, the Teaching Supply Model targets for recruitment are almost certain to be missed once again this year.

Taking into account five consecutive years of missed recruitment targets, increased retention difficulties and the 19 per cent forecasted growth of secondary students by 2026, we see there are huge problems ahead; not only for the government but for everyone committed to ensuring all children have a capable and qualified teacher in front of them.

These figures also mask a deeper problem. Those providing initial teacher education have had to work harder to recruit, with diminishing returns – and all this despite a series of desperate and unprecedented

steps taken by the Department for Education to make the figures look respectable.

These include:

- Over-recruiting in some subjects, while others repeatedly fall short

“ We need a long-term commitment to valuing and nurturing the profession

of their targets.

- Ofsted changing its inspection framework to inspect providers on “maximising” recruitment.
- Changes to NCTL ITT criteria that discourage providers from making prior school experience an entry requirement.
- Letters to vice-chancellors of Russell Group universities encouraging them to run Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses.
- Queries from the DfE to providers over “high rejection rates” of applicants and the closing of recruitment for courses that are full.
- The extension for a further

year of a “no allocation” system, maintaining a shift away from an allocation model based upon region and notional quality of provision.

To be fair to the DfE, it has taken a pragmatic response to the unfolding calamity – much of which is self-made. However, its piecemeal approach – based on a “marginal gains” principle of making the highest conversion of applicants to acceptance – will not address underlying recruitment issues.

Ultimately a marginal gains approach is insufficient to improve the quality and quantity of applicants. When civil servants’ next think-tank exercise takes place, instead of considering how to fish

a small number of applicants from a diminishing pool, they should ask the fundamental question: Why is teaching becoming less appealing?

Almost certainly there needs to be a cultural shift within the DfE and a rethink of policy and practice. The marketisation and fragmentation of initial teacher education has been a significant policy failure, and we have gone from an aspirational approach of raising the entry bar to unprecedented leverage to fill places on initial teacher education programmes.

We need to move away from policy based on knee-jerk short-termism and towards the establishment of an independent

agency charged with instituting a long-term strategy for supplying and valuing high quality teachers. This will not be straightforward, as the challenge to recruit and retain the best teachers is now a global one, and enticing opportunities for new graduates are on the rise.

However, if teaching does not remain at the forefront of desirable careers, the negative implications are serious indeed. Sustainable solutions do not lie in tinkering, gimmicks, short-term incentives or marginal gains approaches; instead, we need a long-term government commitment to valuing and nurturing the profession built on ensuring that high quality teacher preparation programmes, with sufficient national coverage for all subjects, are sustained and valued.

Commitments to teacher preparation and retention will only succeed if they are accompanied by a significant shift in culture to one that values all teachers and attracts those with the moral and intellectual appetite for making a difference. Professional agency must be restored, with teachers allowed to thrive and be innovative, free from a stifling, punitive, risk-averse culture.

The past decade has shown how to fragment, unravel and disrupt a teacher supply and preparation system that was successful and coherent, if far from perfect. Current warning signs show that the need to reimagine an ambitious and sustainable teacher recruitment, retention and development ecosystem has never been greater.



DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
CONTACT US NEWS@SCHOOLSWEK.CO.UK

Children get profound, long-lasting benefits from their earliest exposure to teaching, from academic and non-cognitive development to better health and careers later in life. Research also shows that their teachers' professional development is key, says Alison Peacock

Early years education is perhaps one of the most contentious areas of pedagogical practice. Of late it has been firmly in the spotlight, thanks to the focus on early years in the Education Committee's Life Chances inquiry as well as the recent publication of the new Early Learning Goals.

And it absolutely should be in the spotlight. As a strong advocate of early education who has worked as the headteacher of a primary school with a nursery, I know that early years education can have a profound and lasting influence on a child. Our youngest children deserve the very best teachers who are able to clearly articulate to their colleagues, families and external assessors the rationale for all aspects of their school practice. The benefits of play, talk, exploration of the natural environment, development of fine and gross motor skills, socialisation and developing relationships are all vital aspects of a young child's learning.

So it is critical that policymakers, educators and wider society recognise the importance and impact of early years education—but what exactly is this impact? And how can schools ensure that early years education is as effective as possible? It's worth reflecting on



ALISON
PEACOCK

Chief executive,
Chartered College of Teaching

Early years education: the gift to a child that keeps on giving

five key findings from research into early years education.

1: The home learning environment is the biggest influence – but high-quality early years education obviously helps

Of course early years education does not sit in isolation. We know that the quality of the home learning environment is a huge factor in a child's future attainment, so it's worth ensuring that programmes focus not just on children but on supporting their parents.

