

SCHOOLS WEEK

A digital newspaper determined to get past the bluster and explain the facts.

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Academies spend on bosses' firms rises to nearly £135m



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Ofsted under fire over school cuts stance



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- Teachers 'in danger' as schools step up to protect their pupils
- Heads reject call for 'staggered' finish times
- Shadow minister slams 'outrageous' pressure on schools amid cuts

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SCHOOLS WEEK

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The editor's top picks



**Academy trusts
still paying staff off
the books, despite
crackdown**

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**Older teachers have
still got what it takes,
says (very) long-awaited
report**

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The school leading on job shares from the top



What's it like to have two people share the job of headteacher... and how does the school handle part-time work throughout? Simon Knight and Heidi Dennison told us how it's going since they took the helm at Frank Wise school in Banbury.

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News: Ofsted

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Under-fire Ofsted pledges school funding cuts research

JESS STAUFENBERG

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EXCLUSIVE

Ofsted is planning to research the impact of funding cuts, as its chief inspector comes under fire for standing firm on her insistence there is no "clear evidence" to show funding pressures are hitting schools.

Daniel Muijs, Ofsted's head of research, told *Schools Week* the inspectorate will be running research next year on the impact of, and how schools are dealing with, funding changes.

Muijs said the watchdog hasn't scoped the project yet but it will include looking at inspection reports and visiting schools to "get the picture from the ground what schools think the issues are".

The disclosure comes after chief inspector Amanda Spielman wrote to the public accounts committee last week to say Ofsted has evidence that funding cuts have led to falling standards in 16-to-18 provision, but not for schools.

When asked for the evidence that supported Spielman's funding claim for colleges by our sister title FE Week, Ofsted provided just three inspection reports for the sector.

These three reports mentioned "reductions in resources", "funding priorities" and "necessary budget reductions", but didn't explicitly link these budget issues to worse student outcomes.

Two of the providers were rated 'good' and one 'outstanding', and two reports dated back to 2015.

Schools Week analysis this week has found similar terms have also been used in school inspection reports – questioning why Spielman has changed her stance on further-education funding, but not schools.

Analysis using Watchsted, a free data-analysis tool run by Angel Solutions, found three inspection reports where "budget reductions" were specifically highlighted by inspectors in their main findings.

Governors at Halebank Church of England primary school near Liverpool had faced the "challenge of an ever-decreasing budget", inspectors wrote in a report in 2017.

Leaders were similarly praised at Welford



■ The local authority, diocese and governing body have worked highly effectively to bring about an innovative and successful solution to the challenges of an ever-decreasing school budget in a small school. They have formed a collaboration with a much larger school where you are the deputy headteacher. You spend half of the week at the local school where you are permanently employed and the other half as the interim headteacher of this school.

■ The school has improved since the last inspection. The leadership of teaching is effective and achievement is better than at the time of the last inspection. Leaders and governors have managed a falling budget carefully to ensure that pupils' learning has not

■ Due to a period of significant turbulence, including staff changes, recruitment issues, staff absence and a budget shortfall, leaders have been slower to have an impact on aspects of school improvement.

Sibbertoft and Sulby Endowed primary school in Northampton for managing a "falling budget" in December 2012.

And two years ago, inspectors said leaders had been unable to drive speedy school improvement owing to a "budget shortfall" at Thomas Bennett Community College in West Sussex.

Spielman was rebuked in September by the accounts committee for failing to use the intelligence from inspections to call for change around funding for schools.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said *Schools Week's* findings show Ofsted inspectors have "seen fit to comment on the pressure on school finances" and urged the chief inspector to rethink her stance.

Severe budget cuts have led to a narrowed curriculum, he added, which Spielman is "rightly concerned about but not recognised as the product of financial constraints".

Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, added Ofsted was selectively interpreting the

evidence to ensure it said nothing "politically difficult" about funding cuts.

"Amanda Spielman clearly does have some evidence, unless she doesn't put any store by her inspectors' reports."

However Muijs has admitted it could be "entirely possible" there is a lag in the impact of funding cuts on schools that the inspectorate was yet to see.

"I think what's happening is we are seeing that evidence in further education and skills, but not – or not yet – in schools," he told *Schools Week*.

An Ofsted spokesperson said funding for further education and skills has not kept pace with funding for schools, which "has almost doubled in real terms in the last 20 years".

For schools, they admitted "funding growth has slowed recently", but added "what we do know is that thanks to the hard work of teachers, this is not yet having an impact on attainment data or Ofsted grades".



Investigation

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Police cuts force teachers to protect pupils from knife crime

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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INVESTIGATES

Schools are being forced to put teachers in harm's way in the battle to keep pupils safe from knife crime as police cuts bite, a *Schools Week* investigation has found.

Headteachers have also rejected recent calls for schools to stagger the times they send pupils home to tackle violence between pupils in the evenings, instead calling for increased police numbers.

It follows a spate of attacks across London in which five people, including three under the age of 18, were killed.

A total of 200 schools in the capital have now signed up to receive free "knife wands", special handheld scanners that detect concealed bladed weapons, as a shadow minister slammed the "outrageous" situation that sees school staff put in charge of policing their pupils.

Trauma specialists at the Royal London Hospital this week called for staggered school finish times after research showed that 22 per cent of attacks on under-16s happens between 4pm and 6pm, the period immediately after pupils leave school.

Between 2004 and 2014, the average age of stabbing victims treated at the hospital fell from the late 20s to 18, and an increasing proportion are teenagers, according to the research, published in the *BMJ Open* medical journal.

However, headteachers told *Schools Week* that staggered school finish times would not solve the problem of the increasing prevalence of knife attacks on young people, especially as police numbers continue to fall.

"I think it's an awful idea," said Carolyn Roberts, headteacher of Thomas Tallis School in south-east London. She said three of her pupils have either been assaulted or threatened by people with knives in the past week.

"Which school is going to opt to open from 10am to 6pm? The issue to me is that there are fewer police officers on the streets of London, and the fact that there's this upsurge in knife crime, those two things can't be separated."

The number of police officers in England and Wales has dropped by 20,000 over the



Police activity outside Clapham South tube station after a 17-year-old boy was fatally stabbed

last eight years.

Although the number of police officers working in London schools actually increased from 270 in 2014 to 295 last year, the Metropolitan Police predicts that the capital is set to lose 3,000 frontline police officers, who deal with issues outside of school time, between 2017 and 2020.

Roberts said she had been forced to send her staff to "actively supervise" the local shops until 4pm, when a curfew comes into effect. Any pupils caught in the area after that time are disciplined when they return to school.

"I'm having to put my staff in a position of danger," Roberts warned.

Chris Hall, headteacher at the Footsteps Trust, which runs two independent alternative-provision schools in north London, said staggered leaving times would not solve the problem unless it involves "a large number of police on the streets between 3pm and 6pm".

Hall said his staff already supervise pupils as they wait for their bus from the school site every day, but they "can't do any more than that".

"It's a big problem. Everyone's looking for a soft solution, but it doesn't exist."

There were 40,147 knife crimes across the country in the 12 months ending in March 2018, a 16 per cent increase on the previous year and the highest number since 2011. Out of the 44 police forces in England and Wales, 38 recorded a rise in knife crime since 2011.

Louise Haigh, the shadow policing minister, told *Schools Week* it was "inevitable that pressure will fall on schools"



as cuts to police numbers continue to bite.

"We are now in the outrageous position where they are being faced with calls to stagger hours in order to stop their pupils being killed," she said, adding only a "whole-system response" will stem the "relentless rise in violence".

Police cuts have also been condemned by the office of Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London. City Hall has offered free knife wands to every school and college in London, with 200 schools already taking up the offer.

Earlier this year, the government set out plans to consult on a new legal duty that would require schools to take action to prevent violent crime.

"We recognise that policing is a vital element of this strategy," said a Home Office spokesperson. They added the government is providing £1 billion more for policing than three years ago.

News: School funding

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Hammond's 'little extras' may not go directly to schools

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EXCLUSIVE

Academy trusts will be able to pool the money their schools are awarded from the £400 million "little extras" pot and dish it out as they deem appropriate, *Schools Week* understands.

Philip Hammond, the chancellor, pledged the in-year bonus during last week's budget, suggesting the money could be spent on computers or whiteboards. He said the extra grant would average £10,000 for each primary school and £50,000 for each secondary.

However, a document released by the government to help schools work out how the money will be handed out reveals that "in some cases the payments may go through local authorities, or multi-academy trusts".

Both the chancellor and the Department for Education have made it clear they expect the money to go directly to individual schools.

However, a former government adviser and academy trustee warned there was not much ministers could do to stop the money being pooled, a process whereby school funding is held centrally and distributed between schools according to need.

"There's very little to stop MATs pooling this or distributing it in a way of their choosing – depending on their scheme of



delegation with their schools," said Jonathan Simons, a former head of education at Policy Exchange who advised prime ministers Gordon Brown and David Cameron on schools policy.

"And, actually, that may be a more efficient use of resources rather than passing through what is quite a small sum of money evenly, regardless of need."

Schools Week reported last year how trusts were increasingly using new freedoms to pool their schools' funding - capital and general annual grants - into a central pot before dishing out the cash to their academies.

It's a major departure from the method used by most trusts, where the funding goes directly to schools before the trust top-slices a percentage to fund its central operations.

During a hearing by the parliamentary education committee this week, union leaders and headteachers also told MPs the money would be better spent as a revenue grant to fund the day-to-day running of schools.

The money is capital funding, so therefore cannot be spent on many of the revenue costs that schools are struggling to meet, such as teacher pay rises and support staff wages.

Stephen Tierney, the chief executive of the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic trust and chair of the Headteachers' Roundtable group, said ideally he would spend the extra money on implementing the part of the recent teacher pay award that is not funded by the government.

Darren Northcott, from the NASUWT union, said his organisation believed the money would be better spent on pupils with high needs.

Valentine Mulholland, from the NAHT school leaders' union, said: "A lot of the funding that comes into schools at the moment is dedicated grants for small things, and that's not useful."

Conversion of capital funding to revenue is not unprecedented in education. Last year, Justine Greening, the former education secretary, announced plans to pump an additional £1.3 billion into school revenue coffers, with money coming from various capital pots, including the free schools programme.

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School leaders call for £4bn to £8bn cash injection

Headteachers and union leaders have told MPs that schools need between £4 billion and £8 billion added to their annual budgets to meet rising costs.

Appearing in front of the parliamentary education committee on Tuesday, witnesses gave their estimates for an increase to the core schools budget.

Although the core budget currently stands at £42.4 billion, the highest it has ever been, in real terms funding has been cut by £2.7 billion

since 2015.

Unions have previously said that at least £2 billion in additional annual funding is needed, but this week they went further.

Stephen Tierney, the chair of the Headteachers' Roundtable, said an annual uplift of £4 billion was needed, while Valentine Mulholland, from the NAHT school leaders' union, said the sector needed "a couple of billion" over and above the £2.7 billion that would reverse the real-terms cuts.

Darren Northcott, a national officer with the NASUWT teachers' union, said £5 billion "would go a long way to making up the deficit that we have seen", while Jules White, a headteacher who leads the Worthless school funding campaign, called for a £6 billion increase.

Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said his organisation wanted an "ambitious" increase of "£8 billion at least".

Investigation

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Heads question methods of glossy Westminster mag

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INVESTIGATES

A glossy magazine that charges schools thousands of pounds to be featured in its pages has been accused of misleading headteachers over its links to parliament.

School leaders across England received letters last month telling them they had been selected to appear in *The Parliamentary Review* and attend a gala event in Westminster with politicians and celebrities.

