

SCHOOLS WEEK

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

RSC LEAGUE TABLES:
WHO WON OUR THIRD
ANNUAL ROUND-UP?

P11

Minister's trust hit
in gaming crackdown

P5

Luke Tryl: I don't
want to shut down
religious schools!



P26-28

Government's jail
threat for tutoring
companies



P9

SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK | @SCHOOLSWEEK

FRIDAY, NOV 16, 2018 | EDITION 157

CLOSED.

- Schools Week investigation reveals soaring number of MATs shut down
- Analysis shows collapsed trusts handed at least £6m in start-up cash
- Questions over important documents being shredded after closure

EXCLUSIVE

PAGES 10-11

ncfe.

get creative with
your curriculum.

V Certs from NCFE are a great way to kick start your learners' careers in the creative industries.



Art and Design



Graphic Design



Interactive Media

Find out more by visiting ncfe.org.uk/getcreative

SCHOOLS WEEK

Meet the news team



John Dickens
EDITOR

@JOHNDICKENSSW
JOHN.DICKENS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Laura McInerney
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

@MISS_MCINERNEY
LAURA.MCINERNEY@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Cath Murray
COMMISSIONING EDITOR
& HEAD OF DIGITAL

@CATHMURRAY
CATH.MURRAY@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Freddie Whittaker
CHIEF REPORTER

@FCDWHITTAKER
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Alix Robertson
SENIOR REPORTER

@ALIXROBERTSON4
ALIX.ROBERTSON@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Jess Staufenberg
SENIOR REPORTER

@STAUFENBERGJ
JESS.STAUFBENBERG@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Shane Mann
MANAGING DIRECTOR

@SHANERMANN
SHANE.MANN@LSECT.COM

THE TEAM

- Head designer: Nicky Phillips
- Designer: Simon Kay
- Photographer: Ellis O'Brien
- Financials: Helen Neilly
- Sales team leader: Bridget Stockdale
- Sales executive: Clare Halliday
- Administration: Georgina Heath
- PA to managing director: Victoria Boyle

SUBSCRIBE

For an annual subscription to *Schools Week* for just £50 visit www.schoolsweek.co.uk and click on 'subscribe' at the top of the page.

schoolsweek.co.uk
or call 020 8123 4778 to subscribe



BROUGHT TO YOU BY
SCHOOLS WEEK
AND FE WEEK

THIS WEEK'S TOP AVAILABLE JOBS IN THE EDUCATION. TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION PLEASE SCROLL TO PAGE 40 OF *SCHOOLS WEEK* OR VISIT THE WEB ADDRESS LISTED



AMNUAY SILPA - VARIOUS ROLES -
SALARY DEPENDENT ON ROLE

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/RUR4](https://httpslink.com/rur4)



THE SHARED LEARNING TRUST - KEY STAGE 1
LEADER - £39,965 - £43,034

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/ADGY](https://httpslink.com/adgy)



INNER SYDNEY MONTESSORI SCHOOL -
DIRECTORS - COMPETITIVE SALARY

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/KBHM](https://httpslink.com/kbhm)

TO ADVERTISE YOUR VACANCY WITH EDUCATION WEEK JOBS AND *SCHOOLS WEEK* PLEASE CALL 020 81234 778 OR EMAIL ADVERTISING@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

#EDUCATIONFEST
EDUCATIONFEST.CO.UK

THE 10TH FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION
THURSDAY 20 & FRIDAY 21 JUNE 2019
WELLINGTON COLLEGE, CROWTHORNE

10TH

anniversary

FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION

Wellington college

Where those who inspire, find their own inspiration.

NEXT YEAR WE WILL CELEBRATE THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION, WHICH HAS GROWN FROM A THOUGHT-FORUM TO THE MOST IMPORTANT, INTERESTING AND INSPIRATIONAL EVENT IN THE EDUCATION CALENDAR.

LAST YEAR OVER 4,000 ATTENDEES IMMERSSED THEMSELVES IN SESSIONS RANGING FROM THE CANDID PIERS MORGAN INTERVIEW WITH SIR MICHAEL WILSHAW, TO THE INFORMATIVE TESSA DUNLOP AND THE EMOTIVE DR NEVILLE LAWRENCE. WITH OVER 250 OTHERS, INCLUDING TOM SHERRINGHAM, GEOFF BARTON, AMANDA SPIELMAN AND DAISY CHRISTODOULOU, THERE WAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION.



VISIT EDUCATIONFEST.CO.UK TO BOOK NOW



ADVERTISE WITH US

If you are interested in placing a product or job advert in a future edition please click on the 'advertise' link at the top of the page on schoolsweek.co.uk or contact:

E: advertising@schoolsweek.co.uk
T: 020 81234 778

SUBSCRIBE

For an annual subscription to *Schools Week* for just £50 visit www.schoolsweek.co.uk and click on 'subscribe' at the top of the page.

schoolsweek.co.uk
 or call 020 8123 4778 to subscribe

Disclaimer

Schools Week is owned and published by Lsect Ltd. The views expressed within the publication are those of the authors named, and are not necessarily those of *Schools Week*, Lsect Ltd or any of its employees. While we try to ensure that the information we provide is correct, mistakes do occur and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of our material.

The design of the digital newspaper and of the website is copyright of Lsect Ltd and material from the newspaper should not be reproduced without prior permission. If you wish to reproduce an article from either the digital paper or the website, both the article's author and *Schools Week* must be referenced (to not do so, would be an infringement on copyright).

Lsect Ltd is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites linked to.

Please address any complaints to the editor. Email Error/Concern@Schoolsweek.co.uk with Error/Concern in the subject line. Please include the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is.

SCHOOLS WEEK IS PROUD
TO BE A MEMBER OF



LEARNING & SKILLS EVENTS,
CONSULTANCY AND TRAINING LTD
161-165 GREENWICH HIGH ROAD
LONDON SE10 8JA
T: 020 8123 4778
E: NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

The editor's top picks

Opinion



Katie Waldegrave

How can schools be better at attracting older teachers?

P30

News



Revealed: The government's new sweetener for academy trusts

P13

It's official: Schools with sixth forms DO provide worse careers guidance



Schools with sixth forms are failing to provide pupils with the same level of careers advice as schools without sixth forms, a situation fuelled by competition for pupils, experts say.

P20

Investigation

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

Performance scores plummet as trusts ditch ECDL

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

Progress scores in a trust founded by the academies minister plummeted after a fast-track qualification was removed from government league tables in a move to clampdown on gaming.

The average Progress 8 score this year in Lord Agnew's Inspiration Trust dipped more than in any other trust that entered most pupils into the ECDL qualification, according to new analysis by Education Datalab.

The BCS level 2 ECDL certificate in IT application skills was dropped from qualifications that count towards school performance table scores after accusations it was used to game league tables.

It followed investigations by Schools Week that revealed some schools were allegedly teaching the qualification in just three days.

The new research reveals that the average Progress 8 (P8) score for Inspiration pupils fell from 0.56 in 2017 to 0.08 this year. The trust entered 93 per cent of pupils for the ECDL in 2017. (See nerd box)

While figures for the school-level data for the number of pupils entered into the ECDL will be published in January, Inspiration confirmed it has stopped offering the course.

A spokesperson for the trust said it was "far too simplistic to claim a cause and effect from ECDL in a year when P8 scores have also been affected by new syllabi and splits in grade boundaries across dozens of subjects.

"There are too many moving parts and the changes too slight to draw any meaningful conclusions."

But Philip Nye, the Datalab researcher who

TRUST NAME	ECDL entry rate		Average progress 8 score		Change
	2017	2018	2017	2018	
Aspirations Academies Trust	84%		0.05	0.11	0.06
Delta Academies Trust	96%		0.23	0.31	0.08
Fylde Coast Teaching School	86%		-0.41	-0.79	-0.38
Inspiration Trust	93%		0.56	0.08	-0.48
Northern Education Trust	88%		-0.16	-0.29	-0.12
Priory Federation of Academies Trust	85%		0.23	-0.19	-0.42
Seckford Foundation	95%		0.45	0.24	-0.21

carried out the analysis, said in a blog published today that a "clear relationship is visible", with trusts with higher ECDL entry rates on average "being more likely to have experienced falls in their P8 scores between 2017 and 2018".

The data showed that for trusts with ECDL entry rates of 40 per cent or less, on average there was either no change, or a slightly positive change, in their scores.

However, among trusts that entered more than 80 per cent of their pupils for ECDL in 2017, P8 scores dropped this year by an average 0.13.

The next largest drop was at the Priory Federation of Academies Trust, which entered 85 per cent of pupils for the qualification in 2017.

Progress scores also dropped this year at The Fylde Coast Teaching School Trust, Seckford Foundation and Northern Education Trust. They had entered more than 80 per cent of pupils for the ECDL.

Rob Tarn, the chief executive of the Northern Education Trust, acknowledged the removal of the ECDL from league tables "undoubtedly had an impact" on scores.

But he said reductions in P8 at his schools

were "largely a result of the then legacy curriculum model that led to a number of students having empty slots". The trust no longer offered the qualification.

Aspirations Academies Trust and Delta Academies Trust both entered more than 80 per cent of pupils for the qualification, but their average scores increased.

Steven Kenning, the chief executive of Aspirations, said his trust had "never used ECDL to improve results", adding that it was "just seen as an additional IT qualification for students".

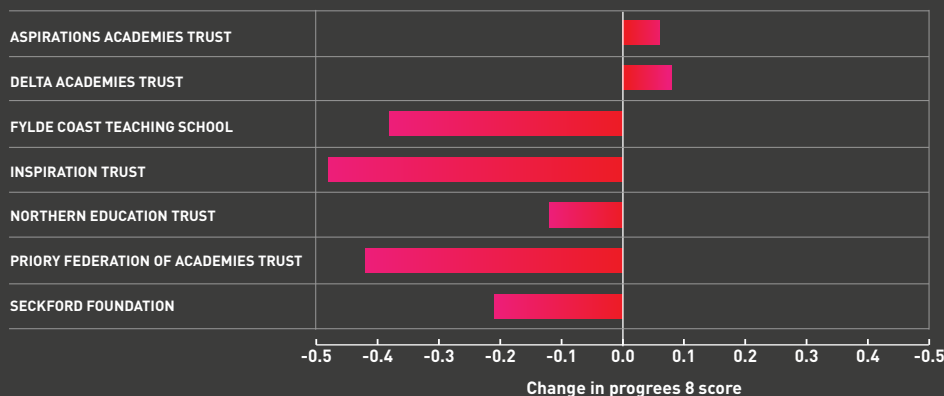
He said the trust did not enter any pupil for the ECDL this year, but achieved the "best ever results in some of our schools".

More than 150,000 pupils entered the ECDL in 2017, up from just over 40,000 in 2015.

Nye said it was "no surprise" that schools took advantage of the ECDL, given that the main headline on which secondary performance was judged "is a zero-sum one".

But he said that rather than focus on the "righting of league table wrongs", it would be "much better ... to hold a conversation about reducing the pressures that lead to gaming behaviour".

The winners and losers



Nerd box:

The analysis looked only at schools that count towards each trust's league table performance. This is based on the DfE's own methodology, and only schools that have been with a trust for at least three years were included.

A year of failures at doomed trust

The doomed Wakefield City Academy Trust broke government funding rules 16 times in 2016, according to a review of the chain's finances.

A review of financial management and governance details a string of failures at the ailing trust, which announced last year it was to give away all its 21 schools.

The report – published more than two years after investigators visited the trust – reveals how WCAT had no formally appointed accounting officer, chief financial officer or fully operational audit committee in 2016. The trust was also criticised for planning to award its interim chief executive a 12-month contract off-payroll, failing to agree a balanced budget and having no business continuity plan in place.

The Department for Education published the damning report alongside an earlier review by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), conducted in July and September 2015.

The first review concluded that the trust

was making "good progress" in "establishing a more robust financial and control framework", but a series of problems followed shortly afterwards.

In October 2015, the trust had to carry out an internal investigation following whistleblower allegations that resulted in the resignation of an academy principal and the decision by the CEO in January 2016 to take a period of personal leave.

Most trustees resigned in April and the CEO left in May. The ESFA described the events as a "serious breakdown in the management, governance and oversight" of the trust.

Both of the reviews published this week were conducted before WCAT's board decided to give up its schools.

A statement from the board at the time said that after a "robust period of review and evaluation of all aspects of the organisation", it had "requested that the Department for Education work with [the board] to place our academies with new sponsors".

The trust "does not have the capacity to facilitate the rapid improvement our academies need and our students deserve", the statement said.

The last of WCAT's academies moved to its new sponsor this month, ending a long period of uncertainty for pupils, staff and parents.

A spokesperson for the trust said its new board, appointed in July 2016, had "acknowledged the issues highlighted by the ESFA reports".

"The DfE recognises the new board 'immediately took appropriate action' to address financial and governance issues. "A robust action plan addressed and resolved the concerns."

He added that WCAT's latest published accounts for 2016-17 received a clean audit and those for 2017-18 are expected to show a surplus position.

"The board is now focused on overseeing an orderly and solvent winding-up procedure in the current financial year," he said.

RSCs warn four schools

Four schools in the East Midlands have been warned they face losing their funding and being transferred to new sponsors.

The Department for Education published four "minded to terminate" letters to sponsors in Derbyshire and Leicestershire yesterday. The letters were sent to the trusts on September 6, but went unpublished for more than two months.

Hope Valley College in Derbyshire, Hinckley Academy and John Cleveland Sixth Form Centre in Leicestershire, Brookfield Academy Trust in Derbyshire and Stafford Leys Community Primary School in Leicester, received letters from John Edwards, the regional schools commissioner for the East Midlands and the Humber.

The interventions at all four were prompted by inadequate ratings from Ofsted.

In each letter, Edwards said he needed to be "satisfied that this academy can achieve rapid and sustained improvement".

If he was not satisfied, he would "consider" issuing termination warning notices. These would signal the start of the rebrokering process used to move struggling academies to new sponsors.

Each school was given 15 working days to respond to the letters, outlining the actions planned to remedy.

The letters were published on Thursday as the government faced a number of high-profile ministerial resignations prompted by the EU withdrawal agreement.

DFE SETS OUTS THE RULES FOR NEW VA SCHOOLS

The proposers of new voluntary-aided (VA) schools will only get government cash if they can prove parental demand, a need for places and if they can find their own site.

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, announced plans to make it easier to open VA schools earlier this year in a compromise aimed at encouraging more Catholic schools to open without lifting the 50 per cent admissions cap on new faith-free schools.

The DfE officially started inviting bids from groups wanting to open new VA schools on Thursday, and set out the criteria for applications in new guidance.

The document states that the government will only accept bids

where there is a "basic need" for places, so new schools do not create an "oversupply of places". Bids must also demonstrate parental demand and proof the schools would bring "added diversity and choice to the area".

New VA schools would also have to "address the needs of pupils from all faiths and none, and from different backgrounds and communities". The government also expects bidders to commit to use a site "already in your ownership" or a site "that is being offered on a free of charge basis".