Assessment of Sure Start centres, for example, found positive impacts from a range of parenting measures. High-quality early years

education can be seen in both a range of educational attainment measures and in vital non-cognitive skills such as self-regulation, social skills, perseverance and behaviour. These skills enable our children to collaborate, play together, move beyond the home environment to enjoy connecting with others, and engage confidently with new experiences.

3: The benefits of early years education extend far beyond the early years

Although early achievements in areas such as early language and literacy sometimes appear to "wash out" across a child's time in school, they can be sustained

“Unsurprisingly, the quality of teaching is a critical factor”

education makes a difference to pupils' future achievements, and it has particular benefits for children whose home learning environment is less strong.

2: High-quality early years education makes a difference for both cognitive and non-cognitive skills

The benefits of effective early years

education when a child moves on to a high-quality primary setting. Strong communication, collaboration and high-quality provision across early years, primary and secondary is paramount. But even when educational attainment benefits do fade over time, the non-cognitive benefits appear to continue, and may even be the reason for the substantial long-term benefits

that are seen where early years education is effective, for example in improved adult earnings.

4: Professional development for early years educators makes a difference

Unsurprisingly, the quality of teaching received is a critical factor in the effectiveness of early years programmes. Targeted, specialist professional development programmes for early years educators can help to develop their expertise to support both academic attainment, including maths and literacy, as well as the non-cognitive skills of the children they teach. As with teachers in other phases, mentoring and coaching can be particularly effective here. Early years educators, like all teachers, should have access to ongoing professional learning opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and skills.

5: Early years education provides a strong return on investment

Ensuring access to high-quality early education is worthwhile financially, too – in fact, for some programmes in the US, the benefits are estimated to be more than three times the cost of the programme. The sources of these cost benefits include improvements in health and reduction in crime, as well as gains in parental income during the programme and gains in participants' own later-life income through both higher levels of employment and higher salaries.

3
MINUTE
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Opinion



ANDY DALY-SMITH

Senior lecturer in physical activity and behavioural science
Leeds Beckett University

Does the Daily Mile™ really go far enough to get kids fit?

The low-cost, straightforward and high-profile Daily Mile initiative is drawing wide support, says Andy Daly-Smith, but there is limited evidence thus far for its effectiveness. Schools should focus on fundamental movement skills, fitness, positive behaviour and passion.

The newly published second chapter of the Government's childhood obesity plan argues that all schools should adopt an "active mile" initiative.

The lure is obvious, and the Daily Mile has captured the attention of schools like no previous initiative. To date, some 4,200 schools across 57 countries have joined in, so it is little surprise that politicians have also jumped on the bandwagon. For policymakers and directors of public health, the appeal is obvious. First, the programme has little if any cost. Second, no training is required, and third, there is research evidence to support the effect of the Daily Mile on physical activity, fitness and reduced body fat. What's not to like?

To begin, the evidence supporting the effect of the Daily Mile is within its infancy. While the outcomes of the most prominent study suggest substantial effects, a closer inspection of the underlying

research design and results offer different conclusions. In the two-school pilot study, the Daily Mile school was assessed over 28 weeks and the comparator school over 12. Physical activity outcomes were established using only 17 per cent of participants (56 children). Finally,

and of greatest concern, results suggest that 45 per cent of Daily Mile participants reduced their physical activity levels.

This suggests the Daily Mile works for some, but not for all. To understand why, we need to know what drives physical activity engagement during childhood. A growing body of evidence suggests four key components contribute to a physically active lifestyle: fundamental movement skills, fitness, positive behaviour and passion.

Fundamental movement skills – e.g., throwing, running and catching – enable a child to engage in an array of different games-based activities. Higher fitness

enables a child to maintain positive engagement with an activity, even with increased physiological demands. Positive behaviour relates to choosing active pursuits over more sedentary ones, e.g., walking or cycling to school. Finally, passion is central to the adoption and maintenance of physical activity behaviours: the number one reason for children to drop out of organised sport is lack of fun.

Two questions remain. First, why is it important to get this right in childhood? And second, how do we get it right? Research from the Center for the Developing Child at Harvard University sheds light on the former. During childhood years, the brain's ability to change is high

“ Early results suggest 45 per cent of participants reduced their activity levels”

and comparatively little effort is required. Habits, good and bad, are formed based on experience. But as we age, although the brain can still adapt and form new habits, the effort required to do so increases. Through exposing children to multiple positive experiences, we can lay the foundations for lifelong physical activity.

So what works? Establishing positive sustainable change is challenging. Children's physical activity response varies greatly, determined by a complex interaction of factors. We need to move beyond singular interventions and adopt whole-school approaches: before and after school, during lessons, break and PE.