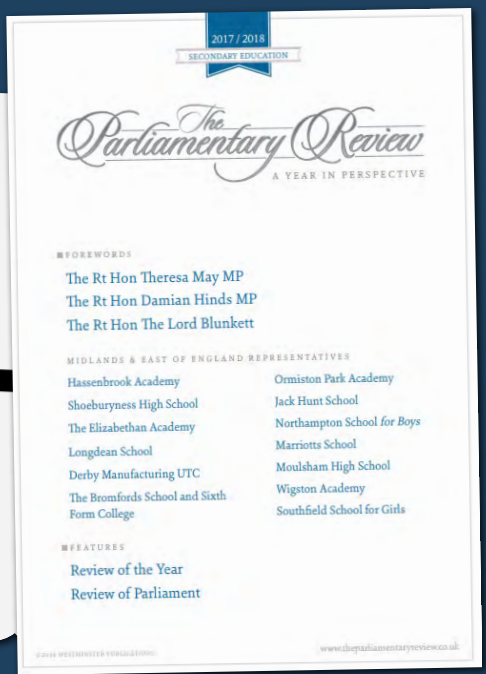
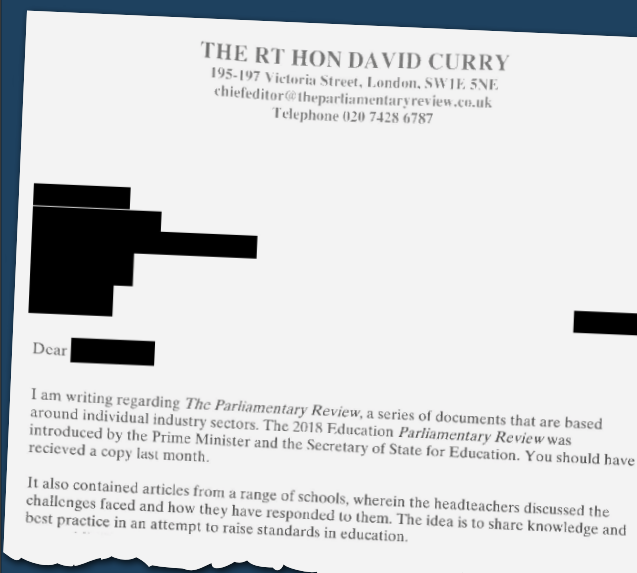
The letters from "The Rt Hon David Curry", a former Conservative MP and minister, boast of recent contributions from Theresa May and Damian Hinds, the education secretary, and encourage schools to submit articles demonstrating their "best practice".

However, headteachers who responded to the invitations were later asked to stump up thousands of pounds to be featured in the publication, which is distributed free each year to every school in the country.

The magazine – which has editions for several industries – purports to be "hugely popular" with schools. But some headteachers told *Schools Week* they were led to believe it was published by parliament itself.

The magazine refuted "any suggestion" that it misled schools.

"It looks like a parliamentary publication," Sam Nixon, head at Ashleigh Primary School in Wymondham, Suffolk, said. "You open the first page and it's got Theresa May doing the foreword and Damian Hinds on the second page. That makes it look even more so.



"We had a letter that looks quite similar from Lord Agnew, again with his title at the top, congratulating the school on its outstanding grade. So having seen this one when it came, I thought 'oh excellent, great news!'"

The letter said that Curry would like the school to be one of the representatives for next year's edition and to write 1,000 words with the guidance of its editorial team. The letter included an invitation from Lord Blunkett,

the review's chair, to an annual gala. Previous attendees were listed as George Osborne, the former chancellor, Frank Lampard, the footballer, and Jonny Wilkinson, the rugby player. The letter urged the school to

Continued on next page

Investigation

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phone so the "whole process" could be explained. It made no mention of a fee.

Assuming it was a free service provided by a public sector organisation, Nixon responded enthusiastically, only to be told in a later phone conversation and email that he would have to pay £1,200 for his school to be included. He declined.

"Speaking to a couple of other heads, everyone felt that they had been highlighted for recognition for the work they'd done," Nixon said.

He also questioned the use of Hinds's name to promote a publication that charged schools "at a time when you're being told you have to be careful with how you spend your budget". He said the education secretary's contribution appeared to "validate" the magazine.

Nick King, the head of Scarning Voluntary Controlled Primary School in Norfolk, was also contacted by Curry in October. He said he felt "flattered" to have been approached, but was subsequently told he would have to pay £3,500 to take part.

"We were more than happy to contribute 1,500 words or whatever it was they wanted about how life is at our school," he told *Schools Week*, adding that his school was "very close" to signing up.

"My deputy did a little bit of digging and there seemed to be a general view that it wasn't necessarily the most upfront process."

Both headteachers said they understood why some schools signed up. King said one leader he knew had found the publication a useful way to promote her school, but he still questioned its value for money.

"She had had a bit of a bad time in terms of publicity locally and she said they found it quite a good way to promote the

school in a positive way. I get that, but ultimately the £3,500 was a bit of a warning sign, and we decided not to do it.

"You get it on that distinguished-looking paper, and you see 'parliament' in there and a reference to Theresa May, and it's all very grand and quite flattering.

"On investigation, it was unclear why we were being asked to pay £3,500."

Other recent contributors to the magazine include Michael Gove, the former education secretary, Nick Gibb, the current schools minister, and Lucy Powell, the former shadow secretary.

Powell, who now sits on the parliamentary education committee, said she did not know about the charges and would not write for the publication again.

"I was asked to write a piece . . . but I had no idea until much later that schools were paying so much money to be included," she said.

"From what I know of it, I don't think this publication offers value for money to schools at a time of falling school budgets and I would not feel comfortable contributing to it again."

But Craig Wilmann, the director of The Parliamentary Review, said it was made clear to schools "in the very first call" and on the magazine's website that it was published by an "independent organisation".

The publication's name "reflects the fact that each document discusses parliamentary policy pertaining to the relevant policy sector.

"It does not imply that we are directly connected to parliament ourselves and it would be remiss of us not to mention the fact that the prime minister and the education secretary have contributed forewords.

Ministers regularly contribute to non-governmental publications.

"We absolutely refute any suggestion that we in any way mislead schools or organisations who partake in the review."

A DfE spokesperson said a contribution by any

government minister was "not an endorsement and nor should it be seen as such.

"Any organisation or publication that approaches a school to sell a product or service should be transparent about what they are doing."

What is The Parliamentary Review?

A printed and online publication with a number of editions across a range of sectors – including primary and secondary education. It is distributed free to all schools once a year.

The magazine is published by Westminster Publications, a private company that has just one director, Daniel Yossman and, according to *The Times*, has an annual turnover of £2 million.

The publication is chaired by Lord Pickles, the former

communities secretary, and David Blunkett, the former education secretary, both of whom are paid for their services. It is edited by David Curry, a former standards committee chair who in 2010 was ordered to repay £28,000 of parliamentary expenses that he spent on a house in his constituency that he rarely used.

The review also organises an annual gala, which in the past has been attended by Tony Blair and Nick Clegg.



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News: Workload

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DATA HELPS US INTERVENE EARLY, SAY TRUSTS

EXCLUSIVE

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Trusts are concerned that a new government diktat to pull back from data collection will stop them making rapid interventions for struggling pupils.

The Department for Education this week pledged to cut out unnecessary workload so teachers could "devote their energies to teaching".

It followed several recommendations in a Workload Advisory Group report, which were all accepted by the DfE (see page 11).

The government has pledged to tell trusts and local authorities they shouldn't ask for data on targets and predictions to hold schools to account.

"It would be like trying to navigate through the rear-view mirror"

However, Hugh Greenway, the chief executive at the Elliot Foundation, which runs 28 schools, warned targets data allowed him to intervene early if pupils needed help. Because his heads have a "trusting relationship" with him, they feel able to provide predictions for year 6 outcomes that trigger extra support in year 4.

The government said trusts and councils should instead use national test data, rather than regular data drops, to hold to account schools that are not failing.

"But that means you're at best a year behind reality," Greenway said. "It would be like trying to navigate through the rear-view mirror."

Sir Mark Grundy, the executive principal of Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust, agreed he would be "nervous" about using only national test data. "How would we know when to intervene?"

Schools told to ditch pupil data from teacher appraisals

The government has also updated guidance to state that teacher appraisals should not be solely based on data for single groups of pupils, or on teacher-generated data, because both could be unreliable.

But in a survey of more than 2,000 teachers on Teacher Tapp, a teacher survey app, almost two-thirds of teachers (60 per cent) said their appraisal discussions involved teacher-generated data and



predictions.

Stuart Kime, the director of education at Evidence Based Education, said data for a single class should not be used to judge a teacher as it could capture progress made much earlier in a child's school career. Instead performance management should involve "multiple measures", including pupil evaluations of staff.

DfE accused of ignoring teacher pay recommendation

Unions have welcomed many of the recommendations. But they claim the DfE has ignored part of the report that said pay progression for teachers should "never" be dependent on test results.

This could lead to burnout and higher drop-out rates.

However, the DfE insisted "strengthening the link between performance and pay is fundamental, so high-performing teachers are rewarded properly".

Chris Keates at NASUWT, said teaching was a complex activity that could not be reduced to "crude" data.

"There is no excuse for persisting with this debilitating and entirely irrational practice."

More than a quarter (26 per cent) of teachers told Teacher Tapp they were set attainment data targets that were linked to pay.

A study by the Education Endowment Foundation previously found performance-related pay resulted in zero months' progress for pupils, although its evidence was limited.

Kate Unsworth, the founding principal at the Christleton International Studio based in Cheshire, which has taken steps to reduce teacher workload, including a no-homework policy, said teacher pay should not be linked to pupil outcomes because data was "exceptionally unstable".

Teachers could be "punished or rewarded for results beyond their control", she said.

DfE pledges get mixed response from trusts

Some academy trusts have given a mixed response to the recommendations.

Jon Coles, chief executive of United Learning, agreed it was "not sensible" to use teacher-generated data for appraisals. However, he said trying to please the DfE or Ofsted could increase workload, and he would pay no more or less attention to the report than to any other debate on the issue.

The Kemnal Academies Trust is moving to a common data platform to automatically input data from all schools.

And Oasis Community Learning has recently set up a working group to investigate its pay and appraisals, "although data underpins how we set our priorities", a spokesperson said.

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, said: "I want to make sure teachers are teaching, not putting data into spreadsheets."

He also sent a letter to schools outlining his workload commitments, which was co-signed by the heads of other sector bodies, including Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector.

The DfE's 7 pledges to tackle teacher workload

The government has responded to a report from the workload advisory group about how to support teachers, trustees, governors and local authorities to cut workload in schools.

Called Making data work, and led by Becky Allen, a UCL professor of education, the report focuses on how data collection could be simpler. It comes after research commissioned by the Department for Education last year found 75 per cent of former teachers surveyed said workload was the reason they left the profession.

Schools Week has rounded-up the key recommendations, which have been accepted in full by ministers.

1 Fewer regular data drops for local authorities and government

The DfE has pledged never to ask schools for attainment data – except national test data – unless they are failing or at risk of failure. The pledge has been added to its “principles for a clear and simple accountability system”.

The report also recommended the government tell academy trusts and local authorities not to expect regular data drops, but the DfE has promised only to “communicate this expectation to local authorities” and did not mention trusts. However a spokesperson confirmed that trusts were included.

The government plans to create a “Send data to the DfE” service that would automatically update data from school management information systems.

2 Research into whether schools need a ‘data collection tool’

The DfE will research whether schools might benefit from “a tool or checklist on effective data use” between now and spring next year. The report said the government should find out whether this would be helpful.

If a need is found, the DfE will commission experts to produce the tool and publish it in the workload reduction toolkit next year.

3 New guidance on logging pupil behaviour

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, has promised new guidance in the kit about logging pupil behaviour.

The report warned against “burdensome” processes for logging incidents, such as teachers having to write extensive descriptions or select from a long list of unmemorable behaviour codes.

Instead, there should be straightforward data entry using simple codes. This should take place during the school day, not during teachers’ lunch or break times.

4 Trustees and local authorities not to use predictions data to hold schools to account

The government has promised to commission research into the impact of target-setting in

schools, following the report’s warning that targets and predictions put extra burden on staff.

The DfE will also tell trusts and LAs they “shouldn’t request target and predictions data to hold schools to account”. If this is required, the school should not have to change the data into a new format.

Hinds has pledged that schools should not have to repackage their own data reports at any time.