VA schools could not benefit from the services of LocatEd, the DfE's property arm, set up to find new sites for free schools.

News

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

DfE makes a dog's breakfast of morning meal figures

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

INVESTIGATES

The government will not confirm how many new school breakfast clubs have been set up under a £26 million scheme, despite boasting that "thousands more children" are now receiving a morning meal.

Nadhim Zahawi, the children's minister, announced earlier this month that "500 new or improved" breakfast clubs have signed up to the government's programme since the spring.

The project, a partnership between the Department for Education and the charities Magic Breakfast and Family Action, aims to reach more than 1,770 schools in the most disadvantaged areas of the country by 2020.

The Department for Education refused several times to provide the data that the announcement was based on.

It was also not clear what constituted an "improved" club.

However, a DfE source told *Schools Week* that officials were "unable" to say exactly how many of these 500 clubs were new because data was still being "collected and quality assured".

It is understood the data won't be available until the government's target of 1,770 schools is reached.

Angela Rayner, the shadow education secretary, accused ministers of making claims that "don't quite match reality".

"The education secretary has already been slapped down by the statistics watchdog five times since he took office in January. Now another of his claims is falling apart."

In their 2017 election manifesto, the Conservatives pledged £60 million to offer a free school breakfast "to every child in every year of primary school". The money was to be found by cutting universal infant free school meals.

However, the party was criticised after *Schools Week* revealed the £60 million pledge amounted to just 7p for each breakfast.

Ministers later admitted the policy could cost far more if every pupil in the country did indeed sign up.

The breakfast plan was dropped after the election when the weakened government



Angela Rayner



Nadhim Zahawi

was forced into a U-turn over its unpopular plans to scrap free meals for infants.

The £26 million fund was set up as a compromise. Zahawi said that more than 150 new clubs were already up and running.

He said it was "fantastic to see the positive effect that new breakfast clubs are having right across the country – particularly in our most disadvantaged areas.

"I want to encourage schools to take part in this rewarding programme that is already providing a boost in so many of our



classrooms."

Rayner said the breakfast club funding was not "anywhere near enough" to make up for the children being "denied free school meals under . . . their manifesto pledge of a breakfast for every child".

This week in Parliament

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

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

Ministers mull outstanding school inspections

The government is “considering” calls from MPs for a review of the inspection exemption for outstanding schools.

The influential parliamentary public accounts committee said last month that current rules – which have left some schools without an inspection for more than a decade – should be re-examined.

At the time, the Department for Education defended the current set-up, claiming Ofsted “has always been and will continue to be able to inspect at any point” where it has concerns about performance.

But Nick Gibb, the schools minister, told the Commons on Monday that his department was now “considering” the recommendation, and would formally respond to the committee’s report in December.

Earlier this year, the National Audit Office found that hundreds of schools had had no inspection for ten years because of the rule that left “outstanding” schools to their own devices. It followed from a Schools Week investigation first revealing the schools

ignored by Ofsted.

Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector, has warned that the exemption is “no longer sustainable” and is masking poor-quality education at schools with top ratings.

Speaking during education questions, Gibb sought to reassure MPs that schools were not falling through the gaps.

“Ofsted assesses and looks at triggers that will cause an inspection to happen, even if [a school is] judged as ‘outstanding’ and is exempt from inspection - for example if the results of a school fall or if there are complaints received from parents or if there are safeguarding concerns.

“All those are triggers for an inspection, so [you] can be confident that a school that is judged ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ is ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’.

“We are considering the public accounts committee’s recent recommendation that we review the exemption, and will be responding formally to this in December,” he said.

Asbestos data delayed as schools shun survey



The results of the much-anticipated school asbestos survey will not be published until next spring, leading to fears that they could come too late to influence long-term spending plans.

The Department for Education has reopened its “asbestos management assurance process”, which asks schools to declare whether or not they are compliant with their legal duty to manage asbestos on their sites.

The process originally closed at the end of May this year, but Nick Gibb, the schools minister, admitted this week that almost a quarter of schools failed to respond, prompting his department to reopen the process until next February.

However, the extension may be too late to influence next year’s comprehensive spending review, which will decide how much money schools will receive from 2020.

Meg Hillier, a Labour MP and chair of the parliamentary public accounts committee, has raised repeated concerns about the prevalence of asbestos in schools. This week, she called on ministers to tackle the issue.

“Given that 85 per cent of schools have asbestos and the risks are getting greater as those buildings age, will the minister make a serious commitment to providing the funding to schools to tackle that asbestos, otherwise there’s no real incentive for them to come up with a plan, given the pinch on their budgets.”

But Gibb would not be drawn on funding. On the survey, he said: “Seventy-seven per cent of schools have responded so far, but we expect all state-funded schools and academies to participate, so we have reopened the assurance process from today until February 2019, to give them a further opportunity to do so.”

Fraud police called into 16 schools

The police have been called in to investigate 14 academies and two free schools over finances in the past six years, it emerged this week.

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, was grilled about the investigations at education questions on Tuesday.

Jim McMahon, the MP for Oldham West and Royton, told Hinds that since 2012, 16 schools - 14 academies and two free schools - have been referred to the police by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

But Hinds insisted: “The free schools and academies programme has overwhelmingly been a success.”

The outcomes of the investigations have not been published. The Department for Education said it could not respond to a request to provide this information.

Hinds, speaking in parliament, said when there were issues in schools, the government must “deal with them quickly” across local authority-maintained schools and academies.

“The difference with the academy system is that there is that much more transparency, so people know what is going on.”



But the academies programme has suffered from allegations of financial impropriety and a lack of transparency, particularly in some high-profile cases.

In September 2016, Sajid Husain Raza, the principal of the flagship free school the Kings Science Academy in Bradford, was jailed for five years for his part in defrauding the government of £69,000.

Daud Khan and Shabana Hussain were also found guilty of fraudulently obtaining cash from government grants to set up the school.

The government will also from next year force trusts to get approval for large payments to companies connected to academy trust bosses.

However Lord Agnew, the academies minister, earlier this year insisted that more than 95 per cent of trusts had no issues.

Investigation

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

Tutoring companies told they are flouting the law

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The bosses of dozens of tutoring companies have been threatened with imprisonment after the government launched a clampdown on suspected illegal practices in the industry.

Schools Week understands the Employment Agency Service (EAS) inspectorate, an arm of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), has written to as many as 50 tutoring company directors, warning them that they risk breaking the law if they don't change the way they operate.

The letters tell the directors they "could be fined or imprisoned for up to two years" if they fail to comply.

The clampdown is understood to be part of a wider focus on the regulation of industries that use large numbers of self-employed workers, known as the "gig economy". Some agencies have also been accused of failing to pay tutors.

Experts have said that if companies collapse, schools could face having to put tutors on their own books. One of the firms actually also has a contract with the Department for Education.

Under the Employment Agencies Act 1973 and Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003, businesses deemed to be employment agencies are not allowed to receive fees from clients on behalf of workers.

The EAS claims tutoring companies are employment agencies because they "provide information to both parties for work-finding".

But several companies disputed the government's claim that employment agency law applied to them, and vowed to fight plans to regulate them in that way.

"I don't think many of us are against prudential, sensible, well-considered regulation that solves an identified problem," Dr Leo Evans, a director of The Profs, told *Schools Week*. His organisation markets itself as a "collective" of tutors from the higher education sector, and does work for the DfE

"But when they just arbitrarily decide



EXCLUSIVE

that we should be considered a type of company that we're not, subject to laws that were not designed to accommodate our mode of business, and then threaten us with criminal prosecution, the whole thing looks ill-conceived, poorly considered and badly executed."

Most agencies charge a per-session fee to parents and schools and pass it on to tutors, minus a commission. Hourly rates for tutors found online range from £15 to £75, depending on the subject and level of education.

If they were regulated by the EAS, tutoring companies would be forced to either employ tutors full-time or pass responsibility for their employment to families or schools.

Evans accused the government of being "heavy-handed", and acting "without concern or consideration of the effect it would have and the damage it would do.

"Tutors teach, fine, but what the agencies do are the functions of client acquisition, billing, payments, administration, complaints, payment failures. It's a valuable service and is clearly viable.

"We're talking about tutoring of children and young adults to do better at school. It's not a nefarious industry. From our point of view there's no clear-cut beneficiary here. They may argue the tutors benefit, but the ones we work with aren't very happy about this. They like the status quo."

Another tutoring company boss, who did

not want to be named for fear of reprisals from the government, said he was "rattled" and surprised by the legal letters. His lawyers had advised him the Employment Agencies Act did not apply to his firm.

"They haven't shared at all what's the basis for this or why they might possibly change their mind about things."

Hugh Viney, the director of Minerva Tutors, said: "What most struck me is the way they came in and said 'it's illegal and you can't do it'," he said.

"We've been doing this for 40 years. Why have they not noticed until now?"

He said the action was "threatening to push further back into the dark ages an already dark industry in terms of the tax collected", and warned that without companies like his, "there's going to be much more of a black hole in terms of tutor taxes".

"Half our tutors are fully employed by us, but many tutors wouldn't want to be and choose to be self-employed. We want to avoid at all cost a situation where tutors are forced to be employed."

A government spokesperson said: "All agencies are required by law to abide by minimum standards of conduct, which safeguard both the work seeker and the hirer.

"The EAS is responsible for enforcing those standards, and works closely with all key stakeholders to ensure agencies are compliant with the relevant legislation."

PA

Investigation

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

KEEP OUT KEEP OUT KEEP OUT KEEP OUT

Closures of academy trusts rise sharply, landing the government with hefty bills

SCHOOLSWEEK REPORTER

@SCHOOLSWEEK

Soaring numbers of academy trusts are being wound up, and many are collapsing with deficits of millions of pounds, a *Schools Week* investigation has revealed.

Our analysis, using public records on Companies House, found at least 91 multi-academy trusts had closed or were in the process of being wound up since 2014.

However, more than half (46) closed or began closing this year – with figures soaring since 2014. The disclosure also comes after the government admitted last week that a lack of high-quality sponsors is still a “top risk” facing the academies system.

Closure rates are also likely to continue to rise after a series of high-profile academy trust failures such as Bright Tribe, Schools Company, and Wakefield City Academies Trust, which will soon officially close after their schools are rebrokered to other trusts.

Our investigation also revealed that closed trusts are likely to have benefited from at least £6 million in start-up funding.

There are also questions over what happens to important financial documents of collapsed trusts, with one expert claiming they are shredded a year after liquidation – despite guidance stating records should be kept for at least three years.

Schools Week collated the figures after the government admitted it does not collect figures for the number of trusts that have ceased to exist.

Why are trusts wound up?

It was not possible to find out exactly why each multi-academy trust closed. But reasons have included poor finances or outcomes for pupils and mergers with other chains.

Closing trusts as a result of mergers is a “good and responsible thing”, according to Leora Cruddas, chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, which represents academy trusts.

However, other trusts were closed as



a result of poor performance. The Perry Beeches Academy Trust, which started the process of being struck off from Companies House this month, had its five schools rebrokered after a government investigation into financial malpractice.

Cruddas said it was “absolutely right” the DfE is acting to close trusts that don’t have the improvement capacity or financial capacity to support their schools.

“Where a trust is failing then intervention is positive – it’s a positive feature of the academies system.”

The number of closures rose sharply from just one in 2014, to 12 in 2016, then 30 last year and 46 so far this year.

However it is still a small proportion of MATs. By comparison, the number of active MATs in England rose from 1,121 in November 2016, to 1,324 in January.

The cost of closure

The government hands out grants of between £70,000 and £150,000 for new academy sponsors to set up a trust, and also covers running costs for trusts until their first school opens.

Even if all 91 closed trusts received the lowest possible grant, the DfE would have paid out at least £6.3 million to set them up.

Experts told *Schools Week* that when a collapsed trust cannot repay its debts to the DfE, the department has little choice but to write off what is owed.

For instance, the DfE wrote off more

than £500,000 owed by Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust when it closed last year and £300,000 owed by the Collective Spirit Community Trust, which is due to close soon.

The DfE also even handed the latter trust just over £250,000 to “assist in the close-down” of its Collective Spirit Free School in Oldham, Greater Manchester.

A search of some of the higher-profile trusts where the government has stepped in to rebroker all of their schools – some of which are yet to officially close – also show they are millions of pounds in deficit.

In May the University of Chester Academies Trust was cautioned by the Education and Skill Funding Agency for a £3 million deficit. A month later it was announced that the trust would close and give up all seven of its schools.

Perry Beeches, meanwhile, had a £2.1 million deficit in October 2016. It is now being wound up.

Schools Company Trust also abandoned its schools this year, leaving a deficit “in the region of £8 million”.

In some cases, it may be possible for the government to reclaim money if it was spent improperly.

The DfE is looking to recover more than £300,000 in funding from the Bright Tribe Academy Trust, following allegations the money had not been used as intended. The trust offloaded its last six schools in September.

Investigation

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

KEEP OUT KEEP OUT KEEP OUT KEEP OUT

But where do a collapsed trust's documents go?

Lawyers who worked on the closure of academy trusts told *Schools Week* there is little guidance, or any official processes, from the DfE regarding closures.

There is also confusion over what happens to important documents after trusts are wound up.

The DfE pointed *Schools Week* to charity law showing that documents and records, such as board-meeting minutes, must be kept for three to six years.

Schools Week understands this includes pupil records that must be held for six years, though the period is longer for special-needs pupils.

The government said liquidators or administrators are responsible for ensuring that relevant documents are safeguarded after a closure. The service is paid for out of the assets of the company.

One restructuring expert, who did not want to be named, said it was not uncommon for a liquidator to dispose of records within 12 months of the trust being dissolved, provided that they have permission from stakeholders or shareholders.

However, this does not apply to pupil records.

Andy Jolley, a former school governor and transparency campaigner, said no consideration has been given to any potential future legal action, which would require documents to be retained.

"This really hasn't been thought through and is enabling people to walk away from failed trusts without scrutiny."

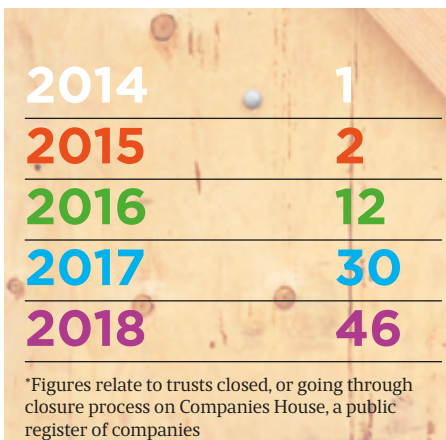
Some trusts are wound up through the government's Insolvency Service. As the service is a public body, it is understood documents handed over would be subject to the freedom of information act.

However *Schools Week's* research found three trusts in "voluntary" liquidation with private liquidators, meaning any documents would fall out of reach of the FOI act.

The DfE's shutdown specialists

It has emerged that the government has a team of troubleshooters – school leaders parachuted in as trustees to oversee struggling trusts.