To get started, schools might want to prioritise compulsory lesson segments. Children spend four to six hours in highly sedentary lessons every school day. Integrating movement within lessons can be an optimal strategy to increase physical activity. While the Daily Mile offers one solution, physically active learning (e.g., Tagtiv8) and classroom movement breaks with or without learning (e.g. BBC Supermovers) present others. While teachers may be reluctant to sacrifice "academic learning" time to physical activity, high-quality research shows the beneficial effects of physically active learning and classroom movement breaks on academic performance and classroom behaviour.

While schools are increasingly being tasked with promoting physical activity, they cannot do this on their own. Multidisciplinary teams, including researchers, sporting partnerships, leisure services and public health bodies need to work together, to first develop, and then implement initiatives.

Finally, why are children so rarely involved in programme design and implementation? As adults, we do not always know what is best for the children within our care. To drive excitement and passion, we should place children front and centre in the decision-making process. You never know: they may actually come up with a solution to the current inactivity crisis that researchers and practitioners have thus far failed to spot.



DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
CONTACT US NEWS@SCHOOLSWEK.CO.UK

Now we have consensus that more diverse admissions benefit both students and universities, Sam Butters writes, it's time to increase transparency via shared terminology and better use of data

We know that parents' income, the quality of school attended and a myriad of other background factors continue to affect educational outcomes for young people, including how well they do in their exams and their likelihood of progressing to higher education.

We also know it is possible to close this gap. There are well-known examples of schools that have bucked the trend, and where disadvantaged pupils do just as well as their wealthier peers. The primary aim must surely be to continue to work towards a UK education system in which your background does not determine your educational outcomes.

Sadly, it is still the case across the country that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are, on average, 1.2 grades behind their wealthier peers at age 16.

Efforts to increase the diversity of higher education student cohorts through outreach programmes appear to have had only marginal effects at the most selective universities, partly because such institutions tend to have both high entry tariffs and high levels of competition. They face the challenge that there is a much smaller pool of disadvantaged applicants who fulfil the preset expectations, including required grades. State-school students from more affluent families are still four times as likely as peers from low-income families



SAM
BUTTERS

CEO of the Fair Education Alliance

Contextualised admissions: how do we make them fairer?

to enter a higher-tariff university. The Fair Education Alliance has

can be conducted fairly and to the benefit of universities

“Careers advisors still do not know which background factors matter to which universities

published new findings (based on research by the University of Exeter's Centre for Social Mobility) that shine a light on how contextual data is used at highly selective universities, and make recommendations on how to use these data in ways that make access to higher education in the UK fairer.

The main findings are as follows:

- The use of contextualised data in higher education admissions has become increasingly accepted over the past five years and the practice more widespread.
- Contextualisation is applied in a variety of ways by higher education institutions, and it is often unclear (particularly for applicants) which practices are undertaken.
- Key concerns are now less about reaching consensus that contextualised admissions

and students, and more about creating a shared terminology and common understanding of good data use, thereby increasing transparency.

We believe two steps should now be taken:

First, we are calling for improved access by institutions to relevant data. Inconsistencies across the UK nations and missing data are of particular concern. Area-based measures, such as participation of local areas (POLAR) classification groups, are too broad and do not guarantee that every applicant has the same background characteristics as others in the same group.

Other more accurate measures, such as free school meal eligibility and the multiple equality measure quintile, should be made available to HEIs at the application stage.

Evidence suggests that these measures provide more meaningful information about a young person's background, and improve the legitimacy and effectiveness of contextualised admissions practices.

Second, it is essential that applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds are made aware that they may be eligible for additional consideration at institutions they may otherwise think are out of their reach.

Our research showed that school careers advisors still do not have sufficient confidence in this area to advise students to aim for more selective universities, or have the information to hand about which background factors matter to which universities. Schools say that the admissions landscape is confusing and that wide variability in practices has led to low levels of trust in admissions processes.

These views are mirrored by HEIs, who generally think the understanding of contextualised admissions in schools is low.

We recently called on the Office for Students to require HEIs to publicise what kinds of data they use in their contextual admissions process on the UCAS application page for each individual course. The most selective universities should publish joint guidance for careers leaders, outlining which contextual factors they each take into considerations, and update such guidance annually.

We pleased that the OFS has just [announced their support](#) for our recommendations, and has called for an “ambitious approach” to contextual admissions

3
MINUTE
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Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



The Curriculum: Gallimaufry to coherence

By Mary Myatt

Published by John Catt Educational Ltd.