5 New research on the impact of reporting pupil premium

The DfE should speak to schools about the burden of current reporting requirements for pupil premium, and primary PE and sport premium spend, the report said.

“We recognise the need to ensure reporting is proportionate and does not involve unnecessary burdens on schools.”

The government has also promised to look at the current reporting requirements this term, and will publish actions to tackle any problems in spring next year.

6 Performance management guidance to be updated so teachers aren’t judged solely on data

The government agreed to update its performance management guidance for maintained schools and local authorities to reflect that teachers shouldn’t be judged on data for a single group of pupils. A DfE spokesperson said this guidance also applied to academies and local authority schools.

The government accepted too the recommendation that staff should not be judged on “teacher-generated” attainment or progress data, because this could be particularly unreliable.

However, the department added a caveat in its response, arguing that “strengthening the link between performance and pay is fundamental, so high-performing teachers are rewarded properly”.

7 New governance training on workload

The DfE has promised to include “myth-busting” messages for governors in the workload toolkit and the governance handbook, to undo misconceptions of what is required by the DfE or Ofsted around data collection.

It is also designing a “new governance training offer” with a focus on reducing teacher workload, and will make sure all governors get this training.



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News: Academies

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Revealed: How academies spent their money last year

The Department for Education has published its annual academies report, covering the 2016-17 year. It's the second year the consolidated accounts – which provide a round-up of spending in the academy sector – have been published. Here's what we found:

1 Slight rise in trusts paying staff over £100,000

Plans to name the bosses paid more than £150,000 have been slightly watered down to the names of trusts paying staff above certain thresholds. The number paying at least one person £100,000 or more has gone up from 873 (29.3 per cent of trusts) in 2015-16, to 941 (30.1 per cent) in 2016-17, while trusts paying staff £150,000 or more hasn't changed much – from 121 in 2015-16 (4.1 per cent) to 125 (4 per cent).

It comes as Lord Agnew, the academies minister, gets tough on chief executive pay, asking the highest-paying trusts to justify their bosses' salaries.



2 Related-party transaction spending rises 10 per cent to nearly £135 million

The government is also cracking down on related-party transactions (RPT) – when an academy trust pays a firm for services that has links to its employees. From April, trusts will now have to get all such transactions signed off by the government.

The accounts show while the number of RPTs has decreased, their value has risen.

Trusts paid £134 million on RPTs in 2016-17, up from £122 million in 2015-16 (a rise of nearly 10 per cent).

A total of 62 transactions – totalling £79 million – were for more than £250,000.



3 Academies march into multi-academy trusts

The number of academies increased by a fifth between July 31, 2016, and July 31 last year.

A total of 1,230 new academies opened, of which most (965) were primaries.

More are joining multi-academy trusts: 84 per cent of primary academies were in MATs in 2016-17, compared with just three-quarters in the previous year. The rise was higher in secondaries – up to 61 per cent in 2016-17 from 48 per cent the year before.

This isn't surprising, as MATs can help to deliver savings through economies of scale, something the government is keen to point out (as funding gets tighter).

The number of trusts with six to ten schools rose from 110 to 175. The number with 11 to 20 schools – which Agnew once called the "sweet spot" for MAT size – rose from 31 to 48.



4 The poor get poorer, the rich get richer

The number of trusts that posted a deficit in 2016-17 rose to 185 (5.9 per cent), up from 167 (5.6 per cent).

The cumulative deficits of trusts totalled £65 million, up from £50 million in 2015-16*.

But, interestingly, the cumulative surplus of cash held by trusts rose, up from £2.2 billion to £2.4 billion.

* Nerd box: the figures relate to revenue deficit – the net income compared to projected net income.



5 Sponsor quality still top of risk list

The government said that maintaining a sufficient number of high-quality sponsors was still one of the biggest risks to the academy system.

Other dangers included communicating "what it means" to be an academy to the wider schools sector. Sir David Carter, the former national schools commissioner, recently told Schools Week that trusts could send annual reports to parents as part of their communications strategy.

Another big risk was "excellent school resource management", which explains why the government is spending £2.3 million on recruiting moneysaving experts to help struggling academies as funding is squeezed.



6 RSC key performance indicators reveal huge regional differences

The regional school commissioners' key performance indicators were published as an annexe alongside the report*.

Vicky Beer, the RSC for Lancashire and West Yorkshire, had 31 academies (5 per cent) rated Ofsted "inadequate" within first three years of opening.

At the other end of the scale, the North West London and South Central region (Martin Post), alongside the South West (Rebecca Clark then Lisa Mannall) both had only 2 per cent of their academies (19) rated Ofsted "inadequate" within first three years of opening.

In Post's region, almost one third of academies were not yet in a MAT. Meanwhile, in the East of England and North East London area, headed by Tim Coulson at the time, 84 per cent were in MATs.

*Fear not – our annual RSC league tables are being put together as you read, they'll be in next week's edition.



News: Academies

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Trust told to tighten up checks on 'off-payroll' payments

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

INVESTIGATES

A trust has been rapped by the government for failing to deduct tax or national insurance on off-payroll payments to its chief executive, in a case thought to be the first since rules were tightened.

An Education and Skills Funding Agency investigation published this week revealed that Education for the 21st Century trust failed to make the deductions on payments totalling £145,006 to a firm owned by chief executive Paul Murphy.

The payments, for his services as CEO, ran from 2014 and were paid on top of Murphy's salary as a headteacher. The transactions were not declared in the trust's 2015-16 accounts.

A worker is paid "off-payroll" when they work through an intermediary, such as their own limited company, rather than providing their services directly and being counted as an employee.

HM Revenue and Customs' rules stress that senior staff should generally be on the payroll, unless there are "exceptional temporary circumstances".

The legislation was strengthened in April 2017 to make it the responsibility of the client or employer, not the contractor, to determine whether they are paid off-payroll and to ensure they are making the

right income tax and national insurance contributions.

Education for the 21st Century trust is believed to be the first that has fallen foul of the tightened rules. It has also been issued a financial notice to improve.

But new government figures show off-payroll arrangements continue to be widely used. A total of 144 academy trusts paid some staff off-payroll in 2016-17. Ten trusts also remunerate their trustees in this way.

Adrian Hulme, senior consultant at BHP Chartered Accountants, said it is a trust's legal obligation to check the employment status of anyone they are paying off-payroll, whether they are self-employed, operating through a limited company or an agency.

He said trusts need to make judgements according to "each individual contract", with off-payroll arrangements tending to be with "specialists working on certain projects".

"Ask yourself, is their work the same as other employees? In the staffroom, can you tell any difference between them and a member of staff on the payroll?" Hulme added.

Trusts can also use HMRC's online "check employment status for tax" service as a guide and should keep a hard copy of the results. If they have any doubts they should check with their professional advisors, he said.

Other trusts have also been caught out over improper off-payroll arrangements.

Last month Liam Nolan, former chief executive of the Perry Beeches trust, was found guilty of unacceptable professional conduct after an ESFA investigation revealed that he was paid £160,000 over two years on top of his £120,000 headteacher salary.

The payment was for his services as CEO, a role subcontracted via Nexus Schools Limited and Liam Nolan Limited, a private company of which he was the sole director.

However, despite the potential for exploitation, off-payroll arrangements are not problematic in and of themselves.

In setting up the Floreat Education Trust for example, Lord James O'Shaughnessy was paid £61,734 through his company Mayforth Consulting Limited.

A spokesperson for Floreat said the payment was "a fair and reasonable sum for the work he carried out" between 2013 to 2015.

"All arrangements were approved by the board, disclosed in the annual accounts, and were in line with the trust's governance and financial regulations."

The arrangement ran for two years, but this was while the trust was still being established.

A Department for Education spokesperson said they will intervene when trusts flout the rules.

JOHN DICKENS | @JOHNDICKENSSW

Trusts that missed financial deadlines named

The government has named 88 academy trusts that have failed to file financial information on time.

While the 88 make up just 3 per cent of trusts in the country, the government said the naming and shaming was part of a "firmer stand" on non-compliance.

Eileen Milner, the chief executive of the education and skills funding agency, said late financial returns had a "detrimental impact" on the accuracy of the government's finance reporting to

parliament, and on its ability to provide timely support to trusts in financial difficulties.

Trusts have to file an accounts return, a financial statement and two budget forecasts over a year.

Teddington School was the only trust to miss all four deadlines. The single academy trust, based in Richmond-upon-Thames, London, was given a financial notice to improve in September.

The notice revealed the trust had been

given an "unprecedented" timeframe of up to seven years to repay a government bailout over its "weak financial position".

Lord Agnew, the academies minister, said the move to name trusts made sure that increased autonomy was supported with increased transparency.

He said the financial returns helped the government to see if the financial health of academies was robust and that they continued "to be more transparent in their reporting than local authority schools".

News: Faith schools

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Sikh school claims DfE gives it 'little choice' in its future

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

A local Sikh community has called on the education secretary to intervene in the case of a faith school it fears is being pushed into joining a trust that it claims does not reflect its beliefs.

The case reveals how minority-faith-based academies do not have the same government support in academisation as other faiths.

The local community of Coventry all-through free school the Seva School has come together with national Sikh organisations to request that education secretary Damian Hinds meets parents to address concerns about the school joining the Nishkam School Trust.

Seva School, which has been in special measures since September 2016, is run by the Sevak Education Trust, but needs to be rebrokered to a new sponsor.

Local groups claim the DfE is pushing the Nishkam School Trust as its preferred

choice, even though parents favour the Khalsa Academies Trust.

While Nishkam is registered as having a Sikh religious character, parents from Seva have argued that the trust operates a "self-created multi-faith ethos model" and does not offer a mainstream Sikh education.

A spokesman for the Nishkam School Trust rubbished the claim, adding it is "mainstream Sikh-faith trust".

While the Catholic Church and the Church of England have formal "memoranda of understanding" drawn up with the Department for Education to safeguard the religious values of their schools during the academisation process, the government only works with minority-faith groups on an informal, individual basis.

Over 750 individuals have now written letters to MPs rejecting the transfer.

The Sikh Council of Gurdwaras Coventry also claimed the situation would not be the same for a Catholic School, saying "the Department for Education should not assume that one size fits all for the Sikh

community".

Seva's trustees claimed they have had "little choice" in the future of the school, and suggested that resistance to joining Nishkam had delayed Seva being given government approval to acquire a "desperately needed" new school building.

Lord Singh, director of the Network of Sikh Organisations, which has worked with Seva School over a number of years, described the DfE's approach to rebrokerage the school as "unacceptable".

To claim that Seva and Nishkam "share the same ethos" arises from "ignorance" and "arrogance" he added.

However a spokesman for the Nishkam School Trust said claims made against it "are simply incorrect".

The trust is "a mainstream Sikh-faith trust" and "a successful and approved academy sponsor with a widely recognised track record of success and a capacity to grow," he said.

A DfE spokesperson said the rebrokerage will ensure pupils get the "best possible education".

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£2.4M ON RESEARCH IS MONEY WELL SPENT, SAYS OFSTED

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

Ofsted's increased focus and spending on research is "more important" as the inspectorate faces cost pressures, its head of research has said.

Professor Daniel Muijs (pictured) has defended the inspectorate's plans to shell out £2.4 million on research over the next two years.

It comes as senior staff have been at pains to point out the inspectorate is "at the limit" of what it can do with current resources.

By 2019-20, its budget will have reduced 38 per cent since the start of the decade.

But Muijs, a respected academic hired by chief inspector Amanda Spielman in January to preside over Ofsted's beefed-up research programme, described the additional spending as an "investment that will allow us to do our core business better".

"When you are working in a resource-constrained environment, as obviously we are, in many cases it becomes even more important to do what you do as well as possible," he told *Schools Week*.

"For us, that obviously means that we do things that are well-evidenced and well-supported. That is one of the reasons we invest in research - so that we are not using limited resources to look at the wrong kind of things."

One of Muijs's main tasks has been overseeing the organisation's large-scale research on the



curriculum, which will feed into the watchdog's broader focus on the "quality of education" in its new inspection framework.