The go-to shutdown specialist seems



to be Angela Barry, a former headteacher appointed to the board of high-profile academy trust failures including Schools Company, Lilac Sky and Bright Tribe.

Speaking exclusively to *Schools Week*, Barry said the vast majority of people are in education "for all the right reasons".

"They sincerely believe in the moral imperative of improving the life chances of the children in our care."

But she added: "Where mistakes have been made – and these have happened in non-academies and academies – it is because people have lost sight of the moral imperative.

"This is unacceptable and it is absolutely right that there is scrutiny of mistakes, but it is also very easy to focus only on these and overlook the fact that our system is full of brilliant people, which includes so many blameless staff at academy trusts and at academies where mistakes have been made, and includes hard-working and talented civil servants at the Department for Education."

Barry, who has worked in education for more than 30 years, including over 20 years as a head or executive head, added her work for trusts was to "sort out the issues" and ensure the "most important people – the children in schools – can access the very best education possible as quickly as possible".

The Public Accounts Committee is due to scrutinise academy finances again next week with two hearings on "academy accounts and performance". Barry will appear on behalf of Bright Tribe on Monday.

When presented with our findings on trust closures, Meg Hillier, chair of the

committee, said: "What is the impact on these children?"

"At the end of the day it's students who have most to lose. A headteacher can walk away with a slap on the wrists, but this is pupils' life chances."

Guidance

The DfE has detailed guidance for academy trusts that close their doors, but there is less information about the process of closing the trust.

Guidance states that disposal of academy assets – such as land, buildings, finances, and fixtures – will be carried out in partnership with regional schools commissioners.

Academy trusts are also responsible for meeting redundancy costs and pension liabilities.

Documents also state that once final accounts have been submitted, trusts should produce a "deed of termination" for agreement and sign-off by the government, before being removed from the register at Companies House.

Schools Week understands more detailed government guidance is due to be published shortly.

"The truth is that more academies than ever are joining or creating multi-academy trusts," a DfE spokesperson said.

Nearly nine in ten primaries and 70 per cent of secondaries are now in MATs.

How we worked it out

When asked for the figures of closed trusts under the Freedom of Information Act, the DfE said it "does not collect information on trusts that cease to exist".

However the DfE sent a list of 621 trusts that were registered on its academies management information system but had no schools.

The majority of these were single-academy trusts which no longer have a school because it set up or joined a MAT.

We ignored these, and analysed just the 159 that were registered as multi-academy trusts to establish whether they had closed.

Using Companies House records, we found that 91 multi-academy trusts had closed or were in the process of closure. More than half of these closures were registered this year.

**ON A BREAK
FROM
TEACHING?**

**MISS THE BUZZ
OF WORKING
WITH YOUNG
PEOPLE?**



TUTOR A STUDENT AND TRANSFORM THEIR LIFE

GET FURTHER is seeking volunteers with a teaching background who can give an hour a week to support students with English or maths in further education

www.getfurther.org.uk/volunteer



GET FURTHER

**GET FURTHER.
GET AHEAD.**

Boosting English and maths skills in further education

hello@getfurther.org.uk | www.getfurther.org.uk

News: funding

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

Schools face £33m clawback after ‘pumping up’ pupil numbers

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

EXCLUSIVE

Hundreds of schools that overestimated their pupil numbers last year will have to repay £33 million in funding to the government, as a minister warned trusts are “pumping up” pupil forecasts to balance their budgets.

Schools Week can also reveal that the government is now offering the estimated pupils funding model as a “sweetener” in rebrokering packages to entice trusts to take on failing schools.

Freedom of information figures seen by *Schools Week* show that almost half of the 660 academies and free schools funded under this method last year actually overpredicted their pupil numbers.

The schools now have to repay around £32.9 million to the government. However, this is less than the £50 million owed in the previous year.

Critics say offering the option of the estimated pupils funding model to some trusts but not others is unfair, as it means those approved to use the system can get extra upfront funding.

If a trust under-recruits pupils, the extra funding doesn’t have to be paid back until the following year, although some trusts have negotiated deals to pay the money back over a few years, or even had the debt written off.

Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the funding should not be used for “one type of school effectively as a sweetener”, adding it exposes a lack of sponsors to take over struggling schools.



Pam Tuckett

It follows a warning from academies minister Lord Agnew that trusts are “pumping up the projection on the number of pupils” in the hope their financial problems “will be solved”.

He urged school business managers at the Institute of School Business Leadership conference yesterday (Thursday) to be “the voice of moderation” who stop trustees from overestimating forecasted pupil numbers.

Of the 660 schools funded on estimated pupil numbers last year, almost half (304) overpredicted their pupil numbers. A quarter of the schools predicted their pupil numbers correctly and didn’t owe any money, while the rest underpredicted their pupil numbers, so were actually owed funding from the government.

As in previous years, university technical colleges fared badly. Of 49 UTCs that are still open, 30 under-recruited pupils and now have to pay back more than £6.5 million between them.

However the biggest debt



owed by a single school last year was £708,707, owed by Folkestone Academy (secondary) in Kent.

A spokesperson for Turner Schools trust, which runs four schools including Folkestone, pointed out the calculation was made in November 2016 before the school transferred to the trust.

They added the trust is in discussion with the DfE because it believes the correct clawback figure is “significantly less than the figure cited”.

Folkestone is one of 54 rebrokered academies that appear in the list of institutions that overpredicted their pupil numbers last year.

It is not clear if the funding method was in place before the academy was rebrokered. But the government has admitted trusts may be offered the estimate funding model as part of a “recovery package” to take over a struggling school for a “limited time period to allow for recovery”.

“Where trusts have taken on failing schools estimates

provide stability for growth as the educational performance improves,” a DfE spokesperson added.

Pam Tuckett, partner at accountancy firm Bishop Fleming, said academies funded on estimated pupil numbers “usually get the funding because they’re growing – and it all tends to be down to negotiation”.

Examples of growth include if the school received a better Ofsted grading, or a nearby school was closing down, Tuckett said.

But the “benchmark” for gaining estimated funding isn’t clear, she added.

She spoke of one school she worked with which received estimated pupil number funding after predicting its pupil numbers would expand by just 10 per cent. This was one of the lowest predictions Tuckett had ever encountered from a school that went on to be successful in securing the funding.

Schools Week has previously revealed how schools owing clawback have had the debt written off. The highest write-off was £1 million owed by the Greenwich UTC.

However in the most recent FOI response, the DfE said it is “currently in the middle of the standard recovery period for 2017-18 and are therefore unable to provide a full update on the status of repayment plans and write-offs”.

Year	No of schools funded on estimated pupil no	Number of schools owing money for over-predicting	Amount owed
2013-14	355	249	£39,811,851
2014-15	602	333	£54,303,082
2015-16	625	356	£51,241,761
2016-17	633	370	£50,018,372
2017-18	660	304	£32,949,063

News

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

Schools slammed as 'inadequate' apprenticeships scrapped

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

A company that trained school support workers is to cease its apprenticeship programme after Ofsted labelled it "weak" – warning of poor support from headteachers.

Inspectors rated apprenticeships provided by Expanse Group Ltd as "inadequate" following an inspection in September. They said the firm's leaders and managers did not ensure the schools supported their apprentices to receive sufficient time for off-the-job training.

But Ofsted also took aim at headteachers at the schools that employed the apprentices, warning that they "do not have a sufficient understanding of apprenticeship programmes" and, therefore, "are unable to support apprentices effectively".

Assessors do not involve school staff when reviewing apprentices' progress, inspectors said. Consequently, headteachers and staff are "not sufficiently aware of the knowledge, skills and behaviours their apprentices

develop off the job and how they can integrate theory into practice effectively to benefit their school".

Schools have come under increasing pressure to hire apprentices following the introduction last April of the apprenticeship levy and public sector apprenticeship targets.

Under the levy, many schools have to pay 0.5% of their payroll bill into a central pot, from which they can claim back funding to train staff. The targets require schools with 250 or more staff to hire 2.6% of their workforce as apprentices each year.

Expanse is one of dozens of companies offering training for school apprentices. At the time of its inspection, the firm had 34 apprentices undertaking an apprenticeship in supporting teaching and learning in schools, most of them studying at level 3 and working at schools across two local authorities in Greater Manchester.

Ofsted said schools using the firm should have participated in reviewing apprentices' progress and given apprentices "sufficient time to complete off-the-job training during

working hours".

In its response to the inspection report, Expanse said it now plans to stop running apprenticeships and focus on the rest of its provision, which was rated as "requires improvement". However, the firm did point to a wider issue with apprenticeships in schools.

"When you are working with a mainstream secondary school with 1,200 pupils and you are working with just one teaching assistant, it's very hard to get access to a headteacher," a spokesperson said.

"In Ofsted's view that wasn't sufficient and they focused on headteachers, but in our view that wasn't always the most appropriate person to speak to."

But Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said it was "no surprise" school leaders are struggling to deliver apprenticeships in their schools.

"No one has helped schools to really know what apprenticeships should look like – what the training should look like and what the standards should be," she said.

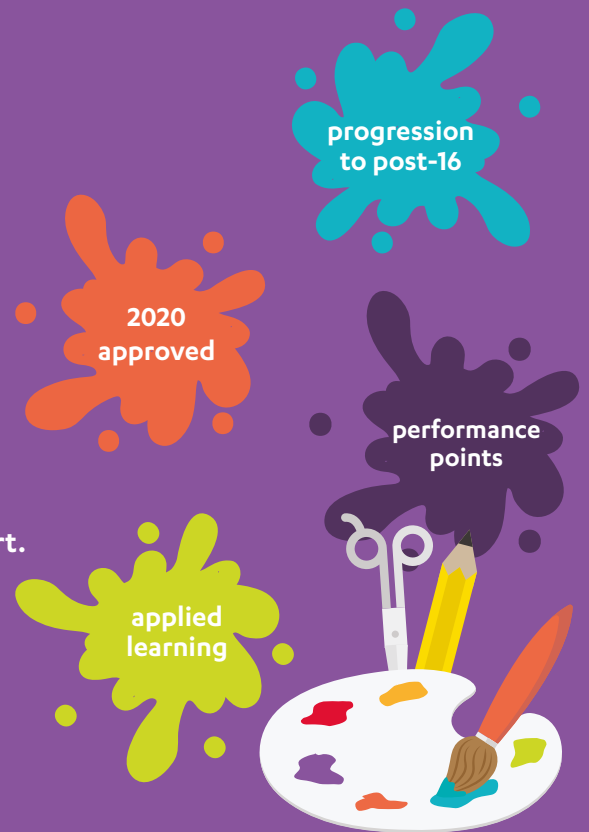
ncfe. futures by design.

Whether your learners want to unleash their inner Banksy, become an Adobe aficionado or create the next must-have mobile app, NCFE's creative V Certs are a great place to start.

Explore our technical qualifications in Art and Design, Graphic Design or Interactive Media for your Key Stage 4 learners.

Speak to our Qualification Advisory team today about getting creative with your curriculum.

Visit ncfe.org.uk/getcreative Call 0191 240 8833
Email QualificationAdvisoryteam@ncfe.org.uk



News

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
CONTACT US NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK**'County lines' risk for private school pupils**ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Affluent children attending private schools are being groomed into selling drugs because they are less likely to be suspected by the police, a group of government agencies has warned.

A study released by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, the Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, and the Inspectorate of Probation found it was not just the most vulnerable pupils who are at risk of being recruited by gangs as drug runners.

Ofsted's chief inspector Amanda Spielman told the National Children and Adult Services Conference on Wednesday that all children, including those in areas of "relative affluence, are fair game for these criminals".

She added: "We have heard of gangs targeting private-school children, for example, because they are less likely to arouse suspicion."

The report calls for a "coordinated" multi-agency approach, with schools and colleges as "essential partners".

However, the agencies warned that schools need to develop their awareness of the risks of "county-lines" exploitation – where pupils are recruited to transport and sell class-A drugs or weapons around the country.

In May, information about county-lines exploitation was included in statutory school safeguarding guidance for the first time.

The guidance urged schools to watch out for children who might be at risk or whose attendance was poor.

The new study found children excluded from mainstream school or not in regular education are at a heightened risk of exploitation, as are pupils with special educational needs, looked-after children and children with poor mental health.

It examined the multi-agency response to child exploitation and children missing from home, care or education across three local authority areas – London borough of Greenwich, Southend-on-Sea and Dorset – this spring.

Sexual health and school nurse services are particularly "well placed" to identify exploited children, the research found. In the London borough of Greenwich, children can access these services by text.

The borough also has a dedicated project officer for youth violence, vulnerability and gangs who works closely with the police, community safety, children's services and schools.



INVESTIGATES

Councils urged to follow Plymouth AP modelJESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

Councils have been urged to sign up academy trusts to help to track home-educated pupils, as new figures reveal a 27 per cent surge in the numbers removed from school by parents.

An alternative provision (AP) academy trust has what AP experts believe is the only contract in the country to monitor home-educated pupils and return them to school if necessary.

Sarah Gillett, the chief executive at ACE Schools multi-academy trust, which has one AP and two special schools, has said that her contract with Plymouth city council to support vulnerable home-educating families was "a no-brainer".

Her team was experienced in returning pupils part-time or full-time to school where needed, she said.

A survey of 106 councils from the Association of Directors of Children's Services, published yesterday, revealed the number of home-educated pupils across the country rose 27 per cent this year, from 45,500 to 57,800. The pupil population rose 0.8 per cent.

The survey also revealed that almost a third of home-educated pupils were known to children's services, and most had previously been in school.

ACE's contract, in place since 2011, funds an "elective home education teacher" and administrator.

The trust contacts parents six weeks after it is notified that a pupil will be home-educated.

Most take up the trust's offer of workshops such as "kitchen sink science" and resources. ACE now works with 100 families, Gillett said.

Her team also run 12-monthly reviews of education health and care plans (EHCP), which

are special needs statements. Once a pupil leaves the education system he or she cannot access the support in the plan. The trust's review prevents it becoming outdated with the local authority, allowing the pupil to return to school without having to apply again, Gillett said.

Finally, if home education "doesn't sit comfortably" with the trust because of safeguarding or suitability, the parents are reported to the council who may enact their legal "duty to intervene" and return the pupil to school.

Currently, schools must tell councils if a pupil is removed from the register. Parents have the legal right to give children a suitable education "by attendance at school or otherwise".

Rob Gasson, the chief executive at the Wave AP multi-academy trust in Cornwall, said he would "absolutely" like a similar contract across his ten schools.

His staff were more up-to-date with the education landscape than a local authority team that had been out of schools for years, he said.

But Mike Wood, owner of the Home Education UK website, criticised the model as he said the trust must apply "a measure by which they are making a judgment" on parents. "Should the family 'fail' by this measure, they will find themselves involved in a legal battle."

The Department for Education is considering feedback from a consultation that proposed a register for home-educated pupils, a call backed by Ofsted.

A bill for councils to assess home educators annually, spearheaded by Lord Soley, the Labour peer, is set for its second Commons reading next Friday.

News

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

No teaching ban for top head Tomsett

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

A leading headteacher who had a sexual relationship with a former pupil will not be banned from teaching.