Reviewed by Melanie Hooson, Fellow (Transforming Teaching), Institute for Teaching

No idea what gallimaufry is? You're not the only one. A quick search told me that it's the perfect word to describe the curriculum in some of our schools; the "confused jumble" that many of our children are weaving their way through. Given Ofsted's recent announcements, and the focus that curriculum design is now rightly attracting, this is a timely read that does a great job of disrupting our thinking around how we plan the what of learning.

So how do we get from here to coherence? Mary Myatt is very clear on this, and leaders and teachers will find plenty to start the process. Myatt's writing is concise and each section is broken down into small chunks; this digestible read brings a real clarity to our thinking as she takes us through the fundamentals of the curriculum, planning, assessment and feedback, and finally leadership. The last section is split into subject areas, although with only a few pages per subject, I'm unsure how useful it will be when planning.

Relatable analogies from other fields highlight just how bizarre our practice can be in terms of what we attend to, and what we assume. Myatt invites us to imagine a restaurant owner who ensures his paperwork is complete, trains his front of house staff, and then just assumes, but never checks, that the chef is using top quality raw ingredients that will keep customers coming back for more. Sound familiar?

Much of our work at the Institute for Teaching is grounded in cognitive

science, and Myatt's thinking also starts here. She argues that we need an understanding of this area of science if we want a coherent curriculum. We know that humans are hard-wired for stories, which are treated preferentially in our memories. Children form long-term memories more easily from narratives than from disjointed facts. The curriculum should therefore, she proposes, be based on a narrative that can keep "multiple strands all spinning at once". This also helps children to make sense of the bigger picture – the why of their learning.

Myatt emphasises: "All of our children ought to be able to tell us what they are learning about and why it is important. If they can't, we haven't taught them properly."

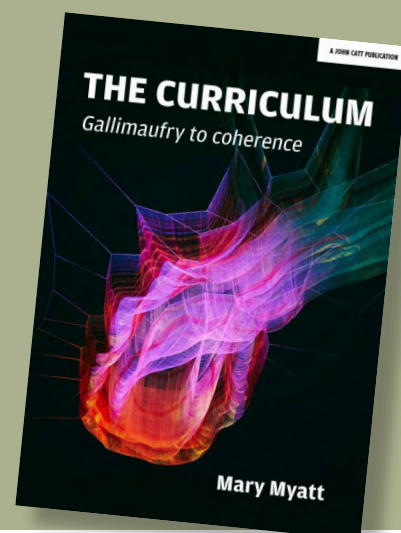
This will be a new starting point for many, but it's key to coherence.

Knowledge is another of the book's key themes. Myatt is unapologetic about how important it is that knowledge forms the backbone of a school's curriculum – children need a lot of background knowledge in order to make sense of any new learning. The Curriculum presents useful research on this point; for example, comprehension can improve with increased background knowledge and knowing lots of "stuff" – regardless of static reading ability. This has huge implications for teachers when planning. Do we decide to teach the skill of comprehension, or the background knowledge of a text so that children have something to relate their new learning

to? The latter, Myatt would argue, as comprehension skills are not transferable but highly text-specific. We cannot learn everything; planning is as much about deciding what not to teach as it is about what to include.

The narrowing of the curriculum is concerning for many of us in education, and Myatt is clear that we are "depriving our young people of intellectual, artistic and physical nourishment" if we don't get our curriculum principles and planning right. Many will welcome this argument, as frustration grows with the prioritisation of accountability measures over knowledge.

I get the feeling that over the next academic year we're all going to be spending a lot of time examining our thinking on the curriculum and asking whether we're doing a good enough job of ensuring that our children are experiencing what they are entitled to. If you're looking for something to help you move away from gallimaufry, here it is.



3
MINUTE
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Harry Fletcher-Wood is associate dean at the Institute for Teaching

@HFLETCHERWOOD

Policy tribes: How allegiances can harm policy making

@B_I_Tweets

The last in a series of posts about how behavioural insights can improve how government works by understanding the cognitive biases to which groups succumb, its ideas could just as easily be applied to the staffroom. In explaining why we reject arguments made by another group, "even if they are good ones", the Behavioural Insights Team note that we "believe that the groups we identify with are better than other groups. That is the case even if a) there is strong evidence they are not, or b) they have only just been created, and we therefore have no prior attachment to them." For example, although supporters and opponents of affirmative action in the United States "did not differ much in their self-reported political views... The supporters thought their own group were more left-wing they actually were, and their opponents much more right-wing; the reverse was true for the opponents of the policy." In decision-making,

TOP BLOGS of the week

"evidence is used to justify the position of a department (or similar group), rather than a collaborative exploration of potential options and approaches": a useful caution.