But the research has come under fire. Last month, Ofsted rejected claims it favoured "knowledge-rich" schools popular with ministers after it was revealed only a small group of the 23 schools studied had a "skills-led" curriculum.

The inspectorate was also criticised after it emerged the schools had been chosen based on inspection reports, advice from its curriculum advisory group and news stories.

Ofsted said the study was qualitative research that was never intended to be a representative sample.

Muijs said the inspectorate would publish full methodologies for all its reports from now on.

When asked about the scrutiny, he said: "All public sector organisations should be open to scrutiny and open to questioning; as such I don't think it's unfair that we're under that kind of spotlight."

The organisation was also criticised last November for its presentation of *Bold Beginnings*, a report into how reading, writing and maths are taught to pupils in reception.

Muijs "fully stands behind what came out of the report", but said lessons had been learned about presentation.

"We could have communicated that better than we did," he said.

Muijs also wants to make research more accessible to classroom teachers. Many were excluded from "positive developments" like ResearchEd and the government's research school programme, and work by the Chartered College of Teaching, Teacher Development Trust and Education Endowment Foundation, because so much CPD was run outside school time.

"Ideally I would say that teachers should be given more time to engage in those kinds of activities and to take part in research as part of their professional development.

"I would like to see that built into teachers' working life more systematically, because you shouldn't be asking people to give up their weekends and evenings to do that in a job that is already pressurised in terms of workload."

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Progs vs trads debate is 'too polarised'

Debate over pedagogy has become "too polarised" and fighting between traditionalists and progressives on social media "quite unhelpful", Ofsted's research chief has said.

Professor Daniel Muijs told *Schools Week* the "trads-vs-progs" debate had become a "simplification of the evidence around teaching, around pedagogy, to say that it is one or the other".

"In general teachers need a repertoire of strategies . . . depending on where they are in the progression of teaching a particular topic in the curriculum.

"They may need a more expository method,



more direct instruction to start with and, once kids have gained more expertise in an area, they might need to move on to a more inquiry-

based approach. I think the polarisation can slightly misrepresent what you actually find."

Muijs also warned debate in this area had become a situation "where people don't actually listen to each other".

"Those kinds of debates often go on for many days, but nobody's mind is ever changed. You can sometimes question, what is the point of that?"

"People are also more entrenched in their positions. The style of debate on social media with 280 characters, it's hard to put a lot of subtlety in your arguments. Sometimes it exacerbates the style of debate."

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News: Private schools

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Private school inspection costs rise 12%

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

EXCLUSIVE

The main inspectorate for private schools has hiked its fees by 12 per cent after operating at a loss for the past two years.

The Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI), which inspects about 1,000 larger private schools, posted an operating loss of £441,000 last year, following a £498,000 loss in 2016. The losses have contributed to its reserves plunging from £2.3 million four years ago to just £236,000 last year.

Disclosure of the financial troubles comes as Amanda Spielman (pictured), the chief inspector, this week asked the government for more powers to check on private school inspections.

The ISI's accounts, filed in September, said that the high cost of the independent inquiry into child sexual abuse, which examined institutions including schools, and having to write off money for a cancelled technology project contributed to the loss.

Despite describing these as "one-offs", the ISI has hiked inspection and introduced a "cost reduction programme".

A spokesperson said the inspectorate was "very conscious of the pressure on school finances and we continue to manage our costs tightly", adding that it invested in high-quality training for inspectors.

Spielman this week revealed irregularities



in some reports by the ISI, which inspects schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council.

Each year Ofsted is commissioned by the government to report on inspections by the ISI and the Schools Inspection Service (SIS), which inspects smaller private schools such as Steiner schools.

In a letter to Damian Hinds, the education secretary, Spielman said her team's work was "seriously hampered" by his department only commissioning 17 reviews out of 459 ISI inspections carried out this year. No on-site monitoring of inspections was commissioned.

Most of the reports were good, but four "lacked sufficient precision", Spielman said.

Two reports did not make clear what

leaders should do to improve, and the recommendations in two others did not focus on resolving a weakness identified elsewhere.

"It is not clear how the recommendations will lead to an improvement in the school's provision," she said.

Meanwhile, only six reports of 17 SIS inspections were commissioned last year, and two on-site inspections were monitored.

Again two reports did not contain recommendations addressing weaknesses outlined elsewhere, leaving leaders unclear how to improve.

And in two reports judgments were not supported by the inspector's commentary – including one school that got a "good".

Spielman said: "It is not clear in these cases how inspectors have arrived at their judgments."

She has demanded that Ofsted carry out more "unannounced on-site monitoring visits" and termly safeguarding checks.

Private school inspectorates should also provide inspection management information to Ofsted every six months, she said.

However a DfE spokesperson said that in 2015 Ofsted had asked for a reduced role in monitoring private school inspectorates, adding the watchdog "still plays an important role in maintaining the high standards we expect in independent schools".

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ

DfE finally takes action against failing private school

The government is finally taking action against a private school that has failed to meet independent school standards on eight different inspections.

Rabia Boys and Girls School, an independent Islamic school in Luton that charges annual fees from £1,950 to £2,300, has also been graded "inadequate" in four full Ofsted inspections. That's the most failed inspections of any private school in the country.

The school's improvement action plan was deemed inadequate and the school is now

forbidden from taking more pupils.

The Department for Education started enforcement action this August, but Rabia is appealing the action and the government has confirmed the school is not facing closure.

The department closed the Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley in Hertfordshire, despite it failing standards fewer times than Rabia school.

Two years ago, Sir Michael Wilshaw, the former chief inspector, wrote to Nicky Morgan, the then-education secretary, urging action against the Rabia school.

A *Schools Week* investigation last month revealed that the government had shut just two of the 10 worst offending private schools for failing repeated school standard inspections.

According to government guidance, enforcement action includes forbidding new pupils or closing a building, as well as full closure. A school is more likely to close where it "has failed to meet the standards for a sustained period".

Rabia did not respond to a request for comment.

News: UTCs

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Year 10 numbers dip in UTCs – and that’s official

JUDE BURKE

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EXCLUSIVE

The organisation behind the university technical college programme has claimed the number of 14-year-olds studying at the institutions is on the up – although its own figures show a different picture.

A spokesperson for the Baker Dearing Educational Trust told our sister title, FE Week, that year 10 recruitment at the 14 to 19 institutions had grown 40 per cent over the past two years, which “suggests students are interested in this form of education at a younger age”.

“This doesn’t suggest that the programme is struggling. Quite the opposite.”

But when pressed by FE Week, she admitted that this was the overall number of learners – which is likely to have gone up as more UTCs have opened

– rather than an increase in each UTC.

Further analysis revealed that the average intake of 14-year-olds at each UTC has fallen this year.

The trust’s unpublished enrolment figures for 2018-19 reveal that each institution has an average of 82 year 10s, down from the 85 in 2017-18, as shown in school census data published by the Department for Education.

The spokesperson was responding to FE Week’s request for a comment on its analysis of learner numbers at established UTCs.

FE Week looked at the DfE’s school census data for the 33 UTCs to have opened in 2015 or earlier, and compared figures for 2017-18 with 2016-17.

There was a year-on-year drop in 19 colleges, with two-thirds of the 33 operating at less than half capacity.

Both UTC Plymouth and Sir Charles Kao UTC, now rebranded as the BMAT STEM Academy, had a more than 50 per

cent drop.

Sir Charles Kao UTC, which opened in 2014, had the lowest enrolment of any UTC in 2017-18, with just 59 learners – down from 143 the previous year, a fall of 59 per cent.

Helena Mills, the chief executive of the Burnt Mill Academy Trust, which the UTC joined earlier this year, said the low numbers were due to a trust and DfE decision to halt recruitment of year 10 and year 12 students last year “because the future of Sir Charles Kao UTC was uncertain”.

Numbers at UTC Plymouth, which opened in 2013, fell by 52 per cent year-on-year, from 153 in 2016-17 to 73 the following year.

A spokesperson for the school attributed this fall to the school’s decision to not take on any 14-year-olds last year.

Both schools expect pupil numbers to grow in the future.

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News: Computing

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£84m centre would have 'greater impact' in primary schools

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

The new £84 million National Centre for Computing Education should focus on upskilling primary rather than secondary teachers, sector experts have said.

The British Computer Society, which designed the new computer science curriculum, the Raspberry Pi Foundation, and STEM Learning will run the new centre, the government announced at its launch on Wednesday.

In the budget last year, Philip Hammond, the chancellor, announced £84 million for a centre to upskill 8,000 existing computer science secondary teachers.

But Bob Harrison, who chaired a 2013 advisory group to the Department for Education on computing, said it was "a lot of money" merely intended to boost entry rates to computer science GCSE.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, has come under pressure to improve entry rates to the new coding-focused qualification after he scrapped the ICT GCSE three years ago, yet uptake remains



slow.

New figures show the proportion of pupils who left school last year with a qualification in a computing subject dropped by 17 per cent.

The government is focusing support on secondary teachers "just so they can say down the line the exam numbers have gone up" Harrison said.

The focus should be on primary schools where teachers often lacked confidence about computing and where the impact on pupils would be greater.

The centre would start working with schools later this year, the government said.

It would operate virtually through a network of up to 40 school-led computing hubs with an intensive training programme for secondary

teachers without a post A-level qualification in computer science.

Tony Parkin, an education technologist, said he would have liked "a geographical home people could relate to", rather than just a website.

However, he added it was good to see the British Computer Society (BCS) had recognised the need for "new thinking" around computing by working with two other firms.

Computing At School (CAS) – which is part of BCS – had a contract to train 400 computing master teachers to help to roll out the computing curriculum. However, it hit the target three years late.

The new centre is also supported by a £1 million grant from Google, which has already been given to BCS and the Raspberry Pi Foundation to train computing teachers.

The firms will also be supported by the University of Cambridge, the Behavioural Insights Team, and FutureLearn, which are listed as subcontractors.

Gibb said the new national centre "will give teachers the subject knowledge and support they need to teach pupils the new computing curriculum".

ALIX ROBERTSON | @ALIXROBERTSON4

Ofqual wants exam-only computer science GCSE

Computing experts have questioned the future of the subject in schools after Ofqual launched a consultation on plans to remove coursework from the computer science GCSE.

The exams regulator admitted it no longer believed that it was possible to use non-exam assessment (NEA) to assess programming skills in a way that was "manageable, reliable and fair".

The 20-hour supervised coursework element of computer science still exists, but was removed from counting towards grades in 2019 and 2020 after tasks were leaked online and downloaded "thousands of times".

In a consultation that runs until December 3, Ofqual now proposes that GCSE computer science become a permanent exam-only subject. The changes would come into effect for pupils starting their courses in 2020 and sitting exams in 2022.

But Leon Brown, a software developer, said that exams were "a useless way to assess people's programming skills".

"There can be many ways to solve one problem with code - a written exam introduces human bias from the examiner to mark valid code as



incorrect," he told *Schools Week*.

In practice, programmers often spent time researching the best way to tackle a problem online, Brown said, and pupils needed to learn how to adapt their knowledge for different problems rather than memorising particular code patterns ahead of a test.

"It would be more beneficial to have an informal interview to discuss a student's understanding of programming concepts," he said.

However, Miles Berry, a principal lecturer in computing education at Roehampton University, said the current situation was "literally pointless" and that Ofqual's suggestion was "undoubtedly a

change for the better".

"That said, I'm disappointed that Ofqual's proposals offer little scope for assessing programming as a creative discipline: if open-ended project work is robust enough for A-level and degree work, why not GCSE?"

Drew Buddie, a computer science teacher and former chair of Naace, the education technology association, described the format of the existing GCSE as "irreparable" and in need of "a root and branch re-evaluation".

If the government wanted to pursue an exam-only route it should reconsider the iGCSE, which it previously ruled out of counting towards schools' Progress 8 scores.

The computer science iGCSE had no coursework and was widely favoured by private schools, he said, as it avoided the "box-ticking" exercise of the NEA, which was a "massive disadvantage to children in state schools".