In a decision notice published on Monday, the Teacher Regulation Agency said banning John Tomsett, the headteacher of Huntington School in York, would “clearly deprive the public of his contribution to the profession for the period that it is in force”.

Last month, an agency panel found Tomsett (pictured) not guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, but ruled that his actions may have brought the teaching profession into disrepute.

He faced allegations that he had a sexual relationship between 1990 and 1992 with a former student when he was employed as a teacher at Eastbourne Sixth Form College.

The panel heard how Tomsett and the former



student, who was nearly ten years younger than him, had a series of sexual encounters at local beauty spots in the summer in which she received her A-level results.

Tomsett, a founding member of the influential Headteachers’ Roundtable, admitted the sexual relationship, but denied misconduct.

In choosing to not impose a ban, Alan Meyrick, who ruled on behalf of the education secretary, said he had “given considerable weight” to

Tomsett’s contribution to the profession.

He said the panel “was very clear in its finding that it is not professionally acceptable for a teacher to enter into a romantic or sexual relationship with their former pupil shortly after that pupil has left school or college”.

Meyrick said he had also considered the extent to which a ban would protect children, after the panel ruled that it “does not consider that current pupils are likely to be exposed to or influenced by this behaviour in a harmful way”.

“The panel is also clear that there is considerable evidence of Mr Tomsett’s ‘positive commitment and contribution to the wider educational sector.’”

The headteacher remains on leave from Huntington. At the time *Schools Week* went to press, governors were still to meet to decide his future at the school.

A spokesperson for York council said: “The governors are considering the next steps and it is inappropriate for us to pre-empt these discussions.”

AET loses two more schools – and gains one

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

The country’s largest academy trust is to give up two more academies – although it was recently allowed to take over schools again following a five-year ban.

The Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) announced on Wednesday it had agreed with the Department for Education to rebroker Felixstowe Academy and Langer Primary in Felixstowe.

The trust was recently taken off the government’s “pause” list, meaning it is allowed to take on new schools again. Hockley Primary Academy in Essex joined in September.

But the growth is capped at up to 1,000 pupils at primary school level per year, and the trust is not allowed to take on secondary schools.

The removal of its two schools, which comes as somewhat of a surprise, follows pressure from Therese Coffey, the environment minister and Felixstowe MP, who set up a petition – signed by nearly 1,400 people – for Felixstowe



Academy to be handed to a new trust.

Coffey said she had been “on the case” with AET for some years and “thought things were getting better”, but provisional results for last summer showed “the academy was going backwards and AET was not giving the leadership and support to the teachers to provide the best for the children”.

Felixstowe Academy and Langer Primary are rated inadequate.

Julian Drinkall, who took over as chief executive of AET in late 2016, said he recognised

that the local MP and government had concerns about the schools.

“We want to do the right thing for both schools, and so would be supportive of this step, subject to a high-quality sponsor being found that is financially sound and has a strong education turnaround track record.”

However, he warned that it was of “paramount importance” the transfers were completed smoothly. If this “proves difficult” the trust would continue to work with the schools.

AET was banned in 2013 from taking over more schools after it was deemed to have grown too quickly. A number of its schools were subsequently rebrokered.

Drinkall, who has overseen a massive overhaul of the trust, said it was now looking forward to taking on more primaries and special schools in the coming year.

“We are absolutely determined that each and every one of our academies delivers an education that allows young people to go on and lead remarkable lives – this is what drives us, and we will not rest until our schools make that vision a reality.”

News: RSC league tables

ALIX ROBERTSON | @ALIXROBERTSON4

INVESTIGATES

Here we go again with our annual RSC league tables

The government published data last week showing how the eight regional schools commissioners performed last year. *Schools Week* has crunched the stats for our third annual RSC league tables.

Dominic Herrington has been crowned the top performing RSC for the second year in a row, according to *Schools Week*'s latest league table analysis.

A new set of performance indicators were used to judge the commissioners' work in 2016-17, the third year since the posts were established.

Schools Week crunched the data published in the latest academy sector annual report and accounts to show how the RSCs measured up in each category (see page 18) – and who did best overall.

As in 2015-16, Herrington, the commissioner for south London and the southeast of England, came out on top. He has been the RSC for his region since July 2014 and is also the interim national schools commissioner.

Second place went to Rebecca Clark, who was replaced as the RSC for the south west by Lisa Mannall at the end of July last year.

Third place went jointly to Tim Coulson, the former RSC for northeast London and the east of England, and Martin Post, the RSC for northwest London and south-central England.

In our analysis last year Post, who has held his role since August 2014, was third, with Coulson one spot behind him.

Coulson resigned to become the new chief executive of the Samuel Ward Academy Trust in west Suffolk and was replaced by Sue Baldwin in August last year.

The fortunes of Janet Renou in the north of England improved a little in 2016-17, bringing her up one slot from last place.

Vicky Beer, the RSC for Lancashire and west Yorkshire, fell from fifth in 2015-16 to bottom.

Beer, who has been the commissioner in her region since November 2015, scored 31.5 points, eight points fewer than Renou, who became as RSC in September 2014.

Fourth and fifth place went to regions whose commissioners changed mid-year: John Edwards replaced Jennifer Bexon-Smith in East Midlands and the Humber in May last year; Christine Quinn took over from Pank Patel in the West Midlands in October 2016.

In 2015-16 Patel came fifth (after being ranked top in the RSCs' first year in 2014-15) and Bexon-Smith came sixth.

The eight RSCs have a range of powers devolved from the education secretary, including converting underperforming schools into academies and deciding whether trusts can expand.

Last year was the first time the Department for Education voluntarily published information on their performance, following a successful campaign by *Schools Week* for more transparency. Before this we created our RSC league tables using data gathered from Freedom of Information requests.

HOW WE DID IT

WE AWARDED THE COMMISSIONERS A SCORE OUT OF EIGHT FOR EACH OF THE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs). SOME INDICATORS WERE SPLIT INTO SECTIONS, MEANING RSCs GOT MORE THAN ONE SCORE FOR THAT MEASURE. THE TOP SCORERS GOT EIGHT POINTS, THE SECOND SEVEN, DOWN TO THE WORST PERFORMERS WHO GOT ONE POINT. IN THE CASE OF A DRAW, A MEDIAN POINT SCORE WAS GIVEN. WE TOTTED UP THE SCORES FOR THEIR FINAL RANKING. IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO COMPARE WITH THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S PERFORMANCE, AS THE KPIs HAVE BEEN CHANGED.

HOW THEY RATED IN THEIR THIRD YEAR

DOMINIC HERRINGTON 1ST SOUTH LONDON & SOUTH EAST 70.5	REBECCA CLARK 2ND SOUTH-WEST ENGLAND 64	MARTIN POST 3RD EAST OF ENGLAND AND MARTIN POST - NORTH WEST LONDON AND SOUTH CENTRAL ENGLAND 62.5	TIM COULSON
--	--	---	------------------------

RSC NAME	RSC REGION	SCHOOLS WEEK RSC PERFORMANCE SCORE
JENNIFER BEXON-SMITH/JOHN EDWARDS	EAST MIDLANDS & HUMBER	58.5
PANK PATEL/CHRISTINE QUINN	WEST MIDLANDS	43
JANET RENOU	NORTH	39.5
VICKY BEER	LANCASHIRE & WEST YORKSHIRE	31.5

News: RSC league tables

ALIX ROBERTSON | @ALIXROBERTSON4

How each RSC scored: The full breakdown*

KPI 1i) Time taken for academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools to move out from below the floor category

Beer and Renou came joint last, both with 1.5 years, while Bexon-Smith/Edwards, Herrington and Clark came joint first with 1.3 years.

KPI 1ii) Number and percentage of academies, free schools, UTCs and studio schools in Ofsted inadequate category for more than 18 months

Beer came last with 20 per cent of her schools (a total of three) rated inadequate for more than 18 months. Coulson, Renou and Herrington came top. No schools in their regions were rated inadequate for more than 18 months.

KPI 1iii) Number and percentage of academies rated Ofsted inadequate within the first three years

Beer came last again, with 5 per cent (31 academies) rated inadequate within first three years of opening.

Post and Herrington did best with only 2 per cent of their academies (19 each) rated inadequate. Renou had the lowest number at 16 (4 per cent).

KPI 1iv) Number and percentage of academies at key stage 2 and 4 below the floor standard within the first three years

Another bad outcome for Beer with 20 per cent (94 academies) at KS2 and 4 below the floor standard within the first three years.

Bexon-Smith/Edwards had the greatest raw number of academies in this category at 117.

Post had the lowest percentage at 12 per cent (88 academies), but Coulson had the lowest number (47).

KPI 1v) Number and percentage of free schools, academies and sponsored academies that are good or outstanding

This is split into three separate tables – one based solely on free schools, one sponsored academies, and one for all academies.

Herrington had the highest percentage in each group – 95 per cent for free schools (36 schools), 93 per cent for sponsored academies (591), and 88 per cent for all academies (780).

Renou had the lowest percentage of free schools and sponsored academies rated good or outstanding, at 57 per cent (four schools) and 84 per cent (248 schools) respectively.

Renou and Beer had the joint lowest percentage of all academies with the two top grades, at 80 per cent each (282 and 477 academies respectively).

KPI 2) Number and percentage of local authority (LA)-maintained schools opened as converter academies within 12 months of receiving an academy order

Patel/Quinn scored lowest here, with 84 per cent of council schools opened as converter academies within 12 months of receiving an academy order (112 schools).

Renou came top with 100 per cent of her LA schools (54) hitting the target.

KPI 3) Number and percentage of LA-maintained schools opened as new sponsored academies within nine months of an inadequate rating, broken down by:

1 Inadequate schools that opened as sponsored academies between August 1, 2016, and July 31, 2017

Patel/Quinn came last with only 21 per cent of their inadequate LA-maintained schools opening as sponsored academies within nine months (four of 19). Clark came top with 63 per cent (five schools out of eight).

2 Schools rated inadequate after April 18, 2016 that opened as a sponsored academy between August 1, 2016, to July 31, 2017

Renou came last in this section with zero and Herrington came top with 100 per cent (four out of four).

Bexon-Smith/Edwards had the highest number of schools (12).

KPI 4i) Number and percentage of schools in a multi-academy trust, as at September 21, 2017

Post did worst here, with 68 per cent of his schools in a MAT (667 schools). However, Renou had the fewest schools in trusts at 321.

Coulson did best with 84 per cent of his schools in a MAT (796 schools), while Bexon-Smith/Edwards had the greatest number of schools at 835.

KPI 4ii) Number and percentage of MATs open for three years and over, that have three or fewer schools, as at September 21, 2017

Renou did worst with 66 per cent of her MATs (53) open for three years or more having only three schools or fewer. Bexon-Smith/Edwards did best with 40 per cent.

But Post had the highest number of MATs falling into this category, at 93 (60 per cent), while Renou and Clark had the lowest at 53 (66 per cent) and 53 (43 per cent) respectively.



News: RSC league tables

Alix Robertson | @ALIXROBERTSON4

More schools does not mean more money

The budgets received by each of the eight regional schools commissioners (RSCs) this year varied by almost £600,000, new figures have revealed.

Workforce budgets ranged from £1.52 million in the southwest of England, overseen by Lisa Mannall, down to £950,000 in northeast London and the east of England, headed by Sue Baldwin.

The figures also show that more schools does not mean more money. John Edwards, the RSC for East Midlands and the Humber, has 1,239 (the most of any RSC), but received £1.25 million this year – £270,000 less than Mannall, who manages 55 fewer schools.

In the north Janet Renou had a budget of £990,000 this year for working with 507 schools, while Baldwin had £40,000 less for working with 1,137 schools.

When the budgets are divided by their number of schools, Renou comes out on top, with nearly £2,000 for each of her schools. Baldwin is at the bottom with only £835.53 for each school.

The data also revealed varying numbers of staff in each RSC's department. In September, Vicky Beer in Lancashire and



West Yorkshire had the most full-time equivalent staff members at 65. She also had the second highest workforce budget at £1.40 million.

Renou had the fewest full-time equivalent staff members at 40.3. She also had the fewest schools for each staff member at 12.6, while Martin Post, who oversees northwest London and south-central England, had the most (23.6).

When each RSC's workforce budget is divided by employees, Mannall has the most at nearly £27,500 for each staff member, while Baldwin has the least, at just over £18,000.

The information was released in an answer to a parliamentary written question

from Stephanie Peacock, a former teacher and MP for Barnsley East, who said the "soaring costs" of the RSCs were another consequence of the "inefficient and fragmented schools system".

According to Lord Nash, the former academies minister, the commissioners' budgets are made up of a "programme budget" to cover "events and other communications activities", and an "administration budget" for staff costs, such as salary and travel. On top of this each RSC has a headteacher board budget, which is used to recompense board members for their time.

The cost of the RSCs has been an ongoing source of concern, ballooning from £4 million in 2014-15, to about £30 million.

Last year Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the climbing costs called into question whether the RSC network was "fit for purpose".

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "Workforce budgets are set relative to our assessment of the needs of each region. They are monitored and reviewed and can change in-year."

RSC REGION	NUMBER OF ACADEMIES, FREE SCHOOLS, STUDIO SCHOOLS AND UTCS (AS AT OCT 2018)	NUMBER OF FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STAFF (AS AT SEPT 2018)	WORKFORCE BUDGET SPEND FINANCIAL YEAR 2015-16 (MILLIONS)	WORKFORCE BUDGET SPEND FINANCIAL YEAR 2016-17 (MILLIONS)	WORKFORCE BUDGET SPEND FINANCIAL YEAR 2017-18 (MILLIONS)
East midlands and Humber	1239	58	£0.46	£1.90	£1.48
South west	1184	55.3	£0.58	£2.20	£1.98
South London and south east England	1148	50.9	£0.43	£2.18	£1.66
North east London and east England	1137	52.7	£0.62	£1.60	£1.62
West Midlands	1096	49.6	£0.52	£1.90	£1.91
North west London and south central England	1077	45.6	£0.52	£1.89	£1.62
Lancashire and West Yorkshire"	841	65	£0.49	£1.85	£1.91
North	507	40.3	£0.51	£1.57	£1.29

News: careers guidance

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

Review Careers and Enterprise Company, urge youth councillors

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

The government had been urged to commission an independent review into whether the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) is doing a good job helping poorer pupils get work experience.

The Commons youth select committee, run by the British Youth Council charity, has also said Ofsted should inspect provision that is funded by the CEC to check on its quality.

It comes as the organisation, which came under fire from MPs in May for spending almost £1m on research rather than frontline careers advice, is set to face the education select committee for a second time on Wednesday.

Now the *Realising the potential of work experience* report, which reviewed 50 submissions of written evidence and two days of oral evidence, has warned of the "patchy and unequal nature" of pupils' access to work experience.

It welcomed the CEC's role in helping schools meet the Gatsby benchmarks, which are markers of excellence in careers guidance, but warned that similar attempts had failed to reverse a trend in which privileged pupils get the best opportunities.