Try to resist misinterpreting the marshmallow test

Keith Payne and Paschal Sheeran

You may have heard of a famous experiment in which children who were able to sit alone in a room for several minutes without eating the marshmallow in front of them were promised two when the experimenter returned; those "who were better at resisting the treat had better school achievement as teenagers". A recent study has debunked psychologist Walter Mischel's original research, suggesting that resisting temptation "was not about self-control after all, but instead reflected affluence". But this post emphasises that the overlap between affluence and self-control isn't news: "While it may be tempting to think that achievement is due to either socioeconomic status or self-control, we have known for some time that it's more complicated than that." So don't give up on the marshmallow test just yet, and don't confuse gradual refinement of our understanding for failure.

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +

John Hattie is wrong

@RobertSlavin

Education scholar John Hattie's digest of what works in education has long been popular. Robert Slavin, "operating on the principle that anything that looks to be too good to be true probably is", took a closer look. He describes Hattie's core claims as: "Almost everything works, any effect size less than +0.40 is ignorable; it is possible to meaningfully rank educational factors in comparison to each other by averaging the findings of meta-analyses". Slavin concludes that these "claims appear appealing, simple, and understandable. But they are also wrong." Hattie falls down, he says, because he grabs "big numbers from meta-analyses of all kinds with little regard to the meaning or quality of the original studies, or of the meta-analyses". This post feels like a milestone in evidence-informed education.

Five tips for making the most of gained time

@FH_FranHaynes

Gained time has finally arrived, but an exhausted crawl to the end of the school can mean abandoning our good intentions. Fran Haynes shares five tips from a colleague, Bex Owen, about getting the best out of the summer, including "making a list of the niggling tasks that you have wanted to sort out during the year but have pushed back due to more high-profile jobs", and drawing up next year's seating plans, because "it is inevitable that some jobs will only pop up once you are back in school". She even has a tip for how to avoid a blank mind: "Although your official school timetable may have a few more blank spaces than usual, this does not mean that you should allow your mind to go blank as well. Bex recommends using your planner to slot in when you will complete the different jobs you have allocated to your gained time."

I wish all readers a relaxed and productive gained time.

3
MINUTE
READ



It's not true that academies care more about money than pupils

Mark Watson, Comment

It's good to see an article that puts across a different perspective than we're used to on here. Congrats to *Schools Week* for publishing it.

I hope that in the future when there's a relevant article, *Schools Week* approach Martyn Oliver for a comment to balance out the usual anti-academies-at-any-cost suspects...

Steve Hall @SteveHall_COG

Thanks for clarifying a report that, when I read it, didn't resonate on any level. This response to @TobyGreany is more of what I recognise and can relate to.

Susan Douglas @SusanDouglas70

I hugely respect @TobyGreany and would like to discuss it with you further! The lack of nuance in this headline is hugely problematic.

Directors of children's services demand LAs be allowed to take over failing academies

DJL @headstfs

Can academies also take over failing local authorities as well then?

Ofsted chief says it's more helpful for pupils to learn European languages before Mandarin

Frank Norris @FrankWNorris

And the Ofsted evidence for this judgement is where? I'm getting too grumpy for my role. Nurse, where are my pills?

Cookie Munster @crowmogh

I think Russian may be fast becoming the most important thing to speak! The Chinese are taking over the world, so Mandarin is kind of important. Spanish is a very useful language to learn, more useful than German, but few state schools offer it.

REPLY OF THE WEEK



Professor Toby Greany and Dr Rob Higham, UCL Institute of Education

It's not true that academies care more about money than pupils

We want to address some of the misrepresentations and errors in Martyn Oliver's opinion piece regarding our four-year study of the government's "self-improving, school-led system" agenda.

Martyn accuses us of drawing on "shallow data". Our research analysed national data from every school in England that

was inspected by Ofsted over a ten-year period.

We also evaluated a large number of academies in MATs using a statistically robust approach. Martyn incorrectly suggests that the findings are based on four local areas, but this ignores our nationally representative survey of nearly 700 headteachers.

Our analysis identified that the average proportion of children eligible for free school meals reduced in schools graded "good" or "outstanding" by Ofsted between 2010 and 2015. Martyn uses an example of change at one academy in his MAT to argue that our findings ignored how FSM eligibility can change over time. This is incorrect. We used standardised averages so that our findings are independent of underlying trends in FSM rates and cannot be compared to changes in a single school.

Martyn also claims that the report is "anti-academy". Our aim was to provide a balanced picture of change across the entire school system, where well over 50 per cent of schools are still maintained. We do report positive findings on academies where they exist: for example, that, on average, smaller Multi-Academy Trusts (with two to three schools) have had a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

To call the research a "manufactured scandal" does a disservice to the hard-working professionals that we interviewed. What our research shows is that their efforts have become more difficult in recent years as a result of the perverse incentives inherent in England's school system.