Sally Collier, the chief regulator at Ofqual, said she wanted to "encourage innovation" under the new proposals, which included giving exam boards discretion over the form of exam assessment they offered.

News

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Older teachers have still got what it takes, says report

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
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The age of teachers has no "noticeable effect" on pupil performance, but schools need more support and clearer guidance to support an age-diverse workforce, suggests a new report into the effectiveness of older teachers.

The long-awaited report into teachers working longer was published today, four years after it was commissioned and more than two years after it was supposed to be released.

It suggests that although reduced energy levels and increased physical limitations, coupled with workload pressures, could make teaching more difficult for older teachers, the key cognitive skills needed for the job did not deteriorate significantly before the age of 70.

"Evidence clearly shows that age is no barrier to a teacher's ability to provide effective outcomes for children and young people," it said.

"In particular, it shows that the cognitive abilities needed to teach effectively do not typically diminish until individuals are at least into their seventies, and that there is no negative link between the age of teachers and educational outcomes.

"In other words, good teachers are good teachers, irrespective of their age."

The review also found evidence that older teachers "add to the overall educational environment through extending the range of experiences, perspectives and knowledge that students can draw upon".

As of November 2017, there were 9,700 teachers and leaders aged 60 or more in state-funded English schools, equivalent to about 2.1 per cent of the teaching workforce.

In 2012, there were 11,000 teachers aged 60 or more, equivalent to 2.4 per cent of the workforce.

This week's report called for "greater recognition and celebration" of older teachers as an important part of the workforce. "Consistent and effective" support for teachers' physical, mental and emotional health needs and wellbeing was also needed.

The review also found that managers in



schools needed more support to manage an age-diverse workforce. Guidance and training packages should be available, while supporting flexible working and career planning were all "normal parts of career and workforce management".

The report also urges Teachers' Pensions, the group in charge of the teachers' pension scheme (TPS), to improve its online services and consider the best ways of communicating with teachers and managers. This follows a finding that "many teachers and their managers do not understand the TPS provisions, particularly in relation to ill health or phased retirement.

"There is even some confusion about what their own retirement age is in some cases," the report said.

The review was commissioned by Nicky Morgan, the then education secretary, in October 2014. An interim report was

supposed to be published in February 2016. Board minutes show the initial report was finalised the following month, but it waited almost a year for ministerial sign-off.

The interim report was finally released in March 2017, but called for more time to gather evidence.

Chris Keates, general secretary of the NASUWT union, said the review was supposed to be published in October 2016, "so that its conclusions influenced the government's decision as to whether to maintain the link between the state pension age and the teachers' normal pension age.

"The review has over-run by two years and it has therefore not contributed to the government's review of the future of the pension age, which took place in 2017. The final report is silent on the issue of an unacceptable and unrealistic teachers' current pension age."

THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS

The working longer review was commissioned in the autumn of 2014. Its steering group, made up of unions, academy leaders and government officials, met for the first time on October 23 in that year.

At the time, Nicky Morgan had been education secretary for just three months, David Cameron was prime minister, Ed Miliband led the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats were still in government. Meghan Trainor's (pictured) *All About That Bass* was at No 1 in the UK charts and the iPhone 6 had just been released.

Just 4,000 schools in England were academies, a figure that has almost doubled. Sir Michael Wilshaw was the chief inspector of schools and Frank Green was the national schools commissioner.

Schools Week had been in production for a matter of weeks.

The newspaper's big stories at the time included a call from Morgan for Labour to stop criticising free schools and a demand from the government for teachers to identify "pointless processes and paperwork".



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BRITISH EDUCATIONAL
SUPPLIERS ASSOCIATION

Superhead Liam Nolan banned from teaching

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

The former “superhead” of the Perry Beeches Academy Trust has been banned from teaching after a Teacher Regulation Agency panel found him guilty of misconduct.

It ruled that Liam Nolan (pictured) had a “cavalier attitude” to the responsibilities of being an academy trust leader.

An earlier government investigation found the Birmingham-based trust had paid almost £1.3 million to a private firm – Nexus Schools – without a contract or adequate tendering

Nolan had drawn a second salary of £160,000 over two years, paid through Nexus, on top of his £120,000 headteacher salary.

In a ruling on Monday, Nolan – once lauded by Michael Gove and David Cameron – was banned from teaching indefinitely. However, he is allowed to apply for the prohibition to be set aside in two years.

The panel’s report said that Nolan had a “cavalier attitude to his role as accounting officer, which the panel found involved a lack of integrity on his part”.

It also said that although he apologised for some of his failings as accounting officer, there



did not seem to be “sufficient insight into the seriousness of those failings or his responsibility in that post.

“In particular, the panel was concerned that Nolan blamed the trustees, accountants and others for the remuneration arrangements that are at the heart of this case.”

Nolan breached academy funding rules with his dual role, the panel said, because he failed to find out if the pay arrangement met his tax obligations and because there were no “exceptional

temporary circumstances” that justified payment outside payroll.

It also found that Nolan failed to ensure the payments were disclosed in his trust’s 2013-14 financial statements, failed to disclose the conflict of interest around his dual role in an annual declaration of business interests and failed to ensure the trust had a written contract with Nexus or ran a tender for the deal.

The panel concluded that Nolan’s actions were “lacking in integrity” because he signed the 2013-14 accounts and annual declaration, despite the omissions. However, it ruled he did not act “dishonestly”.

The panel did accept that Nolan had made a “significant contribution to the profession”. However, it said it could not regard Nolan as having a previously good record because of a reprimand from the General Teaching Council following a criminal conviction for outraging public decency in 2007.

Some of the schools he led had “outstanding” Ofsted inspections, a factor the panel considered before deciding he could appeal the ban after two years.

The two-year period would allow him to “reflect on his failings and gain appropriate insight”, the panel said.

JOHN DICKENS | @JOHNDICKENSSW

Private firm took 8% fee for Nolan’s second salary

The firm that was paid £1.3 million to provide services to Perry Beeches Academy Trust took an 8 per cent management fee to pay the trust’s chief executive a second salary.

Liam Nolan was banned from teaching this week over his role in the trust paying the £1.3 million to Nexus Schools without a contract or adequate tendering.

The private firm then paid a second salary to Nolan of £160,000 over two years, on top of his £120,000 headteacher salary.

The Teacher Regulation Agency panel report, published on Monday, revealed new details about the case – including that Nexus took an 8 per cent cut as a “management fee” for Nolan’s second salary.

The report said that invoices submitted by Nexus in 2015 for Nolan’s executive services included the management fee, which was not charged in relation to other services.

However, this fee was not charged on earlier invoices, which the report said “called into question the basis on which this charge was



made”.

The report also revealed that Nexus provided services, including accountancy, payroll and HR support, for the Perry Beeches schools before they became academies – and did so without a written contract.

The finding raises questions about the level of oversight provided by Birmingham City Council at the time. The council did not respond to a request for comment.

Nolan has argued that his pay arrangements were “transparent and everybody knew about them”. Some trustees did, but other senior staff did not, a government investigation found.

Nexus’ invoices also did not refer to Liam Nolan Limited, the company Nolan’s second salary was paid into.

The panel also saw an unsigned document, dated April 2013 and headed “private and confidential: for members’ eyes only”.

It said that Liam Nolan Limited would apply to Making Learning Work to subcontract the chief executive role and “suggest its employee”, Liam Nolan, “be the CEO”.

Nolan said this was prepared by the chair of governors at the time, Nicola Harris. She was also a director of Making Learning Work, alongside Robert Llewellyn.

The latter is also a director of Nexus Schools. Llewellyn did not respond to a request for comment.

According to Companies House, the firm is under notice to be dissolved. The latest accounts, filed in December last year, show there was £111,867 in shareholders’ funds.

Perry Beeches’ five schools have been rebrokered to other trusts.

EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Ofsted, time for some real evidence on funding cuts

Amanda Spielman has been rightly lauded for her insistence that Ofsted will follow the research.

She said there is no evidence to show the quality of education in schools is being affected by funding cuts, and she's stayed firm on that - despite pressure from MPs to do otherwise.

That makes her intervention last week to declare that among 16-to-18 institutions there is evidence funding cuts are affecting the quality of learning all the more important.

So what was this serious body of evidence that swayed the chief inspector?

Well, it turns out, just a couple of lines mentioning budget reductions in three different college inspection reports.

Was Spielman just playing politics? Either way, it puts her in an awkward position on schools - as our investigation today reveals, inspectors have been highlighting similar concerns in the sector.

But Ofsted has pledged to research this properly. We look forward to seeing what the evidence really does show.

Teachers can't be police officers too

Schools so often sit at the very heart of the communities they serve, so it is perhaps understandable that in times of crisis we turn to them for help.

The tragic events of the last week that left three teenagers and two adults dead in our capital serve as yet another reminder that we must act, once and for all, to tackle the scourge of knife crime and bring the number of deaths on our streets to zero.

Schools have a big role to play in helping to keep youngsters away from crime, but they cannot police their communities. Savage cuts to police forces across England have left our teachers, support staff and leaders having to pick up the pieces, often placing themselves at risk to help the young people in their care.

More funding is needed for all of our public services, so that police can focus on keeping our children safe while schools concentrate on improving their lives through education

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The school leading on job shares from the top

Frank Wise school

CATH MURRAY
@CATHMURRAY_

"Why did you leave, and why are you coming back?" Simon Knight fizzles with delight as he tells the story of how he and Heidi Dennison were grilled by the student council during their interview for the joint headship of Frank Wise School.

"We had about 35, 40 minutes with the pupils interviewing us. The two best questions, certainly from my mind, were one student asking us collectively whether or not we ever argued, which is really important from a joint headship point of view, as if there's some sort of marriage. But the other one was brilliant, because obviously I worked here previously - one of the students, she just looked me straight in the eye and said, 'Why did you leave, and why are you coming back?' I just thought that was superb. That is a brilliant question."

Pitching the answer at the right level was a challenge, recalls Knight. Members of the student council at this special school range from 5 to 19 in age, all with different communicative capabilities. And he had to make sure he was also addressing the governors and teacher representatives.

The answer - by the by - is that he left to gain more experience - and with no intention of coming back. He'd taught at the



Joint headteachers Heidi Dennison and Simon Knight

Banbury special school, which has a long history of top-grade Ofsted judgments, for 18 years - from teenage volunteer to teaching assistant, to trained teacher and all the way up to deputy head.

"When everything ended, it was very much Simon leaving," confirms Knight's co-head Dennison, who has had an almost identical trajectory - at the same school. "We grow our own at Frank Wise," she says, "and

we have to be quite careful that we're not too insular, because it is a very successful school, it's a fabulous place to work."

Guarding against insularity is one reason it's been so great to have Knight go out into the wider world of education, she says. "To have somebody come back and say that this really is special, you are really doing quite a phenomenal job, is very different coming from Simon."

"We know when to scoop the other one up"

Knight spent his two years away, first as director of education for the National Education Trust, and then as director of Whole School SEND, which made him reflect on his own abilities. "In some ways, moving beyond the school and the opportunities that I had, enabled me to realise that maybe I could do the job that I didn't think I could do."



Developing early learning responses in the assessment nursery

The school leading on job shares from the top



A year 11 student on a residential trip to Barcelona

Both Dennison and Knight, however, felt the shoes of their predecessors were too big to step into. "We've both been blessed, and I think in some ways, it's fair to say, cursed by having worked for two extraordinary headteachers," says Knight. "And you kind of look at them and just think, 'I could never do that.' But they both started somewhere.

"You'll see more kids blue-lighted into hospital because the nurse isn't in school"

And when you spend time talking to people about school leadership, you realise that everyone started somewhere, and therefore it's okay maybe not to have all the answers straightaway."

The pair had already established their compatibility working as joint deputy heads for nine years. "We know each other's strengths. We know when to scoop the other one up and support each other in different ways," says Dennison.

So they pitched the idea of a job-share to

the governors, slipping in some research and case studies. To convince them financially, they proposed moving from two deputy heads to one and adjusting the headteacher salaries so the cost to the school was no greater overall. Knight also continues to advise Whole School SEND one day a week, with the school benefiting from



the income that generates.