"The department must ensure the CEC does not replicate the mistakes of the past," the report said.

Instead, the youth select committee called on the DfE to commission an independent review of the CEC's impact on helping the most disadvantaged pupils to access good work experience roles.

The CEC – which has so far received more than £40m in government funding – has previously been criticised for a lack of evidence over its impact. It led to MPs blasting chair Christine Hodgson earlier this year when she admitted £900,000 had been spent on research since it was set up in 2015, despite it not being a thinktank.

That and a confusing staff structure led one critic to call the organisation an "overbloomed quango".

A CEC spokesperson pointed to comments from Ofsted that acknowledge its role in supporting pupils, and "found careers education in schools is improving".

The DfE did not respond to a request for comment.



EXCLUSIVE

Schools with sixth forms 'failing on careers advice'

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

Schools with sixth forms are failing to provide pupils with the same level of careers advice as schools without sixth forms, a situation fuelled by competition for pupils, experts say.

Exclusive analysis for *Schools Week* shows schools with sixth forms are 20 percentage points less likely to offer personal careers guidance that those without sixth forms.

They are also 16 percentage points less likely to give pupils information about further education or higher education providers, the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) analysis found.

It is not the first time schools with sixth forms have been called out for restricting careers information for their pupils. However the new data is the most wide-ranging to date.

Bill Watkin, the chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, said the government must increase the funding rate for 16 to 18-year-olds, which is frozen at £4,000 a pupil, so sixth forms were not desperate to keep their pupils.

Competition for numbers was "not a situation that is going to lend itself to impartial advice and guidance".

Colleges said schools with sixth forms were "reluctant to allow them to address their students at open evenings", Watkin said.

The education select committee warned five years ago that schools with sixth forms were "putting their interests ahead of their pupils" by restricting their access to other education providers. This allowed them to fill their own post-16 places.

The CEC has collected data from 2,937

schools and 355 FE institutions for its 2018 State of the Nation report to see if they meet the eight Gatsby benchmarks, which are markers of excellence in careers advice.

Analysis seen by *Schools Week* reveals a higher proportion of schools without a sixth form met every benchmark. The difference was especially pronounced for the seventh benchmark, which measures pupils' "encounters with further and higher education".

Only 46 per cent of schools with a sixth form met this benchmark, compared with 62 per cent of schools without.

The gap was even wider for the eighth benchmark on "personal guidance". Only 53 per cent of schools with a sixth form met this compared with 73 per cent of schools without.

The Technical and Further Education Act requires schools to follow the Baker clause, which states they must allow training providers and colleges to offer year 8 to 13 pupils non-academic routes.

Further analysis on the seventh benchmark showed only 45 per cent of schools with a sixth form gave pupils "meaningful encounters with further education colleges", compared with 78 per cent of those without sixth forms.

However Kevin Gilmartin, post-16 and colleges specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, warned that the benchmarks did not always measure the "informal advice" offered by schools with sixth forms.

The CEC report also found schools and colleges achieved 2.13 of the eight Gatsby benchmarks compared with 1.87 last year. Meanwhile, the proportion of schools and colleges not achieving any benchmarks fell from 20.6 per cent to 18 per cent.

News

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

Guidance for schools on mental health

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

New mental health guidance should make headteachers think hard about the impact "rigid" behaviour policies have on pupils, according to one of its contributors.

Non-statutory guidance released on Monday by the Department for Education urged schools to focus on how mental health problems could "manifest themselves in behaviour" and how to support pupils.

Mental health and behaviour in schools also says that schools should not try to diagnose any pupil's mental health condition.

The guidance was put together by various parties, including the government's behaviour adviser Tom Bennett and the Attachment Research Community (ARC).

Tony Clifford, a trustee at ARC, said the "zero-tolerance" behaviour strategy of some schools could be a challenge for pupils with mental illnesses.

The guidance was "an invitation to heads to consider the mental health of the child before operating a rigid strategy". It includes a chapter dedicated to the "link between mental health and behaviour" and marks a change from the previous guidance, which was "much more medicalised" and encouraged schools to diagnose pupils, Clifford said.

Instead teachers should operate "positive classroom management" and use a "graduated response" to support struggling pupils.

Under the four-step process, schools should "instigate an assessment" to establish the pupil's needs, produce a plan on how the pupil would be supported, action to carry that out, and a review to assess its effectiveness.

The guidance suggested two tools for assessing pupils, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Boxall Profile.

But Natasha Devon, a former mental health adviser to the government, said she was worried teachers did not have the expertise

or time to spot mental illness or to assess pupils.

"They are still essentially asking teachers to play therapists."

She also cast doubt on the accuracy of the SDQ tool, which GPs use, saying pupils who were not depressed could be wrongly identified, while other mental illnesses were missed.

The guidance also said it was "normal" for children to feel nervous or under stress around exam time.

But Devon said the government was "blindingly unaware of how the pressure-cooker environment of school is impacting young people".

Mental health support teams are due to be in place in schools "by December 2019", but arrangements for designated mental health leads in schools have yet to be confirmed.

A DfE spokesperson said the guidance was intended as "practical advice" for schools, and the tools including the SDQ would not involve schools themselves making a diagnosis.

BAimEed
Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic EDUCATORS

You are warmly invited to the BAMEed Network second anniversary conference:

Owning Your Professional Identity

When: January 19th 2019, 9am - 4pm

Where: University of East London, University of East London, Stratford Campus, Water Lane, London, E15 4LZ

Who is it for? Educators, teachers, senior leaders, from Early Years to Higher Education, and from formal and informal education settings

Join this thriving Black, Asian, Ethnic Minority (BAME) educators network for a stimulating and enriching day of keynote speakers, workshops and networking opportunities.

This year's theme 'Owning your professional identity' will feature practical workshops intended to raise awareness of the issues for BAME educators, to support your practice, and enhance your professional development and career progression.

Delegates are invited from all backgrounds, including people working in the education sector who do not identify as Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority. All those committed to anti-racist practice, equality, diversity and inclusion are welcome.

FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO BOOK YOUR PLACE, GO TO [HTTP://BIT.LY/BAMEEDCONF](http://bit.ly/BAMEEDCONF)

News

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

DfE confirms school support shake-up

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

The government has announced a new £16,000 support package to support some struggling schools, while also confirming the future role of regional schools commissioners (RSCs).

New Department for Education guidance on "schools causing concern" has revealed the triggers for offers of optional improvement "support" for struggling schools. It follows the government scaling back its intervention model earlier this year.

Institutions found to be meeting the new criteria – based on existing coasting, floor standards and Ofsted ratings – will be offered up to three days of free advice from a designated national leader of education (NLE) or equivalent.

Those eligible schools judged as "requires improvement" by Ofsted in their two previous inspections will also get up to £16,000 of funded support to address issues identified by their assigned NLE.

However, fewer schools will benefit from the cash than did under the government's old strategic school improvement fund, which was scrapped earlier this year.

The update follows an announcement by education secretary Damian Hinds

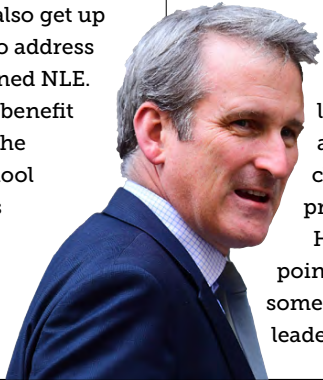


(pictured) earlier this year that the government will no longer intervene in schools deemed to be coasting. It follows criticism that schools faced the "spectre" of multiple interventions and inspections from both Ofsted and the DfE.

However, Hinds acknowledged at the time of the announcement that some schools not rated "inadequate" would still need support, and the latest guidance gives schools more information about when that might happen.

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the school leaders' union NAHT, said the announcement was a "welcome clarification" on Hinds' earlier promises.

He said it marks a "significant point" in ongoing work to address some of the "big concerns of school leaders".



"Accountability is obviously a key concern, and the announcement clears up some of the confusion regarding the roles of Ofsted and RSCs, as well as providing much-needed reassurance that schools seeking to improve will receive support rather than sanction."

The guidance also confirms that RSCs, who work for the department, are now banned from carrying out their own inspections or issuing warning notices, apart from to those schools where there has been a "serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed", or where pupil or staff safety is threatened.

On top of this, RSCs will in future only be allowed to deal with a school's local council or academy trust, not individual schools.

The measures set out this month are only interim, however, because the government is reviewing both the coasting and floor standards with a view to establishing a single trigger for extra support.

A formal consultation on the matter will be held in the new year.

Lord Agnew, the academies minister, said the changes would "simplify the school accountability system so teachers and school leaders know where they stand and simplify a system that we know can be a concern among the profession".

"Where a school is struggling, we will aim to take swift action, providing practical hands-on support and, where necessary, more formal steps."

WHICH SCHOOLS WILL BE ELIGIBLE?

The guidance reveals that primary schools will be eligible for support if they are defined as being "below the floor standards or coasting based on KS2 revised data published in December 2018".

Secondary schools defined as "below the floor standards or coasting based on KS4 revised data published in January 2019" will also be eligible.

Schools that are **not below the floor or coasting standards, but that are rated "requires improvement"** will also be eligible.

WHAT IS THE FLOOR STANDARD?

This year, a primary school is above the floor if at least 65% of its pupils meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at key stage 2, or if it achieves "sufficient progress scores" in all three subjects.

The required progress scores in 2018 are -5 in reading, -5 in maths and -7 in writing.

A secondary school is above the floor if its progress 8 score is less than -0.5, and the upper band of the 95% confidence interval is below zero.

WHAT IS A COASTING SCHOOL?

This year, a primary school is considered to be coasting if, in 2016, 2017 and 2018, less than 85% of its pupils achieved the expected standard at the end of year 6 AND the average progress of pupils was less than -2.5 in reading, -2.5 in maths or -3.5 in English writing.

A secondary school is considered to be coasting if, in 2016, 2017 and 2018, its progress 8 score was below -0.25.

News

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

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Gone in 6 seconds: Times tables test will keep kids on their toes

Pupils will get six seconds to answer each question in the new times-tables tests, with emphasis on the 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12 tables.

The Department for Education has set out the rules for its new times-tables test for eight- and nine-year-olds ahead of the voluntary roll-out next year.

Year 4 pupils will get six seconds to answer each question in the on-screen test, which should take no more than five minutes to complete, the government said.

The time limit on answers is to ensure pupils are recalling the answers, rather than working them out. Six seconds was deemed the most appropriate time after a trial involving 1,124 pupils where three time limits were trialled.

The government announced last September that its long-planned times-tables test would be moved from year 6 to year 4 pupils.

The introduction of another test at primary level caused consternation among headteachers, with union leaders warning it will be "a complete waste of time". Schools

Week revealed earlier this year the tests will cost more than £5m to implement.

Questions will be randomly selected from a bank of 121 taken from the 2 to 12 times tables, though there will be an emphasis on the 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12 tables "because these have been determined to be the most difficult".

The online system will automatically give each pupil a score out of 25, which will then be reported to schools. However, there will be no "expected standard" threshold.

Although the check will help schools to identify pupils who require additional support, with national and local authority-level results published annually, "it is not intended as a diagnostic tool", the guidance states.

Further details for which pupils will be eligible for withdrawal from the tests will be published next autumn.

The test will be available online for a three-week period in June each year. They are due to become compulsory from June 2020.

Ofsted: Research on way for knives claim

Ofsted has pledged to publish research backing up its claim this week that zero-tolerance schools were excluding girls who carry knives that they use to self-harm.

Mike Sheridan, Ofsted's regional director for London, wrote in a blog published on Monday that some schools were using zero-tolerance approaches in an "overly rigid way".

He said the inspectorate had seen examples of teenage girls being excluded for carrying a knife that they used to self-harm.

"While schools need to deal with this behaviour, it is difficult to see how this approach safeguards these girls or supports them through their mental health issues."

However, headteachers say the blog implied that schools should not exclude pupils who bring in knives.

Stuart Lock, the executive principal of Advantage Schools and Bedford Free School, said: "Bringing a knife to school makes everyone . . . horrifically unsafe."

Sheridan later said that schools should not tolerate blades in schools, but added that heads "would be wise to give themselves some wriggle room when applying sanctions".

This is the latest Twitter flare-up between the inspectorate and school leaders this year (see more on page 25).

Schools Week understands the claim was backed up by interviews from headteachers as part of the inspectorate's knife crime study.

However, the full report won't be published until next year.

A *Schools Week* investigation last week found that teachers are increasingly at risk of harm as police cuts bite and they are forced to keep pupils safe from knife crime.

Research released last week showed that 22 per cent of attacks on under-16s happened between 4pm and 6pm, immediately after pupils left school.

The Metropolitan Police predicts that the capital will lose 3,000 frontline police officers, who deal with issues outside school time, before 2020.

Exams watchdog reviews tweaks to music and dance qualifications

Ofqual has launched a consultation into proposed changes to the reformed GCSEs, AS and A-levels in music and dance, after their first delivery this summer exposed issues with how to assess pupils' performances.

The exams watchdog wants to change the way a student's performance is marked if it turns out to be shorter than the minimum length; broaden the range of reference materials musicians can draw on; and adjust the number of dances students can perform at GCSE level.

The consultation opened on Friday and will run for four weeks, ending on 9 December.

Students must carry out a performance assessment as part of each of the qualifications, but if it is shorter than a given time length they get no marks at all, regardless of the quality of their work.

Ofqual is proposing exam boards should be allowed to determine how to mark a student's performance if they fall short of the required minimum time.

Currently, GCSE or A-level musicians must



provide exam boards with "the score or lead sheet for that performance", but Ofqual noted that "some flexibility is appropriate" with styles such as "folk and world music, and contemporary genres such as rap".

The regulator suggested that where a written score is not available, candidates should be able to present a different kind of reference sheet for what they plan to perform.

Finally, in GCSE dance, Ofqual is proposing to allow pupils to do more than one performance if they wish.

The consultation wants feedback on the "costs or benefits" of the proposals, and whether they will have any specific impact on students who have "a particular protected characteristic", referring to the Equality Act.

SSAT National Conference 2018

PURE IMAGINATION

5 - 6 December, ICC Birmingham

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN IMAGINATIVE SCHOOL LEADER?

Confirmed speakers include:

Amanda Spielman, HMCI, Ofsted
Will Gompertz, Arts Editor at the BBC
Priya Lakhani OBE, Founder, CENTURY Tech
Rt Hon David Lammy MP

See the full programme and book
ssatuk.co.uk/nc18

ssat the schools, students
and teachers network



Workshop Sponsor



Exhibition Sponsor



Drinks Reception Sponsor



Lead Conference Partner

SCHOOLS WEEK

Media Partner

EDITORIAL

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

Time for more transparency on academy trust closures

For several years, Schools Week has reported on the seemingly growing number of academy trusts being closed down.

We wanted to find out exactly how many are closing. Is it rising? And if it is becoming more prevalent, what actually happens when a trust closes down?

Collating figures wasn't as straightforward as we thought. We found out last week that the government doesn't even collect figures for the number of trusts that no longer exist.