'Unfair' disqualification by association rules leave hundreds in limbo

Katy @WhatKatyDoesNow

This destroyed me and my family. Too late. The damage is done. The articles have been written.

Feeling numb. Press were on my doorstep because of this, stopping me getting my own child to school. Now they've just quietly reversed this draconian policy as if it never happened.

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

FRIDAY

Damian Hinds may not wish to speak to education journalists, but he did manage to give an enlightening interview to Parliament's House magazine.

Unsurprisingly, Hinds didn't give a lot away in terms of policy, but we did learn a lot about the man behind the desk.

Besides the fact that education secretary is his dream job (we guarantee it isn't), Hinds revealed he does not watch Love Island (for shame) and that he is a "Britpop-era kid" who likes to crack up the music to 11 (no shame here), and listen to Oasis's Definitely Maybe of a Sunday morning.

Controversial...

WEDNESDAY

It turns out that Dame Martina Milburn, the (independent) new chair-designate of the Social Mobility Commission, was personally approached by the education secretary and asked to consider applying for the job.

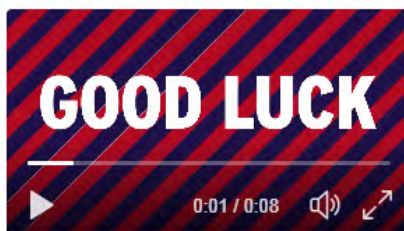
Milburn was nominated for the job in May after a lengthy recruitment process, which followed the resignation of the commission's entire board over a "lack of political leadership" in December.

Giving evidence to her confirmation hearing of the parliamentary education committee today, Milburn said she was approached by Damian Hinds around two months ago and asked to consider the role.

"So the secretary of state called me and asked me if I'd seen the ad, which I hadn't, and if it would be something that I would consider."



Good luck to England in tonight's [#WoldCup](#) semi-final!
[#FootballIsGREAT](#) [#itscominghome](#)
[@GREATBritain](#) [#ENGCR0](#)
[#ThreeLions](#) 🇬🇧



5:24pm · 11 Jul 2018 · Media Studio

It also turns out that she was asked to apply long after the initial deadline for applications for the role, indicating the government struggled with its first round of recruitment.

Asked when she received the call from Hinds, Milburn said: "I honestly can't remember. Two months ago?"

Lucy Powell, the former shadow education secretary who now sits on the committee, questioned the timing, given the original closing date for the job was February 25.

According to Milburn, Hinds was "very clear that there was an open process to go through and he was also very clear that he was calling other people".

That's alright then.

Meanwhile, in the week that we discovered more pupils are passing the government's key stage 2 spelling, grammar and punctuation test, it appears some in Hinds's team need to go back to primary school.

Over on the DfE's official twitter

account, officials wished the England team "good luck" ahead of their semi-final crunch, but managed to spell the name of the competition "woldrcup".

What an own goal!

THURSDAY

So Teach First founder Brett Wigdortz is taking up the chair at controversial National Citizen Service trust.

Having written the business plan for Teach First in 2002 and led it to train more than 1,000 teachers annually, Wigdortz sure has the drive to turn dreams into reality, and he's going to need it.

Like Teach First, the NCS has divided opinion. The NCS programme, which is delivered by private companies, places 16-year-olds on a four-week programme of outdoor activity trips, community projects and workshops.

Government plans to force all schools to promote it were dropped when MPs and the National Audit Office blasted its public spending record and impact last year.

Wigdortz has weathered Teach First's critics – who claim the teacher training programme is elitist, costly and doesn't encourage a long career in the sector – so it makes sense that the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has chosen his steady hands for this rather large ship.

We expect DfE insiders are also pleased with the appointment, not least Jon Yates, was one of the original designers of NCS back in 2009, happens to be Damian Hinds' policy adviser.

It's a small world!

Headteacher



Howard Community Primary School

Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP32 6SA

We are looking to appoint an exceptional primary teacher and inspiring, capable senior leader to be the new Headteacher for Howard Community Primary School in Bury St. Edmunds. Having experienced a period of significant change prior to and since being placed in Special Measures in July 2017, the school requires a motivated, passionate and resilient individual to lead the school to success.

You will have a genuine aspiration for all children to thrive, flourish and achieve, regardless of their background. You will role model exceptional teaching and be committed to working effectively with staff, parents or carers and the local community to raise learning standards.

You will be ambitious for the school and its children. You will have a positive track record for school improvement and leadership impact in challenging circumstances. Supported as part of a vibrant, cross-phase Multi Academy Trust (CHET), you will join a team of driven professionals committed to inclusive, inspiring education and collaboration.

Enriching learning experiences and strong relationships are integral to the Trust's values. We welcome applications from leaders that share our commitment to holistic education and are keen to make a positive and lasting difference to the children and families of the Howard community.

Howard Community Primary School has an expansive site and great facilities and is ideally situated in the heart of its community. Bury St. Edmunds is a beautiful town with a great deal of historical heritage and opportunities for curricular enrichment. Positioned close to Cambridge and Newmarket with excellent transport links across Suffolk and Norfolk, we are keen for Howard to become a centre for educational excellence and a hub for the Cambridge and Suffolk Teaching School Alliance (CASSA).

Start: January 2019

Salary: £46,799-£63,779 (to be negotiated)

Roll: 195 (capacity of 315 plus nursery provision)



CHET | Chilford Hundred Education Trust

www.chetrust.co.uk

@CHETeducation

Closing date: 17th September 2018

Interviews: w/c 24th September

For an application pack, please contact Headteacher Recruitment at headships@suffolk.gov.uk or telephone 01473 263943.

Visits to the school are welcomed, please contact the school office to arrange 01284 766278.

CHET is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We expect all employees to share this commitment. All appointments are subject to enhanced DBS checks.

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- Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
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Cover Supervisor
Starting in
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Derbyshire
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The *Active Learning* Trust

**DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL
AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE**

We are looking for a senior leader with a breadth of school improvement experience to join our central multi-academy trust leadership team. This is a new role in our growing Trust with currently 21 schools across the East of England. A unique experience to extend your career and influence to a Trust-wide level.

Working across all phases and settings, the post-holder will secure the continued improvement of schools across the Trust through the promotion of outstanding performance at school and individual teacher level.

This is a permanent post. Some flexibility can be offered for less than full time working for the right candidate.

Salary by negotiation expected to be up to £70k for the ideal candidate plus pension and generous leave and travel benefits. Job Description and Application form available from emma.pearce@activelearningtrust.org. Tel 01 223 728394. Closing date 24 July 2018.

HEADS OF FACULTY

Science and Technical Studies + Humanities and MFL
Thomas Middlecott Academy, Lincolnshire

About our Academy

TMA aims to provide a high quality teaching and learning environment for all students and we are committed to providing students with an aspirational curriculum to ensure the very best standards of attainment and achievement. We focus relentlessly on pushing every child to achieve academic success, to become confident and well-rounded in people both in school and in their community. In addition, our innovative enrichment programme gives our students access to life-changing experiences in sport, the arts and culture.

Find out more about us at <http://www.thomasmiddlecott.co.uk/>

About the roles

To be the leader of the faculty team, responsible for leading, managing, supporting and monitoring the work of the team to secure effective leadership and management and high standards of staff performance.

Thomas Middlecott Academy is committed to equality, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check is required for all successful applicants.



In doing so, you will lead students to achieve the highest academic attainment and progress.

Salary: UPS + TLR1a

Your career development

As part of The David Ross Education Trust you will join an organisation which is committed to developing its talented teaching team. We have a comprehensive career development programme and provide our staff with opportunities to work collaboratively across the Trust and to progress within it.

Apply now

Please visit <https://www.dret.co.uk/working-with-dret/> to access further information and submit your application.



Diocese of Norwich
Education and
Academies Trust

ACADEMIES GROUP EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL (AGEP)

DIOCESE OF NORWICH EDUCATION AND ACADEMIES TRUST (DNEAT)

Required from January 2019 (or earlier by arrangement)

Salary £70 – 80,000

Are you passionate about school improvement, the need to raise achievement and inspired by improving the lives of children? If so join our highly successful Academies Improvement Team by applying for this post.

The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) has a proven track record of improving schools and is entering another significant and exciting phase of growth. We seek an outstanding leader to play a pivotal role in further developing our organisation in order to ensure high quality education for children across Norfolk and North Suffolk within the context of our inclusive Christian ethos, vision and values. We have had an extremely successful year in 2018 characterised by improved standards and successful Ofsted outcomes. An Ofsted review of the Trust in March this year found:

'recent inspections of Trust schools and Trust-wide assessment information reflect a positive pattern of ongoing change. Pupils are making better progress because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. High-level ambition and raised expectations are at the heart of this cultural shift.'

The successful candidate will be accountable for ensuring the educational success of academies in a defined regional group within the overall framework of the DNEAT approach to school improvement. You will be responsible for providing support and challenge to each academy's Headteacher/Head of School and Local Governing Body across all aspects of their work.