"The skill sets that are required to be a really effective head, they're actually absolutely extraordinary," adds Knight. "And because this is a school that has been on a long journey of sustained success, I think both of us felt that each of us in isolation wouldn't necessarily be the complete package, but that between us we would have sufficient capabilities and sufficient qualities that we could maintain the momentum."

Dennison gets a bit of a rabbit-in-the-headlights look in her eyes when I use the term "flexible working" to describe what they do, and is careful to flag the children's need for consistency.

"I don't think flexible is something we're very good on, but the part-time is something we would be aiming for. I think



The school leading on job shares from the top



Developing an understanding of cause and effect

our ability to be flexible is somewhat limited by the fact that we do need people to be here to ensure the children are safe, and obviously to be learning."

There is more demand for part-time work than they're able to offer, admits Dennison, who has set the limit at one per class team (one teacher and three classroom support officers), meaning over a quarter of staff are doing job-shares. "It's a careful balance," she explains, "between doing as much as we possibly can for as many people as we possibly can, balanced with the children's need for consistency and to be able to anticipate who is in on different days."

They don't use supply teachers to cover staff absences, as they've found them "potentially more destabilising and stressful" – both for the kids as well as the TAs, who know the children and can usually lead

Why should our class staff have to compromise on the amount of work they do in a day, if we don't as well?

lessons "to an exemplary standard," she says, confidently. "It was actually adding layers that were not only financially costly but really ineffective."

This does mean that everyone has to pitch in for cover. "There was a real possibility of me going with one of our classes to the

secondary school today to do PE. Very much not dressed for the occasion," laughs Knight, gesturing to his shirt and trousers. "And I was quite relieved when the school rang up to cancel because it's supposed to be outside and it was pouring down with rain. But it's those sorts of gestures that are really important because why should our class staff have to compromise on the amount of work they do in a day, if we don't as well?"

Frank Wise is feeling the funding squeeze and pupil-to-teacher ratios are creeping up – classes used to be around eight pupils, and they're now generally nine or ten, but they're still only covering their costs. Like mainstream schools, they've been hit by increases in national insurance, pension contributions, unfunded pay rises, the apprenticeship levy and utility inflation. It's complicated, says Knight, because "for us staff isn't just quality of education, it's about safety and dignity as well, because we've got medical and healthcare needs."

The school has also been affected by austerity in wider ways – their previously full-time nurse is now only with them four days a week – a move which might not actually be a cost-saver, suggests Knight.

For example, if a child's having a seizure and the school has used the emergency medication protocol, but things aren't going the way they're expecting, they can't just wait and see, like a trained nurse might. "If things are going wrong we make a 999 call immediately," he explains, "because we can't make clinical decisions. So you'll see more kids blue-lighted into hospital because that nurse isn't in school, and the cost of that nurse being in school is about £40 per pupil, per year."

In such a context, it's not surprising that the pair are glad to share the burden of decision-making.

"Knowing at the end of the day there's two of you that can be held accountable, and are choosing to be accountable," says Knight, "means it's much easier to put those things to bed in a way that I don't think it would have been if it was me on my own."

"The joint headship for me, was the fundamental difference between it being an appealing prospect and something I really wouldn't be interested in taking on. It was that significant a difference," agrees Dennison.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Specialist teachers should be woven into the DNA of your school, not tacked on as a patch, says Jules Daulby

It always strikes when I visit special schools how few interventions outside of the classroom they have.

You may, as a mainstream leader be thinking “well, that’s obvious, the specialisms permeate through the school because, you know, the clue is in the name”.

I’d agree, but let’s think about that for a second. Where are the experts? Sure, the class teacher and attached teaching assistants are experienced, but interlaced through the school are specialists, educational psychologists, speech and language and occupational therapists. Often peripatetic, teachers still know these experts well, see them in and out of lessons and include them as part of staff meetings. Often such support is in the classroom alongside teaching staff, which is key to universal strategies being embedded in every classroom.

For a child with dyslexia or a literacy difficulty in mainstream schools this should be the same and it used to be for children with dyslexia in many mainstream schools. As an NQT in 1997, I often had an advisory specialist teacher in my classroom, taking children out for short periods of time or informing me about the children with dyslexia I taught and what strategies worked best. But get this, the service was free – provided by the local authority. It seems as alien a concept now as university students receiving a free education.

Specialist teachers are now either



JULES DAULBY

Director of education, Driver Youth Trust

How to use specialist teachers most effectively in your school

a traded service through the local authority, bought in by schools privately, or you may even have a full time one who was trained using funding from the Department for Education following the Rose Report of 2009. If you have a specialist teacher, and I recommend it, how might you get more bang for your buck?

teachers is luxury but well worth the investment.

- 3. Is support in small groups or 1:1? One-on-one is the Rolls-Royce service for children with dyslexia. For those who are most severe, including a discrepancy between their literacy skills and oral language, it’s probably the only way to help them. They don’t need

“ They just need phonics, pure and simple

Here are three questions to ask about your specialist teachers:

- 1. Do specialist teachers work with classroom staff? Building capacity in schools is vital; these specialists should be supporting both children and staff. Advice for universal strategies in the classroom should be part of their remit.
- 2. Do any of your staff watch the specialist teacher work? This is free CPD and will allow permanent members of staff – both teachers and TAs – to learn and transfer into their own teaching. Working alongside specialist

self-esteem classes, or inference/comprehension lessons, they just need phonics, pure and simple. But 1:1 is expensive.

Small group work is efficient and can make a difference, but beware of groupings. The most toxic and inefficient group combines a highly articulate child with poor reading and writing skills alongside a child who has poor understanding and expression of oral language with seemingly functional decoding and writing. This combination is doomed to fail, and unlikely to have any positive impact at all. You’ll be wasting everyone’s time and money and the



children would be better in the classroom with their peers.

Finally, where should these specialist teachers fit into your whole-school strategy? Here’s a skeleton plan:

- 1. Universal strategies for your classroom, based on knowing the child and an understanding of how to remove and improve barriers.
- 2. A targeted response outside the classroom, should it be needed. But this must be precise, time-bound and monitored for progress. If results aren’t showing, put them back in the classroom or consult a specialist. Time in class is too important to waste.
- 3. Weaved into your approach, your specialist should be assessing, advising and implementing strategies both in the classroom and in interventions. Don’t forget to review: you want to know what works and why. You need this person to be having an impact across the school, upskilling your teaching staff and closing the gap for children with literacy difficulties. It’s a big job, but you pay them well.

Opinion



RUSSELL HOLLAND

Barrister, Michelmores

What you should do if a pupil at your school seems too old

With media headlines alleging that a “30-year-old” had been spotted in a year 11 class, we asked a lawyer to explain how the age of asylum seekers is determined, and how schools should handle such claims

Recent headlines have alleged that there was an adult seeking to attend school, claiming to be a child. How does the law deal with these issues?

The UK is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. This means that people may make a claim for asylum which, if granted, gives them refugee status. Where a child makes a claim for asylum they have additional rights, including accommodation and associated support from local authorities as a child in need.

Sometimes the first time a child comes in contact with the authorities, is when they are discovered by the police. They can be referred to the Home Office, which has to make a preliminary decision on whether or not they are a child. But what happens if there is a dispute over this?

Social workers must undertake an assessment to determine the age of the young person – who is

entitled to have an appropriate adult present during the process. They will assess factors such as appearance, demeanour, medical factors, any documentation, family history and

an account of their journey to the UK. They will hear evidence from people who know the young person, which may include voluntary sector organisations or a foster carer.

The reality, though, is that if there are no documents, trying to assess age is very difficult. Appearance is unreliable. Moreover, the young person may have had a traumatic experience that has made them mistrustful of authorities. Just because a young person may have inconsistencies in their account of how they came to the UK, it does not follow that they are being dishonest about their age. Young people who have made their way to the UK may well be more mature because they have had to adapt to life in very



difficult circumstances.

Trying to weigh up all these factors is a difficult process but ultimately the local authority has to reach a conclusion. Legally there is no burden of proof and the young

“ Trying to assess age is very difficult ”

person should be given the benefit of the doubt.

If a young person does not agree with the age assessment, they can apply for judicial review to the High Court. This is where a judge is asked to decide whether or not a public authority (in this case the local authority) has acted lawfully. This means they have to have the legal power to make the decision and they must have been reasonable (have sufficient reasons for their decision), rational (have regard to relevant considerations only) and act in a procedurally fair way (in age assessment, this means the young person should have the opportunity to comment on any adverse conclusions).

In traditional judicial reviews if the court considers that a public authority has acted unlawfully then it will often quash the decision, which means that the public authority will need to remake a decision. The point is that the court is usually concerned about how the decision is made, rather than the decision itself. In age assessment cases, however, the Supreme Court decided that the court would have to decide the age of the child. This means that a judge ultimately has to make the decision.

Once the actual age of a child has been determined by a court then public authorities (including schools) would be obliged to accept that child's age as determined. There is specific Department for Education and Home Office guidance on assisting children who are unaccompanied asylum seekers.

Given the legal and policy framework for unaccompanied asylum seekers, hopefully concerns around adults being present in schools should be rare. Where the age of a young person has not been legally determined then schools should seek legal advice. Concerns should be addressed in the first instance to the local authority. However, great care must be taken to ensure that a young person is treated in a fair and sensitive way. Unfortunately the negative publicity generated by headlines can have a tendency to focus on the potential risks rather than consider the legal and policy framework overall.

Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



The Truth about Teaching: An evidence-informed guide for new teachers

Author: Greg Ashman

Published by: SAGE Publishing

Reviewed by: George Duoblys, Director of Science, Bobby Moore Academy

I've been reading the Bible recently, in particular the gospel according to John. One of the most striking things about it is the frequency with which Jesus says: "I am telling you the truth." Over and over again it crops up, whether he's arguing about reincarnation, instructing his followers to eat his flesh and drink his blood, or simply telling them that they must obey his teaching.

To the modern reader, steeped in a culture of scientific scepticism, the need to endlessly assert the truth of such claims quickly arouses suspicion. I had a similar feeling when I picked up Greg Ashman's *The Truth About Teaching*. Fortunately, this book wasn't nearly as messianic as I'd expected.

Evidence-informed

Anyone who's come across Ashman on Twitter or in his blogs will be familiar with his "robust" style of argument. He's a scientist on a mission to debunk myths and expose snake-oil salesmen. For Ashman, evidence takes precedence: the subtitle of his book is "an evidence-informed guide for new teachers".

The notion of evidence in teaching has become such an ideological gavel that you'd be forgiven for rolling your eyes at this point, yet in the very first paragraph of the preface Ashman admits that "teaching cannot claim to be

evidence-based ... Instead, we can hope to be *evidence-informed*". It's a welcome admission that cognitive models and large scale meta-analyses might not tell us *everything* about what goes on in the classroom, and sets the tone for the rest of this detailed and absorbing book.

Routines to reliability

There are a wide range of topics covered here, from classroom management, lesson planning and assessment, to progressivism, the phonics debate and the use of technology in the classroom. There is also a chapter called *The Science of Learning*, which covers some of the ideas with which Ashman made his name, in particular the applications of cognitive load theory in the classroom.

The aim of the book is to give new teachers an insight into what it takes to be successful in the classroom. I'm not sure how much sense I would have made of it as an NQT, but it's undoubtedly a useful resource with which more experienced teachers can coach their junior colleagues.

There are simple strategies and routines here that a surprising number of experienced teachers do not employ: directing questions to specific students; ensuring you stick to the shared language of the school; following through on consequences.

There is advice on how to teach explicitly, which involves breaking down complex thought processes

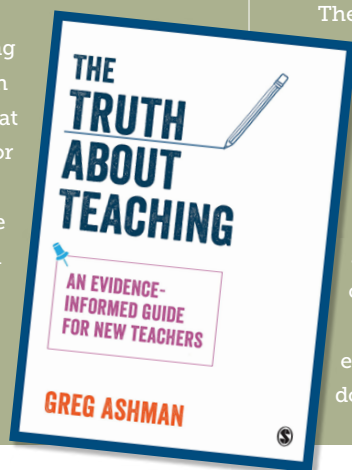
into simpler steps; explaining ideas in detail, often with the use of models; and interacting with the students frequently, typically by asking them lots of questions.