Helpfully though, they did release a list of all the trusts registered on the DfE's academies management system that had no schools.

A cross-reference of these with Companies House revealed that, as suspected, the number of multi-academy trusts closing each year is soaring - up from just one in 2014 to 46 this year.

As the government has suggested, the rising number of closures does represent the "mobility in the sector".

Some argue this is a good thing - it essentially shows that intervention levers in the academy programme are working, and that the government is getting tough on underperformance.

But others warn the growing number of closures

means the education of more pupils is now being disrupted.

Either way, there is an emerging closure market, so we felt it was important to take a closer look at what actually happens.

And it turns out there's not much clarity around the processes.

The government is relying on a team of troubleshooters to oversee such closures. Unlike for when schools close down, there's no official guidance on what a trust should do.

There are also big questions about what actually happens to important documents belonging to a collapsed trust.

The government must be as transparent as it can be on academy closures. The public has a right to know how many are closing. Some of these trusts are in real financial dire straits when they're wound up, too.

It took a while for the government to finally release details, including the costs, of the growing number of academies being rebrokered.

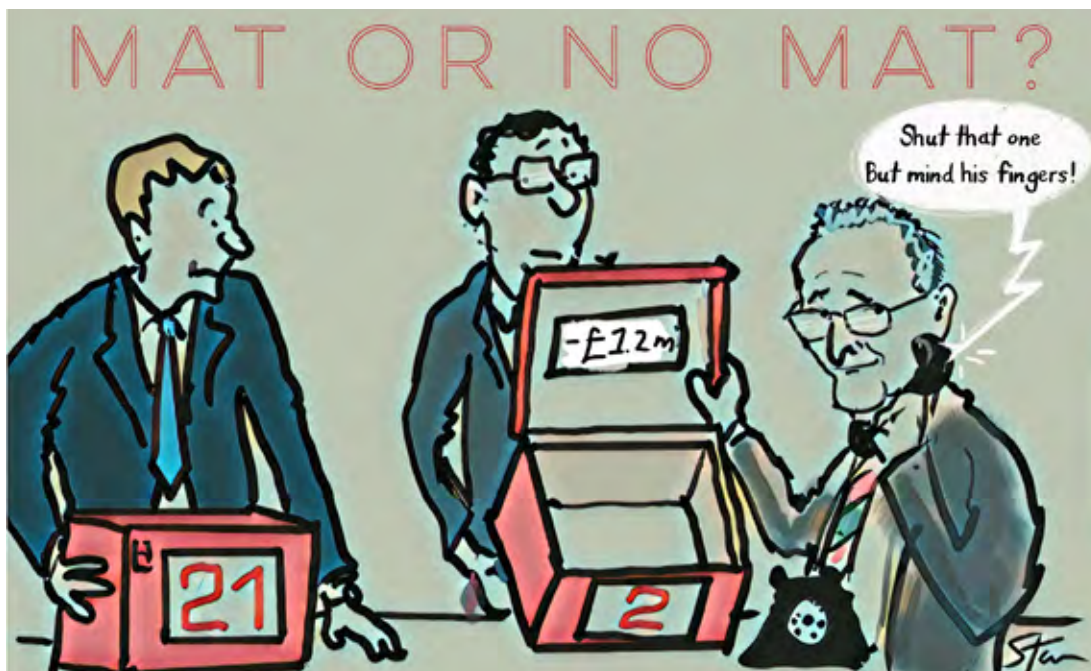
Similar data collection on the academy trusts closing down must now be made routinely available, in the interest of transparency and best practice.

SCHOOLS WEEK



Get in touch.

CONTACT:
NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK
OR CALL 0203 4321 392



Profile

CATH MURRAY | @CATHMURRAY_



“We guard our independence jealously”

Luke Tryl, director of corporate strategy, Ofsted

Luke Tryl, Ofsted's director of corporate strategy, is one of those people who always appears impeccably presented – which is why it's reassuring, as I smooth down my hair from the cycle ride, to notice that he's wearing one poppy-red sock and one powder-blue.

He casually crosses and uncrosses his ankles, settled in a low sofa in the office of his boss, Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman, and there's something about his apparent lack of concern at the mismatch that seems at odds with his nature.

Before I can formulate a polite version of the odd-socks question, though, he fills the silence with a self-deprecating reflection on whether he's going to “balls up” the interview, which segues naturally into a discussion about the perils of public engagement.

“We've been debating a lot internally,” he

admits. Given the hot water some of the inspectorate's employees have been getting into, one would hope this is the case. “We've seen how high tensions can run on Twitter and social media, and there's a danger you get sucked in.”

These debates are all fairly new to Ofsted. Before Spielman took over as chief inspector last year, only HMI were allowed to speak publicly.

Spielman changed all that, says Tryl. “The first thing she did was she said, ‘Well, that's ridiculous because it means we've got a whole research team who can't talk about the findings.’ So she's much more keen on people going up there.” The downside, of course, is that “it places a premium on you knowing when to step away – of knowing, actually, that when I've been out for a glass wine is probably not the time to engage”.

Tryl won't talk specifics – and certainly won't be drawn on the infamous spat, one Saturday evening in September, when Ofsted's director of education, Sean Harford,

told the joint general secretary of the country's largest education union, Mary Bousted, that it was “impossible, under your leadership, to try to work with your union to improve things for all in education”.

Harford answers directly to Spielman. However, it's ultimately Tryl's job, as the senior manager in charge of research and communications, to navigate such issues.

Tryl has experience – he handled most of the press during his two years as special adviser (SpAd) to Nicky Morgan during her time as education secretary.

This means he was somewhat prepared when the Daily Mail ran a smear story last year claiming that he was pushing the LGBT agenda in schools. Based on the fact he used to work for campaigning charity Stonewall, they concluded he was responsible for the inspectorate taking a hard line on two Jewish schools (one of which was inspected before Tryl even joined Ofsted) that weren't teaching pupils about homosexuality.

What upsets him most – apart from the

Profile: Luke Tryl

fact that they didn't ask him for a comment – was the suggestion that Tryl, who is a practising Christian, had some kind of anti-religious agenda. On the contrary, he believes very strongly that a religion must be able to teach the tenets of its faith. "If they say, 'In our religion we do not condone gay relationships', or whatever, they should be able to. As long as they say, 'But under British law, gay marriage is allowed.'"

Interestingly, when he was a SpAd, he preferred his colleagues to handle anything to do with gay rights – so homophobic bullying in schools, for example – precisely because he wanted to avoid "blurred lines".

Instead, Tryl – who was previously Stonewall's head of education – focused on the "what's taught stuff. So, the sort of Nick Gibb agenda basically".

Tryl is an acolyte of the Gibb/Michael Gove academic-rigour-for-all philosophy. Like Gove, he was deeply affected by his own grammar school experience. "It genuinely changed my life, that school. They found whatever potential I had and pushed and pushed and pushed. They pushed me to apply to Oxford. They encouraged my reading, got me into debating. It's a big part of what motivates me now in education. I know you shouldn't rely on anecdote, but that school transformed my life, and I owe it so much."

Growing up with his mum and two younger sisters on the outskirts of Halifax, he was the first member of his family to go to university. And while he's not arguing for more grammar schools, he does want everyone to be able to experience the same level of academic rigour he was exposed to.

"I think in terms of equal opportunity for all, if you make all comprehensives really good so that everybody has a chance to move up at them, brilliant. At the same time, what people are now saying is that if you focus so much on curriculum and knowledge, you're leaving out the kids who just feel alienated by that hard curriculum."

That's still no reason to lower standards, he argues, echoing Gibb's concerns about the dangers of setting low expectations for some children, and defending the schools minister vehemently. "There is no one who cares more about disadvantaged pupils and young people, and it's because of that he



Tryl as special advisor to education secretary Nicky Morgan

doesn't want other people writing them off on their behalf," he insists. And while Gibb understands that not everyone is going to be able to get nines in EBacc, "what he doesn't

"It's probably best not to engage publicly when you've had a glass of wine"

want is that you start from the premise of "They can never do the EBacc".

Another of the reasons he remembers school fondly is that "it just allowed me to be".

Age 14, Tryl came out at school, and found his peers supportive. "We were in town, and there were some kids from another school who were shouting homophobic abuse, and I remember the guys from the rugby team at my school were the ones who went up to them and told them to shut up."

One year 7 lesson particularly stands out in his memory: "The teacher said, 'Oh, I'm going to talk to you about gay stuff because I think it's important. But you should know,

I'm not allowed to by law."

This was around 1999, when talking about homosexuality in schools was still illegal. "Then things just went whoof! You've got to give the New Labour government so much credit for that: civil partnerships, adoption, repeal of section 28, the Equality Act. It's amazing."

A lifelong politics nerd, Tryl named the family chickens after former prime ministers, according to character, so the warring pair were Gladstone and Disraeli. He's also a lifelong Tory.

"I'm told by my gran that, in 1992, when I was five, I stood outside a polling station telling people to vote for John Major, and she kept trying to shush me up."

By 14 he'd joined the Conservative party, a move for which he has no credible explanation. His family wasn't particularly interested in politics. "Apparently I used to like watching the news as a kid," he says, as if that settles the matter.

At Oxford University, where he studied history and politics, he focused on the cross-party politics in the Oxford Union, of which he was elected to the prestigious post of president for a term. He has campaigned in every general election since he was 14, so he struggled to stay out of it all in 2017, during his first election as a senior civil servant: "I was sort of biting my nails."

This was quite a contrast to 2015, when he moved to Loughborough and lived with

Profile: Luke Tryl

Morgan for the duration of her campaign. "Lots of ministers are in safe seats, so those SpAds will go work in CCHQ on policy and that kind of thing. Whereas, with me with a marginal seat, it was great fun. There were some less fun moments, like when we were doing morning media round at Salford studios and we turned up at this hotel in the middle of nowhere, and it was me, Nicky and a series of stag dos around us at 11 o'clock at night."

Since the "brutal" shock of being ousted in the 2016 post-Brexit reshuffle from what he thought was a five-year post, Tryl no longer makes plans for the future. When Theresa May became prime minister, Morgan was called to her Commons office – which is code for "You're losing your job", so she texted Tryl to let him know. "We had an hour to leave ... even before we cleared our desk, it was announced that Justine [Greening] was taking over, and she was on her way in with her people. It is absolutely brutal. I had such a great time working for Nicky. You hear all these stories of these monster MPs, but she's just the opposite.

"So I sort of went home, poured myself a strong gin and tonic and thought, 'What's next?'"

What was next was a brief spell working for the Public Policy Projects thinktank – which he refers to as his "funemployment" period, when he also learned to build habits to avoid professional burnout.

As a way of winding down from the day job, his equivalent of the cryptic crossword is evening classes in economics or undergraduate maths at Birkbeck University. He loves it because "it's just so different from sitting and writing a speech for Amanda".

Appointing Spielman as chief inspector was one of Morgan's last acts as education secretary, and it was a controversial one, overruling the education select committee, which had rejected her unanimously. Six months later, Tryl was appointed to the new strategy role at Ofsted.

Applying for the Ofsted role was a "no brainer" for Tryl, who obviously admires the chief inspector. Allegations that the inspectorate is too close to the DfE are ridiculous, he says, because "we, and Amanda in particular, guard our independence quite jealously".



At the dispatch box in an Oxford Union debate

There's a different rumour bubbling away, however, that Spielman is brilliant at appearing to be aligned with the DfE in public, but behind the scenes is on a collision course with ministers over which matters more: curriculum or results. So where will this end? Is she going to try to force Damian Hinds to change school accountability measures?

Quite the contrary, says Tryl, quoting John

“Grammar school genuinely changed my life”

Patten, the education secretary who created Ofsted, who said they deliberately brought in performance tables and Ofsted at the same time, "so that one could do what the other can't".

The inevitable consequence of this, though, is that schools are stuck with having to serve two contradictory masters – and not knowing which one they are supposed to keep happy.

The answer is Ofsted, says Tryl, insisting

that Hinds has made this quite clear. "I don't think perhaps enough was made of it, but when the secretary of state said at NAHT [the National Association of Head Teachers conference in May], 'The only thing that will lead to a school being converted to an academy, or will lead to a formal intervention from the department, is an Ofsted inadequate judgment.' It was very squarely saying, 'Actually it's us'. So that places a premium on us, taking into account those results, but telling a story around them – to help mitigate Campbell's law, that any system of measurement will lead to some form of gaming."

Tryl's speech is measured and well paced; his sentences thoughtful and well constructed. In fact, he seems far too, well, "together" to have made his sock choice absentmindedly. So what is it? Some kind of statement, or is he just in too much of a rush in the morning?

Originally the latter, he grins. Then once, as Morgan's SpAd, he got told off by David Cameron's private secretary for wearing mismatched socks to a meeting. "Being stubborn, I then stuck with it."

So what would he do if he could only find a matching pair?

He laughs. "Panic?"

Opinion

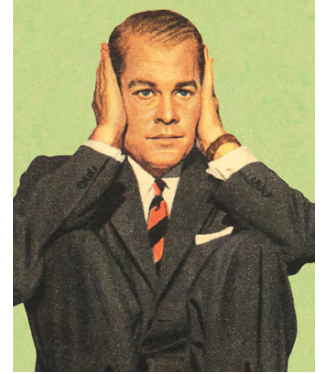
DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
CONTACT US NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

You can deny the debate all you like, says Tom Bennett, but sticking your fingers in your ears won't make it go away



TOM BENNETT

Government behaviour advisor and founder, researchEd



Flipping the trad-prog dichotomy on its head

When I began to teach, I was as unaware of the ideological framework it existed within as a fish is of water. It was progressivism, the famously child-centred educational philosophy that had enjoyed a slow climb to international ubiquity since its birth in the 19th century.

Recent years have seen somewhat of a pushback, mostly from rank-and-file teachers who have learned to embrace a range of alternative, usually more evidence-informed strategies that are sometimes gathered under the label of neotraditionalism. Some claim that this is a pointless debate. I'd argue that understanding these terms is the first duty of the educator-in-training.

What's interesting is that no "neotrad" thinks children should never work in groups, nor be asked to discover information independently. Traditionalism doesn't mean only "direct instruction always", and progressive doesn't mean "never tell children a fact". Both positions already permit elements of child-led and teacher-led strategies.

So, the argument that "in real classrooms there are no trads or progs, just teachers" is superficially seductive, but wrong. In real life there are classrooms where child-led strategies are seen as superior and used even when they might be inappropriate. And then there are classrooms where the balance might tip far, far the other way.

This doesn't deny that

progressivism and neotraditionalism themselves are meaningful ideologies, any more than capitalism or communism are not real ideologies. Cuba is still broadly communist and America broadly liberal-capitalist, despite the presence of Coca-Cola in Havana and public sanitation in Boston.