We are looking for an outstanding educational leader, who commands the respect of head teachers and can make a significant contribution to their success. You will have a proven track record of school improvement, with the ability to read a school, understand what is required and coach others to success.

You will have the personal qualities to work effectively with individuals within the organisation and beyond, to challenge where necessary and to create a culture of learning and improvement across the primary phase. You will be skilled in working in partnership with others, helping to create a team which ensures the success and achievement of all children.

Closing date: 12 noon on Friday 14 September 2018

Interviews: Monday 24 and Tuesday 25 September 2018

**Please send completed applications to:
headship@epm.co.uk**

If you would like to discuss the role in more details, please contact: **01603 881 721** (Hannah Bannister, PA to the Executive Office for DNEAT) or visit **www.dneat.org**

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of all our pupils and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We follow safer recruitment practice and all appointments are subject to satisfactory enhanced DBS clearance, satisfactory references and verification of identity and qualifications



PR & Communications Manager

EMLC Academy Trust (EMLC AT) is embarking on an exciting time of growth. The PR & Communications Manager will play a key role in achieving this, delivering PR, marketing and digital activity to support the Trust and our schools.

EMLC AT is a Multi Academy Trust based in Olney, Buckinghamshire and deliberately all its schools are within an hour drive of the central office. Since incorporation, the MAT now includes five primary academies, one secondary academy and one all-through 4-19 Free School.

Vision, Values and Purpose

'Every child deserves to be the best they can be'

We are driven by a strong moral purpose that every child has the right to outstanding teaching and leadership. It is our mission to work with our children, their parents and carers and our staff to create excellent schools.

This is an exciting opportunity for an individual with an excellent track record. The role will involve working closely with colleagues across the trust and our schools. We are looking for a team player who is committed to developing marketing and communications activities within the trust and its schools. The post holder will work closely with the key regional journalists to deliver positive media coverage for the trust, raising awareness and celebrating impact

All appointments are subject to safer recruitment requirements to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people. All positions will involve appropriate checks and clearances.

and success around the trust's work for young people.

You will have a good knowledge of the media and their needs, an ability to prioritise and meet deadlines and will be comfortable juggling between press, marketing and social media activities.

You will also have experience of advising senior stakeholders and will be an excellent communicator.

How to apply:

To apply for this role, please request an application pack to ruhena.mahmood@emlcacademytrust.co.uk

Please complete and return the Job Application form and Equal Opportunities Monitoring form and email to the above email address. Please note, CVs are not accepted.

If you would like more information, or to have an informal discussion about the role, please contact **Hena Mahmood**, via email or call on **01234 880166**. All enquires will be treated confidentially.

Closing date: Monday, 30 July 2018 at noon.

Interviews will be scheduled for Tuesday, 7 August 2018.

Lead Academy Improvement Partner

EMLC Academy Trust (EMLC AT) is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) based in Olney, Buckinghamshire and deliberately all its schools are within an hour drive of the central office. Since incorporation, the MAT now includes five primary academies, one secondary academy and one all-through 4-19 Free School.

Vision, Values and Purpose

'Every child deserves to be the best they can be'

We are driven by a strong moral purpose that every child has the right to outstanding teaching and leadership. It is our mission to work with our children, their parents and carers and our staff to create excellent schools.

An exciting opportunity for an experienced and talented educationalist to join as full-time Lead Academy Improvement Partner. The Lead Academy Improvement Partner is a pivotal role that will work in collaboration with the Principals, Head of School Development, the CEO and governance function to ensure the School Improvement for the trust is effective, robust and facilitates the best outcomes for every child within the trust.

All appointments are subject to safer recruitment requirements to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people. All positions will involve appropriate checks and clearances.

The successful candidate will be responsible and accountable for the trust's school improvement function as part of the trust's academy effectiveness and improvement framework.

The successful candidate will be part of a dynamic team leading the school improvement agenda across our schools.

How to apply:

To apply for this role, please request an application pack to ruhena.mahmood@emlcacademytrust.co.uk

Please complete and return the Job Application form and Equal Opportunities Monitoring form and email to the above email address. Please note, CVs are not accepted.

If you would like more information, or to have an informal discussion about the role, please contact **Hena Mahmood** via email or call **01234 880166**. All enquires will be treated confidentially.

The closing date is Monday, 23 July 2018 at 9.00am and interviews will take place on Wednesday, 25 July 2018.



SCHOOLS WEEK

We hope you've enjoyed
reading your new look
Schools Week.

Let us know what you think of this week's edition on twitter
(@schoolsweek) or email the editor Shane Mann,
shane.mann@lsect.com.