There are relatively clear explanations of tricky concepts too: reliability and validity, and how they relate to assessment; and the working memory/long-term memory model of the brain, which has huge implications for what teachers plan to do in the classroom. For those already familiar with these ideas, I'd recommend reading Daisy Christodoulou and Daniel Willingham instead. Ashman's book, as he makes very clear, offers a broad introduction rather than any in-depth analysis.

Avoiding ideology

As a teacher, I've been working hard to develop my practice in the direction of explicit teaching over the past year, and have found the ideas of Rosenshine in particular (who Ashman refers to frequently) to be a game changer. This book offers a useful overview of many of these ideas; as such, I would not hesitate to recommend it.

Some readers may find Ashman's style grating at times: the history chapters feel very one-sided, and he occasionally treats alternatives to explicit teaching as enemies to be destroyed rather than ideas to be engaged with (constructivism is given especially short shrift). Overall though, this is not the gospel according to Greg, as the title might suggest. It's a well-researched, practically-minded book, which – for the most part – refrains from ideological ranting.



Research

Every month a school from the Research Schools Network – run by the Education Endowment Foundation and Institute for Effective Education – shares a research-based initiative it has implemented

Primary-secondary transition: why drumming workshops won't cut it

Florence Pope, evidence lead, Aspirer Research School, Macclesfield

Transition is big business at our school. Transition events begin with year 5 visiting the school every few weeks for *Crime Scene Investigation* or drum school workshops; key stage 3 students work tirelessly as “transition ambassadors” and open evening is planned meticulously. It's lovely. But sometimes it feels that the relentless focus on pastoral transition is, if not exactly missing the point, certainly missing a trick.

One of the main barriers that makes the journey into secondary education such a bumpy one for some of our new arrivals is literacy. How do they translate the literacy skills that they have learnt in primary into the brave new world of their secondary setting? What can secondary specialists with a plethora of subject knowledge but very little specific literacy training do to ease their journey?

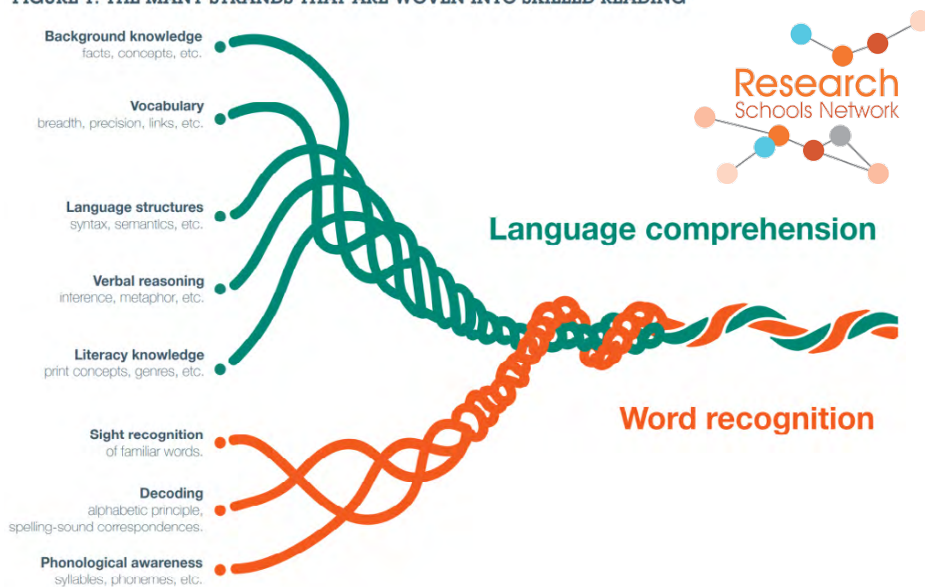
There are significant changes in the literacy demands at key stage 3. Students move from one or two teachers to ten plus. The ILA 2015 report *Disciplinary literacy strategies in content area classes* throws light on why this is such a challenge.

Consider the different literacy requirements a student might encounter in a single day from reading a science text full of lengthy noun phrases and technical vocabulary (“gene replacement therapy”) to encountering a historical source they must interpret economically, politically or socially. In many ways, students are no longer learning to read, but reading to learn.

With so many differing demands, where can we begin? We could do far worse than the guidance provided in the EEF report *Improving literacy in key stage two*. The Scarborough reading rope, as reproduced in section two *Support pupils to develop fluent reading capabilities*, provides an excellent starting point.

Subject specialists can use the top five strands to help identify which areas need addressing in their subject. Below are two examples of how we can then use this research – and the corresponding advice given in the guidance report – to ease transition.

FIGURE 1: THE MANY STRANDS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING⁷



Background knowledge

Both Willingham in *Why don't students like school?* and Lemov in *Reading reconsidered* argue that a student's background knowledge is one of the strongest factors in predicting their reading comprehension. Their much cited example, “As the desert sun climbs overhead, the kangaroo rat burrows deep in the sand and rests until evening,” requires understanding of the power of sun in the desert, the connection between rising sun and heat, the notion that the earth is cooler below the surface, the idea that a kangaroo rat is a kind of rat (not some extraordinary result of cross breeding) and so forth. Obviously we cannot teach all the background knowledge our students need, but planning and pre-teaching of core contexts and concepts before a text is approached can ease this issue for our students.

Vocabulary

95 per cent of words in a text need to be understood to enable students to read well. Subjects with a high proportion of technical language can therefore present significant problems to a year 7 student struggling with literacy. Beck and McKeown's 2013 work on vocabulary helps teachers identify the subject-specific tier 3 words that require explicit teaching

for each topic. Once these are learnt and understood in context, 95 per cent may be within reach.

Furthermore, proper planning in this area can also prevent the confusion students feel when they encounter a word in an entirely different subject discipline. “Describe this river” demands a very different response in English to the one it does in geography. We may associate the teaching of morphemes as a key stage 1 approach, but consider the power of this in subjects such as science where the understanding of Greek and Latin roots would make decoding a genuine possibility.

In a climate where pastoral transition is rightly prioritised as an essential part of a students' education, *Improving literacy in key stage two* is a timely reminder that for this journey to be successful, academic transition – particularly around literacy – deserves equal footing.

References

- [ILA literacy guidance report](#)
- [EEF report on improving literacy](#)
- [The percentage of words known in a text and reading comprehension](#)

Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is
Jon Hutchinson

@JON_HUTCHINSON_

Why I No Longer PEE

@shadylady222

If it's not too personal a question, I wanted to ask: do you PEE? I have to admit that I've PEEed at school before. I'm not proud of it, and deep down I knew it wasn't right, but I did it anyway. Not everybody PEEs though, and Becky Wood argues convincingly here that the point-example-explanation paragraph structure does more harm than good: "firstly... it restricts and secondly because a lot of the time, the very students it is designed to support, just don't understand what on earth it means." Becky then goes on to offer an alternative, more flexible approach, which ensures that students actually engage in the text, answering what, how and why an author is doing. The blog is peppered with example answers, deconstructing this new approach and presenting a very powerful alternative to PEEing.

Critical Thinking and Domain Specificity

@mfordhamhistory

Twitter's educational arena has the power to divide and unite in equal measure. In his book *Ten Arguments For Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now*, Silicon

TOP BLOGS of the week

Valley titan Jaron Lainer argues that "social media is turning you into an asshole". Sadly, eduTwitter often acts as exhibit A in this case. But all is not lost. There is hope. This post from Michael Fordham is the "consequence of a pleasant Twitter thread over the weekend" and delves into two academic papers on the often unexamined notion of critical thinking. The is more light than heat here, and by the end of the post you'll be able to critically think about critical thinking much more critically.

The Levels Illusion

@jpembroke

Do you remember levels? The behemoth spreadsheets, the junk data, the "how many sub-levels should they make by spring again?" Thank goodness that's all behind us. But wait! Assessment guru James Pembroke has spotted what many teachers have noticed: "In the four years since their supposed removal, levels have proliferated and spread, not as blatant copies of the original system, but covertly under numerous guises, and often underpinned by a remarkably similar series of point scores. Levels by another name." This blog reminds us of why we abandoned them in the first place, and counsels vigilance against their surreptitious infiltration back into the school system.

Sentences and the Web of Knowledge

@Rosalindphys

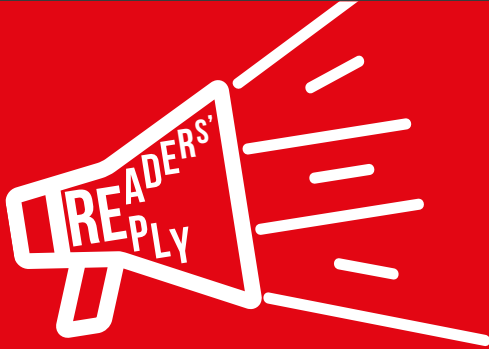
Teachers collaborating online to synthesise academic literature and implement the findings into classroom practice is tremendously exciting to witness. Pritesh Raichura, a science teacher at Michaela Community School, has curated an ongoing symposium in which science teachers write blogposts on how they are getting their students to write well. Ruth Walker's contribution begins by drawing on a key principle from cognitive science: "The organisation of our knowledge is what makes it powerful as a discipline and in addition, one of the characteristics of an expert is that their knowledge is well organised". What follows is a hugely practical guide in using "verbs, conjunctions and relational phrases" to focus students' minds on "the types of relationships we get in the web of knowledge". There is plenty to pinch here, regardless of what subject you teach.

What was down the rabbit hole?

@head_teach

Before arriving at his famous cogito ergo sum Descartes embarked on a meditation of radical scepticism. Aware that some of his beliefs had been wrong before, he likened these to rotten apples in a barrel. The only thing to do? Tip out all of the apples and inspect them one by one before putting them back in. Headteacher Matthew Evans describes his own Cartesian meditation in this courageous blog which is steeped in intellectual honesty. There are plenty of rotten apples in education: learning being a visible phenomenon; lesson observations giving sound information about teacher efficacy; book scrutinies allowing inferences to be made about "pupil progress". Evans ruminates that "although I miss the certainties, I value the authenticity of our school's practice now. We have integrity, even if we don't have all the answers." He ends with a plaintive appeal: "I wish it didn't feel quite so dark and quiet down here in the rabbit hole. Is anyone there?"

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +



The debate: Can schools still make savings?

@JonbatchJ

I've been chair of governors at a primary for several years. I've managed multi-million pound budgets for years and made a good living out of making organisations more efficient. Our school budget is run very tightly. As things stand we will go into deficit next year.

@CatherineHine

The growing number of knife attacks highlight again how vital #RSE [relationships education] guidance is (consultation ending today) but hard to see it will be prioritised among many pressing "little extras".

@OneAboutSue

These two hardly representative of schools across the UK! What about the countless primaries already running on a skeleton staff? Those where head take on increasingly larger teaching commitments to keep class sizes manageable and the finances under control?

Ofqual: 'Not possible' to use non-exam assessment in computer science

@_LeonBrown

Does it not matter that programming work is nothing like sitting an exam? Employers know this and so will not value the qualification. You already see this with computer science degrees.

@DaveBSheppard

I have real concerns that Ofqual will continue to narrow the assessment processes until we have nothing but pen and paper exams that bear no resemblance to the processes required in 21st-century workplaces, let alone in university assessment. Silent corridors: what's all the fuss about?

@stevenmwright

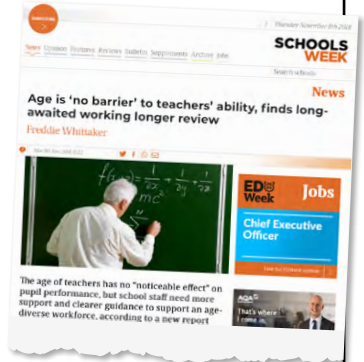
Straw man and false dichotomy fallacies. I gave up reading after that.