Neotraditionalism has only recently

people more commonly described as progressives who are now the traditionalists, and who are often the reactionaries against the encroaching tsunami of time and evolution. And, extending this metaphor, the ones who now champion the architecture of a better future are the so-called neotraditionalists – who should more accurately be called

“ The progressives are now the traditionalists ”

invented itself. This is partly as a reaction against some of the perceived deficiencies of progressivism – its failure to deliver the kind of progress it promised, for example – but also in light of emerging advances in fields like cognitive psychology, statistics etc that point to a more perfect understanding of how students actually learn. As evidence gathers in these arenas, old dogmas fall like dominos. And as they do, the high priests of the past fight to retain their status, as gatekeepers of every generation do before being overthrown by ... why, progress.

In this new landscape, it's the

neoproggressives. Because what could be more progressive than championing science and reason and evidence, and marrying that with craft and experience and wisdom, for the mutual benefit of student and teacher?

The last factor that has catalysed this debate is social media, without which I doubt we would even be considering these issues. Because it is in social media, not the rarefied hierarchies of the academy, that these arguments have broken out like wildfire, and rightly so. We have witnessed a reformation of the church of education, and its revolutionaries

are to be found online, saying what they wish about matters they were previously structurally prevented from commenting on. The furthest your opinion could reach used to be the back of the classroom; today, it spans the globe in an instant.

We now see healthy and mature conversations happening all the time between peers, thoughtfully developing their own schema and taxonomies without requiring permission. These debates are profound and necessary. Without them we would all still be writing about learning styles and thinking hats and diamond nines. At times the debate is rough, but then, like burglary, 99% of the crimes are committed by 1% of the population, and it's easy to block and get the burglars to behave.

I sometimes hear people say that social media isn't as positive as it used to be. Nonsense. What has happened is that its participants are now so many that it starts to reflect all human discourse, and the galaxy of views that entertains. Some of that is knuckle-headed and crude, just like people in general. But the solution to stubbing your toe isn't to ban table legs, but to take care.

Opinion



KATIE WALDEGRAVE

Director, Now Teach

How schools can support older teachers to join the profession

Older teachers bring experience, wisdom and resilience, says Katie Waldegrave, and there are many ways in which schools can tempt them into the classroom

Four years ago Nicky Morgan commissioned a report into the effect of increasing retirement ages on teachers. It was something of a relief, last week, to read the resulting Department for Education report, *Teachers working longer*, which concludes that there are no observable “negative impacts” in students’ educational attainment linked to the ageing of their teachers.

Two years ago, I co-founded Now Teach with ex-Financial Times journalist Lucy Kellaway. Kellaway, who was 57 at the time, had wanted to become a teacher, but nobody seemed to be actively recruiting people of her age. In fact, in 2015, only 76 people over the age of 55 had trained to teach. Since then, Now Teach has launched 120 older professionals (average age 55) into careers as teachers.

This is set to become an increasing trend. People are living longer and working patterns are changing. If we are going to be working for 60 years

and more, then we have to think more carefully about the pattern of a career over a lifetime.

Add to this the stark warnings about the teacher recruitment and

retention crisis in the recent NFER report, and it is evident schools need to be both retaining good teachers for longer, and encouraging older people into the profession. So what can schools do?

The need for more flexible working options was one issue raised by the DfE report. Other professions manage job sharing and part-time working far more systematically than teaching does at present. For example, 42% of UK women work part-time, but the figure for female teachers is 25%.

In recognition of the fact that our trainees need some flexibility, Now Teach offers older professionals the opportunity to train on four



days a week. Of course, the majority of older teachers, now and in the future, will be those who have been in the profession for most of their lives — but they, too, ought to be offered flexibility, and schools

“ Schools who respect their older staff will benefit hugely

need support in managing the timetabling changes this would require.

It is also important for school leaders to think carefully about how to effectively utilise the skills and knowledge of very experienced staff who have chosen not to go into management. Our trainees are often very clear that they do not want to pursue leadership positions; they are changing career to be in the classroom. Lots of longer-serving teachers make the same decision, and often they have many more years of experience in school than the middle and senior leaders they are working under. An ethos of valuing that experience needs to be

instilled in schools — as the DfE report noted, mentorship can run both ways.

Schools who respect their older staff will benefit hugely: research suggests that as we get older, we get better at handling stress and become more resilient.

And for the young people in our schools, seeing a diverse staff helps them learn about how to interact with people of different backgrounds and experiences, including those who are substantially older than them. Older staff can draw on their life experience and offer students careers and pastoral advice that younger staff might not be able to. Our trainees are bringing into their schools an awareness of the workplace, and direct links to it, which are already making a difference for the students they teach. For example, last week one of our teachers — former journalist Alastair Wanklyn — was behind an impressive campaign that saw hundreds of children petitioning the Football Association to pay Wembley workers the living wage.

There are many moving parts to the solution to the current problems in teacher recruitment and retention. But it is vital that the profession supports and values older teachers, whether they’ve been in the classroom since they left university or joined last week from another career. The government now has an excellent blueprint for helping schools do just that, and it is up to all of us to support it.

Opinion

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

Forget expensive, complex intervention strategies, says Sir David Carter – the best investment is to focus on the capacity, capability and competence of teachers



SIR DAVID CARTER

Executive director of system leadership at Ambition School Leadership and the Institute for Teaching

What are the conditions we need to create for our teachers to grow?

Teacher development is the responsibility of the whole system. MAT CEOs, school leaders, school improvers, universities, local authorities and, of course, the Department for Education must all place teacher development at the core of their educational strategy.

For too many years schools have set up complex and expensive intervention strategies to compensate for learning that has been weak and insecure. If I have learned one thing in 35 years it is that the best investment and the most effective means of reducing the reliance on intervention is to focus on the capacity, the capability and the competence of teachers.

But what does this look like in practice?

Naturally, a school in which the learning of everyone (children, staff and parents) is valued will have more chance of facilitating growth than one that does not. However, I think it is too simplistic to say that a culture of learning will facilitate growth just because it appears to be the mantra of the organisation. Here are three focus areas that I've seen making a difference in schools:

- The learning is purposeful and coordinated and evolves from a whole-school objective to improve a particular standard.
- Teachers are expected to own their personal development and

to be demanding of their leaders in helping them to access it.

- The culture relies on stimulation from outside the school – other schools and colleges, universities, research papers, or speakers with a different experience to share.

Teacher welfare is another vital component. Leaders who have responsibility for ensuring that

first challenges I would set myself would be to work with teachers across the trust to develop and implement a workforce development plan. In it would be five chapters, each owned by a separate group of teachers. If my trust were to educate children from the ages of four to 19, then these teacher groups would be cross-phase to emphasise the value

“ Teachers need to grow as people as well as professionals

teaching is as good as it possibly can be must recognise that teachers need to grow as people as well as professionals. The best trusts and schools plan for the wellbeing of their staff as well as their professional capability. While the responsibility of leaders to support great teaching is paramount, a leadership team that does not see its teachers as people leading real lives will never get the full benefit of a talented workforce committed to improving life chances for children.

If I were to return to being a CEO of a multi-academy trust, one of the

of seeing the entire learning journey from pre-school to pre-university or employment.

This is what the structure of the workforce development plan would look like:

1. **What does it mean to be a teacher?** How do I build my confidence and how do I perceive my contribution to the education of the children in my school?
2. **How do I lead learning in my classroom?** Many teachers love teaching and at this stage may not want to be a leader. What they do



see is how the features of the best leaders they work with are evident in the way they organise learning in their classroom.

3. How do I influence the classroom next door? The schools that have the best learning cultures have open doors where teaching and learning is observable. Great pedagogy is not owned by the most experienced teachers. Sharing and transmitting great ideas is part of individual and organisational growth.

4. Who is responsible for my development and how do I own my learning? This would be the most important chapter in the plan, since it enables development needs and opportunities to be identified and articulated by those who will benefit most from them.

5. How can I maximise the usefulness of feedback? This chapter would have two purposes. First, to talk about how feedback is given and how effective it is in growing the capacity of the workforce, and, second, to expose teachers to the skill of giving feedback and how important it is to get it right.

Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



Visible Learning Feedback

Author: Authors: John Hattie and Shirley Clarke

Publisher: Routledge

Reviewed by: Ben Ward, Assistant Vice Principal, Curriculum and Assessment

Whatever your thoughts on the value of meta-analysis, or views on the finer points of effect sizes, it is widely accepted that feedback can be a powerful tool in a teacher's pedagogical repertoire. Yet research would suggest as much as a third of feedback can have a negative impact on progress, and much of the rest makes little difference.

So, what makes feedback powerful? And why is it so variable? Two big questions.

When a heavyweight of the educational landscape such as Hattie writes a new book addressing those questions, you take notice. John Hattie, writing with Shirley Clarke, whom I confess I had not heard of but who has quite the formative assessment CV, aim to combine a summary of the theory and research, with case studies and practical application to provide greater clarity around effective feedback.

The book has just five chapters to structure its 170-plus pages, and the first of those is barely six pages long. It starts by framing the problem above, then discusses the need for a "feedback culture". Next it considers teaching and learning frameworks, then in-lesson verbal feedback, and finally post-lesson feedback. Each chapter begins with a review of the literature and discusses a wide range of research sources, mostly organised thematically. They then become more practical, weaving in some examples and case studies, before summarising key points.

Its meandering style, with multiple

detailed and long lists of bullet points, themes that vary in their connectivity, and density of information make it quite hard to read. The chapters are long, with so many threads that each needs reading several times before you are able to start to construct any meaningful schema.

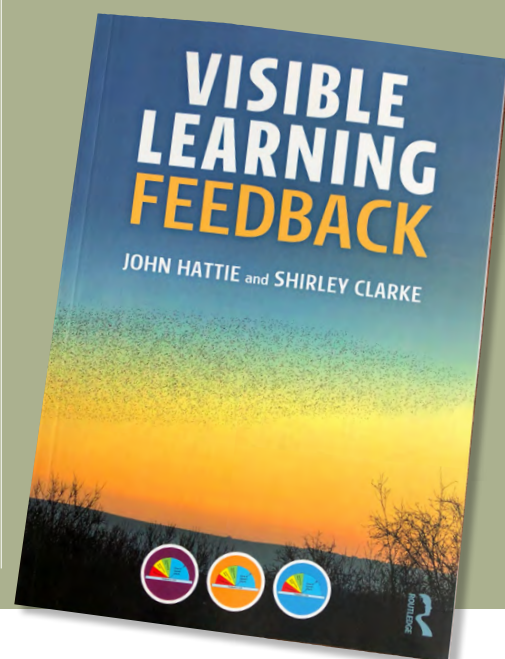
That said, the density and range of references that Hattie and Clarke draw on throughout the book is impressive. If you invest the time (and probably a highlighter, notebook and pen) this could be a valuable resource in developing a greater understanding of the nuance of effective feedback. The case studies are varied and while some feel a little twee, others are interesting and insightful. It pays no heed to debates around knowledge versus skills, or teachers as experts or facilitators. It touches on cognitive load theory, growth mindset, knowledge curricula, inquiry and discovery approaches, building learning power... the list goes on.

Which brings me to my biggest issue with the book. I am not sure what it wants to be, or who it is aimed at. I've tried to imagine who would gain the most by reading it, or who would enjoy its style and structure. And I'm just not sure. Its structure makes it really hard to dip into or use as a reference book. But its writing style makes it hard to settle in for a long read. It's not practical or clear and concise enough to be a good introduction to the underpinning theory, yet it doesn't go deep enough into any themes or ideas to really get

someone with a greater degree of expertise to think again about their practice.

If you were considering reworking your school feedback and marking policy, there is a great section near the end considering the whole school. If you are interested in a culture where feedback is given and received positively, actively sought and engaged with, the culture chapter has lots of food for thought. There is lots to commend this book, it just isn't a coherent journey, or easy to dip into.

Perhaps this book is ultimately reflective of a complex and nuanced topic. Perhaps there is no simple answer to the questions, what makes feedback powerful and why is it so variable? We know in education there are no silver bullets. This book will certainly be added to my shelf, the references have left me with further reading I now want to do, and next time I deliver training on feedback some of the considerations in here may well feature.



Research

Every month Harry Fletcher-Wood reviews the evidence on a school-related theme. Contact him on Twitter @HFletcherWood if you have a topic you would like him to cover.

What's the most effective way to use text messaging in schools?

Harry Fletcher-Wood, associate dean at the Institute for Teaching

Most schools have a text-message service to contact parents, but usually it's used only in emergencies – a snow day, for example. Yet text messages have been tested successfully in a variety of ways, improving students' attendance, learning and progression to university.

One study asked students to nominate study supporters: 40% of those nominated were immediate family members and 40% were peers. The study supporters received weekly messages with conversation prompts. For example:

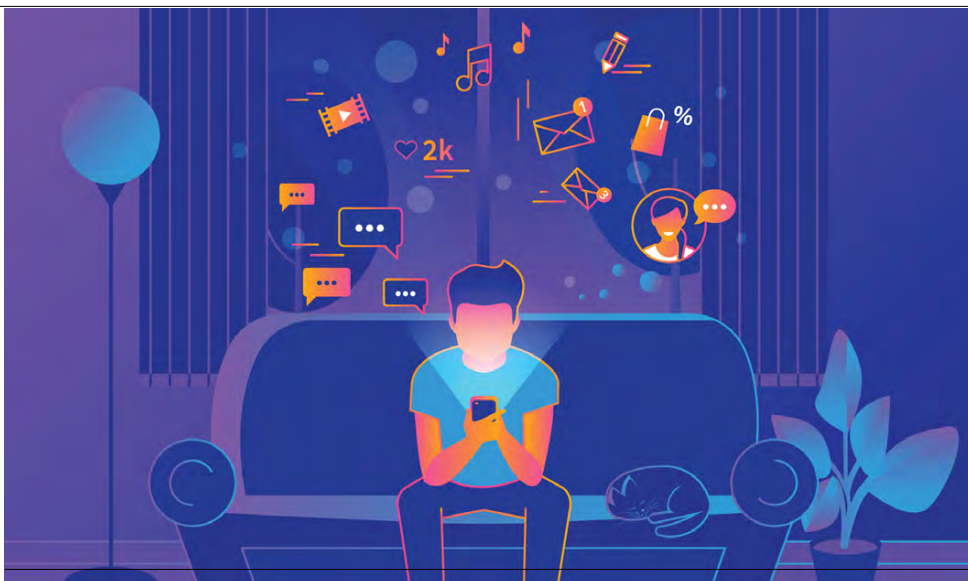
"Hi [supporter forename], [learner forename] has recently learned about percentages. Ask [him/her] to calculate the final price of a £250 TV after adding 20% VAT (tax on things you buy) and show you how [he/she] worked it out. Thanks, [College]"

The overall result was an increase in attendance of 4.2 percentage points, with the intervention apparently more effective among those studying GCSE courses than (older) students studying functional skills qualifications, and among those studying maths than English.

[Groot, B., Sanders, M., Rogers, T., Bloomenthal, E. \(2017\). I get by with a little help from my friends: Two field experiments on social support and attendance in further education colleges in the UK. Behavioural Insights Team](#)

Another study texted Further Education students directly, seeking to increase motivation, planning and social connectedness, in order to boost attendance. One message read: "[Student's name], well done, you've reached the mid term break! Take time to practice what you've learned and stay connected: [Class Facebook link; College's name]". The messages increased led to an increase in attendance of 7.3% compared with students who did not receive the messages, and an increase in the rate at which they passed their courses of 8.7%.