REPLY OF THE WEEK **Patricia Wildig**

Age is 'no barrier' to teachers' ability, finds long-awaited working longer review

It was not the children that made me retire at 59, but the relentless demands and initiatives thrust upon us by politicians and Ofsted. The education system does not support older members of staff, with many over-50s targets for constant observations and expected to meet impossible targets each year. Heads and senior managers have little empathy with older colleagues because they are too expensive.

I loved my job, but working more than 60 hours a week just to keep my head above water took its toll. I retired, had a year out and then signed on to do some supply work. This was a great move: I planned the lessons, delivered them, marked the work and then went home. Leaving the meetings and internal politics behind left me to do my job properly, I had more time to spend with the children and began to enjoy the job again. This ended when schools began to use teaching assistants to cover for staff absences. Many older teachers would remain in the job if it was accepted that as you age, it takes longer to complete tasks and longer to absorb new initiatives.



THE REPLY OF THE WEEK WINS A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG. CONTACT US AT NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK TO CLAIM

Unions make 'unprecedented' move over school spending, as new figures show funding down £1.7bn

@kimsmart9

Totally disgraceful and the government should be ashamed of the underfunded education system!! And time and time again we will be told that education is a priority.

Send annual reports to better engage with parents, Carter tells academy trusts

@ruthagnew

What? Something like the governors' annual report to parents? That used to be a statutory requirement for maintained schools? #innovative #groundbreaking

@HelenStevenson4

I'd be very interested to see any statistics you have to support this. From experience most parents are more interested in the relationship with the individual school rather than having any interest in the multi-academy trust. David's suggestion might go some way to building these relationships.

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

FRIDAY

Great news everybody! The government's "magic breakfast" programme has created 500 "new or improved" breakfast clubs in schools.

So sure is the government of its success that it crowed about the milestone in a press release –before proceeding to ignore repeated requests for a breakdown of just how many of the 500 breakfast clubs were actually new.

After trying to pin the lack of detail in the figures on unwitting charity Family Action, the Department for Education eventually claimed it couldn't break down the figures to show how many more schools are now offering breakfasts as a result of its intervention.

Good to know that once again the government has had its three Weetabix.

MONDAY

Our enthusiastic education secretary Damian Hinds continues to insist his brief is a "special case" in the quest for more funding, telling the Daily Mail this week that schools and colleges are in a "different category of spend from others".

His comments will come as little comfort for anguished school leaders, following warnings from the chancellor Philip Hammond that many government departments could face more austerity as a result of a big planned increase in health spending.

Meanwhile, Spreadsheet Phil also found himself facing questions about schools cash in a hearing with the Treasury select committee, chaired by former education secretary Nicky Morgan.

During the hearing, which irked Hammond because he felt it went on

for too long, the chancellor said he was "surprised" by the reaction to his promise of cash for "little extras" for schools which was widely ridiculed and criticised.

"I was quite surprised because while I understand that schools are operating under pressure, and of course we will look at school funding in the spending review next year, we did put £1.3 billion in the summer of 2017 in order to maintain real-terms per-pupil funding," he told MPs.

"Despite various comments made by various people, I maintain that for most secondary schools, receiving a cheque for £50,000 on an item or items in a year will be something worth having.

"I'm sure that for anybody who feels it's not worth having, there will be plenty of other schools who will be willing to receive the cheque on their behalf."

For all the schools that didn't get the message, we have prepared a translation: "You'll take what you're given. Don't be so ungrateful."

TUESDAY

Fans of transparency rejoice! The DfE now has a dedicated webpage for its secretive headteacher boards.

Officials say the site has been designed "to give a greater insight into the decisions taken by regional schools commissioners" and will offer "parents, teachers and school leaders easier access to information about decisions taken to raise standards across the country".

It's just a shame they still don't publish minutes of their meetings that would give anyone any idea of what was actually said, or how decisions were made...

WEDNESDAY

Still smarting from Labour's "attack" on his government's beloved free-schools programme, Hinds went on a mini tour of the establishments to prove that at least SOMEBODY in Westminster still loves them.

The education secretary visited FIVE free schools to celebrate the publication of a list of 124 applicants under wave 13 of the programme – the first to use stricter criteria aimed at focusing scarce resources where new schools are, you know, actually needed.

To put this into perspective, Hinds visited the same number of free schools in one day as the number of maintained



schools he visited in the first four months in his job.

Happy free-school day everyone!



Education is not only a way for individuals to achieve their potential, it's also a way to restore pride in their community.

Co-op Academies Trust works across the North of England, in some of the most challenging communities, changing the lives of young people. The Trust is embarking on a rapid expansion and has the ambition to sponsor 40 academies by 2022.

They're now looking for a Chief Executive Officer to bring that ambition into reality.

Russell Gill, Chair of the Trust, says "Our aim is to deliver excellent educational outcomes for our students, so we need someone with a track-record of improving attainment and progress, providing strategic leadership through a period of considerable change, managing risk effectively and demonstrating strong financial acumen."

"We're seeking a CEO who is going to go out into our communities because that's where we can make the biggest difference. Co-operative values motivate us and

shape our approach to education, from the style of teaching in the classroom to the culture throughout the Trust - we give our academies the ability to respond to the needs of their own communities."

"We are looking for a Chief Executive Officer to inspire and lead the Co-op Academies Trust."

The Co-op Academies Trust is a very different multi-academy trust. "We are sponsored by the Co-op, a business known and respected for mutual ownership, ethical leadership and community engagement," explains Russell. "The Trust has access to expertise and resources from the Co-op itself, from vocational learning opportunities and curriculum enrichment to strong governance and financial support for its growth plans."

The role offers a competitive salary to attract the right candidate, in line with its

policy of a maximum 1:10 salary difference between the lowest and highest paid colleagues - "all part of our Co-op values," says Russell.

If you're an experienced leader and committed educationalist, steeped in the skills and knowledge of school improvement, able to manage risk and deal with financial complexity, with the credibility that's required to lead a high profile Trust - and believe co-operation can achieve great things, they'd love to hear from you.



Focus on what really matters
Chief Executive Officer - Manchester

This isn't your average CEO position. You do it through engaging, inspiring, co-operating and changing the lives of young people in our communities who need you most. A skilled and enthusiastic leader, you will have a proven track record in driving educational improvement in challenging circumstances. And have the strategic vision and financial acumen to carry out a major expansion plan.

Apply now by going to www.coopacademies.co.uk

Co-op Academies Trust

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HEAD TEACHER, MALAWI

Mount View Primary School is an international school located in Limbe, Malawi, offering quality education from Nursery to Year Six. We are a co-educational day school serving over four hundred and fifty students from eighteen different countries. Our curriculum is based on the Cambridge Curriculum, incorporating many aspects of our local environment.

Mount View seeks applications from a qualified and experienced Head teacher wishing to join our teaching community for January 2019. We require an enthusiastic teaching professional, who is motivated to provide the best education for our developing learners.

The position requires a range of talents as it involves two aspects; a good team leader who is able to motivate and lead a team of 45 teachers and highly good at PR, marketing & communication.

We provide a two-year renewable contract with a competitive salary, end of the contract Gratuity, medical cover, and accommodation on campus.

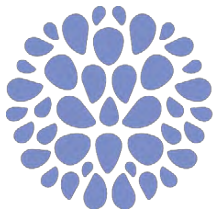
Applicants must hold a recognized teaching degree along with PGCE/QTS qualification and have a minimum of 3 to 5 years administrative experience.

Applications should consist of a Covering Letter, current CV with recent photograph and the details of three referees. The Covering Letter should include your motivation for wishing to apply for the position, both in terms of what interests you about the school and about the country.

Applications should be emailed to: ibheda@gmail.com by the 15th November 2018.

Interviews will take place via Skype from the first week of December 2018.

For more details about the school please check our website <http://mountviewprimarymw.com/>



The Shared Learning Trust
**THE LINDEN
ACADEMY**

KEY STAGE 1 LEADER

The Linden Academy have an exciting opportunity for a Key Stage One Leader with a strong commitment to raising standards to join our progressive team. The purpose of this post is to provide the children within the allocated key stage the very best care and education possible. This role will suit an outstanding classroom practitioner and person who is willing and able to support the school in its journey towards great through systematic planning, monitoring and evaluation of current practice. This post is perfect for people genuinely passionate about school improvement, in supporting and coaching others and wanting to move into school leadership.

In return, we will look after your professional development needs so that you can grow your career with us. You'll also be a valued member of a friendly and happy staff family.

JOB SPECIFICS:

- Start date: **January 2019** or as soon as possible thereafter
- Salary: Leadership Scale: 1-4 - **£39,965 - £43,034**
- Job Role: **Full time, Permanent**

WHY WORK FOR THE LINDEN ACADEMY?

- Linden Academy was previously a fee-paying independent school under the name Moorlands, since converting to 'The Linden Academy' the school has very much kept their traditional values but applied them to a modern context.
- Lovely small class sizes with 18-24 maximum per class with fantastic facilities and resources
- Brilliant CPD opportunities if you wish to improve and develop
- Experienced and innovative leadership with a fully committed governing body

- Join a lovely close-knit team of teachers and SLT that are genuinely here to support you and want to see you succeed

Teacher Testimonial:

"What first attracted me to The Linden Academy was its ethos. All members of staff were extremely welcoming and I loved the rapport between the staff as well as the relationships they had created with the children. Staff were passionate about the children's learning and progress, not just academically but personally. It was something I wanted to be a part of. During my time here, I have developed both professionally and personally. I started my employment as a timid graduate with little confidence of standing in front of a whole class. With great support and guidance, I have progressed from a Teaching Assistant to Class Teacher. Our Senior Leadership Team have greatly supported and built my confidence and ability in becoming a teacher. They have always been approachable and understanding with a genuine care for their staff's wellbeing. Staff across the school continue to support each other in any way they can to make sure we are promoting learning and progress to the highest standard for our pupils. It's a great community to be a part of."

– Jessica Day

Contact name: **Katherine Anderson**

Tel: **01582 211 226**

Email: k.anderson@thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk



Director roles commencing in January 2019 at Sydney's benchmark Montessori school.

Inner Sydney Montessori School, established in 1981 and well located in Inner Sydney, is recognised as one of the leading Montessori schools in Australia, yet maintains an enviable small school reputation as a friendly and dynamic Pre-Primary and Primary School with students at the centre of everything we do.

ISMS Principal, Zoe Ezzard welcomes contact from potential applicants to discuss why you should join this growing team. We would love to hear from you!

We are looking for passionate educators with an embedded understanding and appreciation of the Montessori philosophy. You will have a reputable 6-12 Montessori Diploma and hold a relevant teaching qualification. You will also be required to attain NSW Education Standards Authority accreditation.

You will have a Working with Children Check number and a First-Aid qualification.

You will demonstrate:

- A passion for Montessori education and a strong desire to work within a collaborative, authentic Montessori environment;
- The ability to promote a positive and supportive ethos for pupils where all are valued, encouraged and challenged to achieve the best they can;
- Excellent interpersonal skills.

Respect, collaboration and supportive relationships are at the heart of our School culture resulting in an environment where staff feel valued, supported and inspired. We work collaboratively to create nurturing classrooms where each child develops a healthy self-concept, positive values, strong skills, a deep academic understanding and a curiosity and appreciation of nature and the world around them. Our child focused Pre-Primary and Primary School is at enrollment capacity with around 300 students between the ages of 3-12.

In addition, around 100 students are enrolled per term in our esteemed Infant Community Program for 0-3 year olds.

We are very proud of our School & encourage you to learn more about us at www.isms.nsw.edu.au and follow us at [facebook.com/InnerSydneyMontessori](https://www.facebook.com/InnerSydneyMontessori)

Meet with Principal, Zoe Ezzard in London this September!

How to Apply

Please forward applications by including a cover letter and CV to principal@isms.nsw.edu.au

ISMS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. The position is subject to satisfactory references, police clearances, a Working with Children Check and comply with the requirements of NESAs.

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