[Chande, R., Luca, M., Sanders, M., Soon, X., Borcan, O., Barak-Corren, N., Linos, E., Kirkman, E., Robinson.](#)



[S. \(2017\). Increasing attendance and attainment among adult students in the UK: Evidence from a field experiment. Behavioural Insights Team Working Paper](#)

Can these approaches work at scale? The Education Endowment Foundation sponsored a trial that texted parents to alert them to tests and missing homework, and to provide conversation prompts for parents to discuss work with students. On average, schools sent about 30 messages a year: they led to a small but significant increase in maths scores and attendance. Parents were positive about the messages – unless the information was wrong – and students were fairly positive too. Teachers seemed keen, but struggled to provide the information needed to compose conversational prompts about recent learning for parents. While the effect wasn't huge, the evaluation concluded that it was worth doing, given the limited cost of the programme.

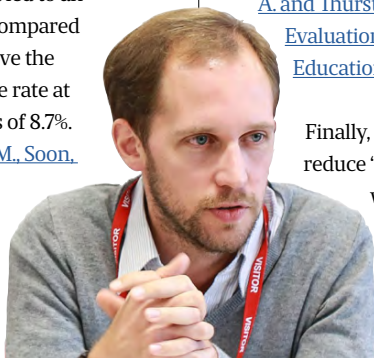
[Miller, S., Davison, J., Yohanis, J., Sloan, S., Gildea, A. and Thurston, A. \(2016\). Texting Parents: Evaluation report and executive summary. Education Endowment Foundation.](#)

Finally, an American study sought to reduce "summer melt", where students who intend to go to university gain the necessary grades

but never enrol. It tested sending text messages every five days over the summer period. The messages sent links to their university's web portal and encouraged students to register for accommodation, entry tests and orientation tasks. They also offered help in applying for financial support and understanding the related documents. The messages "substantially increased enrolment among students with less access to college-planning supports and who were not as far along with their college planning at the completion of high school". This effect was strong in small towns where there may be limited existing guidance about going to university, and seems to provide a low-cost, effective way to encourage students to complete the tasks needed to matriculate.

[Castleman, B., and Page, L., \(2014\). Summer nudging: Can personalized text messages and peer mentor outreach increase college going among low-income high school graduates? Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization 115, pp. 144–160.](#)

Overall, whether we are texting parents, students or friends, and whether we focus on tests, attendance or conversational prompts, text messages seem to offer a low-cost way to help bridge the gap between schools and home, and between good intentions and action.



Reviews



Julia Skinner is a retired headteacher, who is now a trustee and founder of the 100 Word Challenge

@THEHEADSOFFICE

Governors don't know what they don't know – but should they?

@GovPurple

This is a great blog from a very experienced, knowledgeable governor, focusing on what governors should be doing, but many are not. Her description of what governance used to be like is reminiscent of the parish council in *The Vicar of Dibley*, complete with pipe-smoking. What's worrying, however, is the revelation from her experience conducting external reviews, that there are still boards that include "the 'cup of tea, sticky bun and agreeing with the headteacher' brigade". Despite being voluntary, the role of a governor now needs real commitment to keep up to date – so ask questions and get your voice heard!

School curriculum change: What is the role for governors?

@MarcNeesam

This post examines the dilemma often faced by governors over how not to stray from the strategic into the operational. The skills that governors bring to the table, often purposely selected, sometimes lead them to cross that hallowed line. In this case, the writer's expertise is in curriculum design and

TOP BLOGS of the week

development. The blog gives advice on "how to frame curriculum discussions governors should be involved in" – the set of questions for governors to ask is particularly useful to help those non-educationists who may feel adrift when it comes to fully understanding what is actually taught in schools.

Governors; necessity or nuisance in pay decisions?

@mm684

Just where does the power lie when it comes to decisions about teachers' pay? This post explains that it is the responsibility of the governing board and not the headteacher, as some may think. The process is clearly complicated, and, although the writer does try to set out some of the procedure, I found myself getting a bit lost. Nevertheless, the message is that teachers should not be worried about their pay progression – it should be part of an agreed policy. However, judging from the confusion around, I suspect there may be schools where that policy has not been agreed.

A governor's view of the bigger picture

@moderngovernor

This is a very emotive post that not only rallies governors to the cause but also tells the government and society that "governors/trustees have a right to be at the centre of the debate about the future

direction of our education system". The main concern is about funding but it goes deeper than that. It really questions whether governors are doing their job of championing the children in their schools. The set of self-reflective questions at the end will hopefully kickstart the debate.

The thoughts of a newish governor

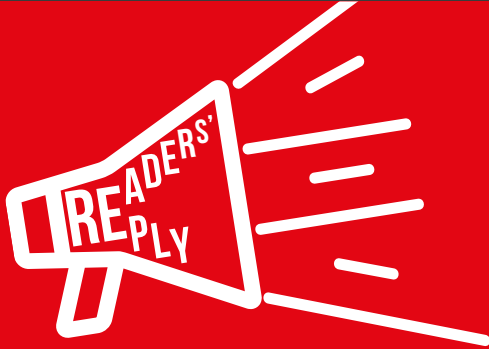
@moderngovernor

This is the first foray into blogging by this experienced governor, and it was the issue of funding that got them to reach for the keypad. The post outlines the work and dedication that many governors employ in their role of supporting their schools – not only through attendance at meetings but also from really getting to grips with specific areas, in this case the curriculum. However, the writer's concern is whether they can continue to support the staff team when the ongoing reduction of finances means that the quality of experience for pupils will be reduced.

Why getting diverse bums on seats is not enough

@Penny_Ten

The posts highlighted this week all have a similar theme, which is the role and voice of governors. However, a school needs a board to begin with. Penny Rabiger is a well-known Twitter presence who advocates for diversity and is prepared to debate the topic when it can feel like there is an elephant in the room. In this blog she is robust in her condemnation of the lack of diversity on school boards, and cites a variety of evidence showing that diverse boards perform more effectively. She reminds us of "the uncomfortable truth that we are all socialised and subtly conditioned". However, getting a variety of people of different backgrounds, genders and cultures is not enough. There is an "inherent bias" that we have to counter, which goes way beyond just appointing people who look different from the usual middle-class white male. The gauntlet is thrown down, and help is at hand with a useful reading list to get us started.



Online progs vs trads debate 'too polarised', warns Ofsted research chief

Michael Pye

Conflict exists for a reason and those causes need addressing. As someone who would be identified as a traditionalist I find the dismissal of the debate frustrating (and that is not my preferred term: explicit, evidenced-based teaching would be, see how that term changes our perception). After training I spent years on progressive teaching methods struggling to make them work before finally reading the research myself and discovering I had been severely misled.

@helenjwc

This isn't helped by @Ofstednews themselves favouring one over the other. Improve the range of people you talk to Ofsted and this might help.

@gillditch55

Agree totally! Am fed up to back teeth of the binary view that you are one or the other. This labelling is unnecessary & gets in the way of proper debate.

Heads question methods of glossy Westminster mag that charges £3,500 for exposure

James Noble-Rogers

People are right to be wary of this publication. At first it feels like something of an honour to be asked to contribute. Only later do they make it clear how much it will cost. I was nearly, but not quite, taken in. The public figures who put their names to it should be ashamed.

Martyn Sibley

I too was nearly taken in by this publication. I recommend great caution. I do not remember being advised that it was an 'independent organisation' in the initial telephone call either. The well-spoken young man inferred that I would be mad not to take up this incredible 'opportunity' to raise our profile and that the school had been especially 'selected'. None of it added up.... no better than a scam, in my opinion.

Ofsted plans school funding cuts research

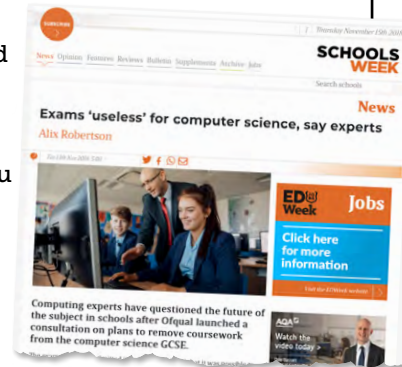
@AssemblyTube

Another way to kick the issue into the long grass. Remember Nicky Morgan pledging to reduce workload? Just set up a

REPLY OF THE WEEK **Bob Harrison**

Exams 'useless' for computer science, say experts

Assessing a computing qualification by pen and paper is like learning to drive in an F1 car but being tested on how you ride a horse (credited to Prof Stephen Heppell). It is also a sad indictment of the lack of investment in the digital infrastructure of our schools and colleges when paper and ink is a more relevant, reliable and valid instrument of assessment than digital technology.



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

consultation and you don't have to do anything for the next four years!

@richardbullard2

Research? Just listen to those leading and working in schools. It's not that hard surely.

@DrRLothouse

Ok @Ofstednews - do your thing. But let's hope that there is an open call for evidence for this research - not a closed shop of schools who might provide the 'necessary response'.

Pupils will get 6 seconds to complete times tables test questions

Tom Burkard

It is true that high-ability pupils can make good progress in maths despite a lack of automatic recall of number facts, but for most, it's a very significant handicap. Cozad and Riccomini (2016) conclude: "Reaching automatic recall allows students to off-load their working memory and better maximize their processing capacity to devote to reasoning and problem solving tasks (Geary 2013)...Many curricula however, do not provide sufficient practice (NMAP, 2008; Witzel & Riccomini, 2007)."

@hopkinsmmi

Given this is not to be diagnostic, what is it's point - just another stick to beat schools? Set up invalid 'league tables' and offer false 'progress measures'?

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

MONDAY

It's anti-bullying week, but DfE ministers clearly didn't get the dress code memo ahead of the big launch at Sanctuary Buildings.

The six politicians were pictured grinning in Damian Hinds' office, all wearing odd socks for the occasion.

However, upon closer inspection, it's clear that the MPs didn't prepare their odd socks in advance, but rather swapped between themselves after arriving at work.

Either that or the education secretary has an extensive sock drawer in his office...

Later, at education questions, an odd-socked Nick Gibb appeared to be following a different set of marching orders to his DfE colleagues.

Asked for an update on the Troops to Teachers programme, a scheme aimed at getting armed-forces veterans into the classroom, the schools minister said he was "determined that it will continue".

Though once again we cannot fault Nick's enthusiasm for half-baked policies, it would be remiss of us not to point out that his determination is misplaced.

The government announced earlier this year that Troops to Teachers is to close and be replaced with a bursaries scheme.

Sorry to be the bearer of bad news, Nick. Maybe your colleagues can keep you up to speed next time.

TUESDAY

Still smarting from repeated slapdowns from the UK Statistics Authority, Conservative MPs decided to counter

opposition complaints about school funding by... yes, you guessed it... resorting to the same claims that got them in hot water in the first place! "Funding has risen by record levels," boasted an ecstatic Huw Merriman, seemingly forgetting that the number of pupils has also risen by "record levels".

"If the picture is so negative, why are almost two million more children being taught in schools that are good or outstanding than was the case in 2010?!" jeered James Carlidge, inflating the already contentious 1.9 million claim favoured by ministers.

We pity the workers in the UK Stats Authority mailroom...

WEDNESDAY

More teething problems for the government's new Get Information About Schools website this week.



The tool is supposed to be Edubase for the 21st century and has proved useful in some respects, but an apparent glitch means it is making some trusts look a lot more old-fashioned than they should.

Week in Westminster was stunned to learn, for example, that the Ashwood Multi Academy Trust opened on January 1, 1900, around a century before the

academies programme even began.

Here's to England's longest-running academy trust!

THURSDAY

The political world awoke to the sound of resignations as Brexiteers on the Tory frontbench fled in indignation over the government's EU withdrawal agreement.

But it wasn't just cabinet ministers Dominic Raab and Esther McVey who headed for the door.

There was also Anne-Marie Trevelyan, a Tory MP who has apparently been working as an aide to education secretary Damian Hinds (seriously, who knew?!).

Trevelyan was so hasty to get her resignation in to the PM, she managed to get the name of her own department wrong, writing that it was "with a profoundly heavy heart that I tender my resignation as parliamentary private secretary in the Department of Education [sic]".

Meanwhile, as Jacob Rees-Mogg distracted everyone with his double-breasted suits and 150-year-old politics, the Department for Education unleashed a flurry of documents and announcements.

Warning notices sent to four academies in September and reviews of finances and governance carried out years ago at a doomed academy trust were published, and officials also announced the opening of bids for its new wave of VA schools.

Good job everyone was paying attention!



AMNUAY SILPA

First Thinking School
in Asia

AMNUAY SILPA SCHOOL, BANGKOK, THAILAND

Amnuay Silpa, the leading bilingual school in Thailand is dedicated to preserving the Thai Language and Culture in our students by successfully implementing a unique Synchronised Dual Teaching Model, incorporating the UK and Thai Curriculum (taught by Thai teaching staff). Providing high quality education to over 1000 pupils aged 3-18, Amnuay Silpa is an exciting, dynamic place to teach, with a very clear vision for the future. In 2013 ANS was accredited by Exeter University as the First Thinking School in Asia and in 2016 awarded Advanced Thinking status. As the hub of excellence in the thinking approach, we are able to provide excellent professional development opportunities for those successfully appointed. In June 2017 ANS became a CIS Member School.

Required for April 2019 (the start of the Thai academic year) and July 2019:

- Primary Class Teachers (EY, KS1, KS2)
- Secondary Maths Teacher and Maths HoD
- Secondary Science Teacher and Science HoD
- Secondary Art and Art/DT Teacher
- Foundation Phase Deputy Headteacher

The package includes:

- Two year contract (renewable)
- Competitive salary (paid in Thai Baht)
- Private medical insurance
- Flight in and out of Bangkok at the commencement and completion of the contract
- End of service gratuity
- Small, well-resourced classes

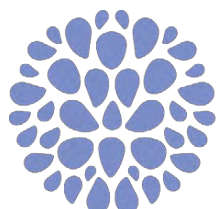
To apply please contact the School Principal, **Mr Joseph Pine** at applications@amnuaysilpa.ac.th. Applications are by the official application form only. Further information can also be found on the school website www.amnuaysilpa.ac.th

CLOSING DATE: 30th November 2018

ANS is committed to Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding students and all candidates are expected to provide an Enhanced Police Check and complete a self-disclosure form.

Interviews will be held in London from **Sunday 9th December 2018** onwards.

www.amnuaysilpa.ac.th



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 NESA.*

ED JOBS
Week

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
SCHOOLS WEEK
AND FE WEEK

MAKING THE RESEARCH EASY

**Start your search for a new role today.
Search through hundreds of premium jobs from
across the education sector.**



Visit www.educationweekjobs.co.uk

To place a recruitment advert get in touch at:
advertising@educationweekjobs.co.uk or call: 020 8123 4778.

Roles from organisations including:

