

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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

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A TRAD MANIFESTO FOR  
CLOSING THE GAP



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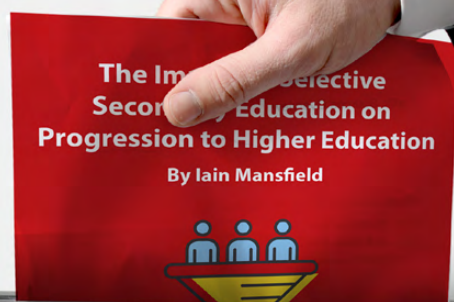
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FRIDAY, JAN 11, 2019 | EDITION 162



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FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

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# SCHOOLS WEEK

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## The school using inclusion to reduce exclusion



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# News: Grammar schools

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## Was grammar schools research selective with the truth?

JESS STAUFENBERG

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INVESTIGATES

Academics have shot down a controversial report that claims grammar schools do boost social mobility and should be allowed to open "branch sites" in non-selective areas.

Education researchers have also reacted angrily to claims in the report, published by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), that they are from a "narrow segment of society" that's likely to vote Labour – so have "unconscious bias" against grammars.

The report, written by former civil servant Iain Mansfield, found the country's most disadvantaged pupils are twice as likely to attend Oxbridge if they live in a region with grammar schools.

But the methodology behind that finding, and other claims (see table on the right), have been roundly condemned by education academics. The positive findings over the impact of grammar schools also flies against stacks of research shooting down claims they boost social mobility.

Stephen Gorard, professor of education at Durham University and a specialist in research methodology, said of the report: "It's insulting. It's not about beliefs and opinions.

"I don't care if grammar schools work or not. It's not that the data is one-sided, it's that the academic evidence is pretty much at a consensus on this."

Mansfield claimed his report shows that "for many disadvantaged children, selective education makes a vital contribution to social mobility".

This was based on the finding that 45 per cent of pupils at grammar schools are from households "below median income". This is the same proxy for disadvantage the government tried to use last year to claim "ordinary working families" are well represented in grammar schools.

Nuala Burgess (pictured), chair of anti-grammar campaign group Comprehensive Future, said this measure actually includes many "lower middle class, well-educated families".

In fact, 70 per cent of all pupils in the country are defined as "below median household income", according to a blog

published by the University of Bath yesterday.

"The HEPI report does not mention this severe drawback" of the measure, it warned. Most reports on grammars use the free school meals measure as a proxy for disadvantage – which grammars do not perform anywhere near as well on.

Another finding shot down by academics was that 39 per cent of pupils in selective schools progress into highly selective universities, compared with just 23 per cent in comprehensive areas.

Burgess said it was "disingenuous" to compare university entry from selective authorities when grammar schools "import vast numbers of high attaining pupils from non-selective areas."

For instance, Southend grammar schools import more than 50 per cent of their pupils from outside the authority.

But academics have been further riled by claims by Mansfield, who was a Conservative councillor candidate, that academics are out of touch with the general public because "by their nature, they are overwhelmingly from a very narrow segment of society" due to their university education and high income.

Academic researchers are also likely to be "unrepresentative politically", he said,



citing a Times Higher Education survey which found seven per cent of academics voted Conservative compared to 54 per cent who voted Labour at the last election.

He added there was "an obvious comparison to Brexit", with its "overwhelmingly Remain 'establishment'".

The report stated "none of this is to suggest that the views of experts are not genuinely held; however, such discrepancies should make us alert to unconscious bias".

Gorard said it was "insulting" to suggest research hasn't been carried out by professionals "simply trying to find the answer."

But Nick Hillman, HEPI's director, added: "Researchers line up to condemn them for inhibiting social mobility, and the schools do not perform well on every single measure.

"But the full evidence is more nuanced and shows some pupils benefit a great deal."

The report urged the government to consider upping the £200 million selective school expansion fund so grammars can set up branch sites in disadvantaged areas, where there is support from the local authority.

He also called for the DfE to commission further research on grammars and social mobility, but for the research team or advisory panel to have "at least one supporter and at least one opponent of grammars".

### Do the claims stack up?

1. 45% of grammar pupils come from 'below median income' households.
 

A. This is based on a DfE technical report, which actually states the research was provisional and "caution should be taken in drawing definitive conclusions". Academics said the measure could encompass 70 per cent of pupils.
2. 39 per cent of state pupils in selective school areas progress from state schools to highly-selective unis, compared to just 23 per cent in comprehensive areas
 

A. Academics say this is a "naïve" comparison – as grammar areas have specific characteristics, such as being generally more affluent. They also said the claim doesn't acknowledge grammars hoover up bright kids from neighbouring non-selective areas.
3. A state school pupil with a BME background is more than five times as likely to progress to Oxbridge if they live in a selective area.
 

A. This figure is skewed by the high-attaining groups such as Chinese and Indian pupils, academics said. Previous research shows grammars take fewer lower-attaining groups, such as black African and Caribbean.

## News

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## DfE to appoint new director of funding

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EXCLUSIVE

The government is preparing to launch a funding "centre of excellence" that will be led by its first overall director of funding.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is expected to announce who has been given the coveted position soon. The successful candidate will be responsible for the "development, implementation and maintenance of a truly 21st-century funding system", according to a job description advertised late last year.

The funding director, who will control more than £63 billion of government money, will take charge of delivering the national funding formula for pre-16 schools and the post-16 funding agenda, including apprenticeships.

The job description said the ESFA was "moving towards a single funding operations centre of excellence, bringing together and improving existing functions".

The Department for Education would not provide further details, but the term "centres of excellence" has become fairly common in business. A company sets up a centre of excellence that as well as an operational role, also takes on improving expertise and discovering best practice that it shares between departments.

This approach has been taken by other government departments. For example, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs runs an Earth observations centre of excellence, alongside other external partners, to focus on how data from satellites complements existing data to deliver policy and services. And the Department of Health and Social Care is piloting a best practice centre to improve the management of existing private finance initiative deals.

The new funding director will focus on national policies and work alongside fellow ESFA directors Mike Pettifer (academies and maintained schools group), Peter Mucklow (further education) and Keith Smith (apprenticeships).

He or she will take up the post at a time of change for the ESFA. The delayed national funding formula for schools will not be rolled out until 2021, with the government facing increasing pressure from schools for more funding.



EXCLUSIVE

## Only two groups bid for £4.8m MFL centre cash

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Only two groups put themselves forward to run the government's new £4.8 million "centre for excellence" to boost the stagnating take-up in modern foreign languages.

The University of York, announced yesterday as the successful bidder, will oversee the work of nine lead schools to raise the quality of language teaching, including in French, Spanish and German.

It comes as ministers were buoyed by a 0.4 per cent rise in modern foreign languages (MFL) entries at GCSE last year – the first rise in five years – although they remain concerned over slow uptake.

A source, who did not wish to be named, said the Department for Education was disappointed when just two bidders pitched in summer for the contract. It also emerged that two people involved in the winning bid had worked on a MFL review with an academy boss on the panel that judged submissions.

The University of York's bid was led by Emma Marsden, senior lecturer in second language education at the university, who will become the centre's director. Rachael Hawkes, director of international education and research for the Cam Academy Trust in Cambridge, will become co-director.

They previously worked with Ian Bauckham, the chief executive of the Tenax Schools Trust and the only non-DfE official to sit on the panel that awarded the contract, on a review of MFLs by the Teaching Schools Council in 2016. It was

the council that recommended the creation of the new centre for excellence.

Carmel O'Hagan, who previously worked at the National Centre for Languages until it was axed in 2011, has raised concerns of a potential conflict of interest, but Bauckham said any possible conflicts were "declared and very tightly managed at every stage".

He said it was "true Marsden and Hawke were on review group" but that was because "they're sector experts". They had submitted an "exceptionally strong proposal".

He also said there was a lack of language specialists with the right research background in the country, limiting the pool of potential applicants.

A DfE spokesperson said the tender was awarded to the bid that was "significantly stronger in all areas".

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said the university's bid showed it had the "vision and expertise to be at the forefront of the work to improve the way in which foreign languages were taught in schools and to increase the take-up of languages at GCSE".

Marsden said the investment offered a "unique opportunity for researchers and expert teachers to work together and draw on high-quality, international research into language learning and teaching".

Cardiff University has been chosen to run a programme in which students will mentor 200 year 9 pupils in ten schools for six weeks, online and in person. The aim is to inspire the pupils to take up languages at GCSE level and beyond.

# Investigation: School funding

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## School budgets raided of £22m to replace scrapped ESG funding

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EXCLUSIVE

School budgets have been raided to the tune of tens of millions of pounds by cash-strapped councils scrambling to make up an education services grant funding black hole.

Thirty-six local authorities have top-sliced more than £22.4 million from school budgets between them this year to make up for the loss of the education services grant, analysis shows.

Some councils charged over £60 per pupil.

The finding is heaping further pressure on already squeezed school budgets – which are also facing hikes in pension contributions amid squeezed funding.

The real top-slice figure is also likely to be much larger because dozens more councils have been given leave to skim money from schools. It is also understood more councils are set to ask permission from their schools forum to do the same next year.

At the same time, town halls have warned they are still top-slicing far less than they used to receive from the government, leaving them in a worse financial position to help their local schools.

Headteachers have hit out at the situation, calling it “classic robbing Peter to pay Paul”.

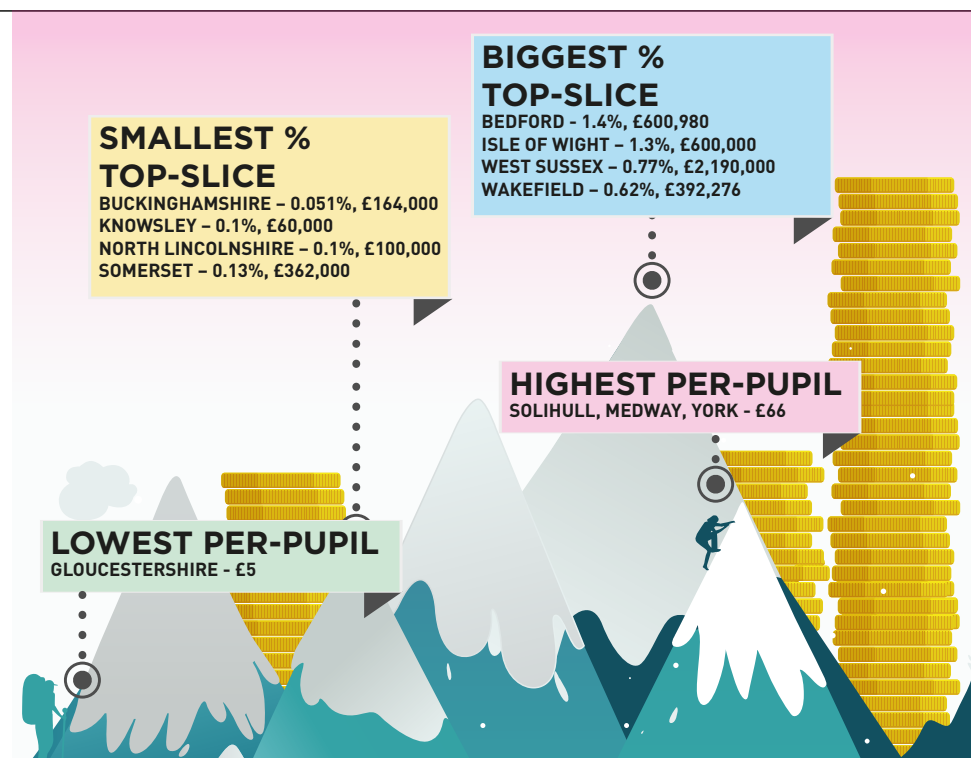
The education services grant was slashed in 2017, and although funding for councils to fulfil certain legal duties such as place planning was retained in the form of “central school services” funding, councils lost money for the general funding element of the ESG, which covered extra services such as legal costs and improvement services.

It was revealed last year that 61 councils had been granted permission by their schools forums to top-slice money for these general services – such as legal costs and improvement services – in 2018-19.

Of those, 36 responded to *Schools Week*'s enquiries, admitting to a combined top-slice of £22,419,459 million this year.

The highest top-slice rate was in Bedford, where the £600,980 top-slice in 2018-19 represents 1.4 per cent of the schools budget.

Other councils with a large top-slice were the Isle of Wight (£600,000, or 1.3 per cent), West Sussex (£2.2 million, or 0.77 per cent)



and Wakefield (£392,276, or 0.62 per cent).

Minutes from West Sussex's schools forum meeting in December 2017, where the top-slice was approved, show discontent among some members.

“Many responses commented on the impact of the charge on school budgets despite the increased funding allocated in as part of national funding formula arrangements,” it said.

“Other responses did not support the charges in view of the pressures on school budgets. Some responses reluctantly supported the proposed charge.”

A West Sussex County Council spokesman said it had had to “significantly reduce our costs for the services we provide our maintained schools.

“This ensures the amount we now charge schools for services like school improvement is kept to a minimum.”

Jules White, a West Sussex headteacher who leads the WorthLess? school funding campaign, told *Schools Week* the top-slicing was “classic robbing Peter to pay Paul”, and said his campaign stood in solidarity with councils forced to pass on the cuts in order to protect “critical services”.

The amount top-sliced per pupil also varies significantly between areas, from

£5 in Gloucestershire and £7.80 in North Lincolnshire to £66 in Medway, Solihull and York.

However, despite the high per-pupil rate charged, a Medway Council spokesperson said the money taken from schools “does not cover the full cost of delivering these services and we use funding from our own resources to cover the shortfall”.

Jasmine Ali, cabinet member for children, schools and adult care at Southwark Council, which took £350,000, or 0.13 per cent of the schools budget to pay for its services, said: “We really need the government to listen to councils, headteachers and parents about the very real impact that budget reductions are having.”

A DfE spokesperson said ending the ESG had been a “difficult decision”, and pointed to £450 million of funding that still helps councils with their retained duties.

“This new funding model means that local authorities can choose to fund some services for maintained schools from their schools' budgets, with the agreement of their local schools forum.

“There is a benefit to this flexibility as local authorities are best placed to understand the needs and requirements of their local area.”



## News

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## MPs: 'Keep us posted on school mental health teams'

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MPs want annual updates on a plan to introduce mental health support teams to work with schools.

The recommendation, from the parliamentary public accounts committee, follows an admission from the government that the new teams of clinicians may not reach every school in England for a decade.

Proposals for the teams form a key strand of the government's green paper on children and young people's mental health. Ministers have faced criticism over the timeframe of reforms – a pilot programme will start this year, but will only reach up to one in four schools by 2023.

The education and health committees last year criticised the government's plans, warning they "lack any ambition" and would put additional pressure on teachers without providing schools with extra resources.

Now the public accounts committee has turned up the pressure.

Given that the plan "only covers a minority of children and young people", the committee said the Department of Health and NHS England "should provide annual updates to the committee on progress in implementing and evaluating the pilot schemes for the mental health support teams in schools".

In its NHS Long Term Plan, published this week, the government said that by 2023-24, an extra 345,000 children would be able to access mental health support through local health services and new school-based mental health support teams.

But a goal of all children getting access to the specialist care they needed would only be achieved "over the coming decade", the document says.

The plan also reveals that the government is considering whether there was a "stronger role" for the NHS in commissioning school nurses, health visitors and other community health services.

In its report, the public accounts committee warned that services such as school nursing "face significant funding challenges", with many bodies having "reduced non-statutory support in recent years".

According to the Royal College of Nursing, the number of school nurses fell 16 per cent between April 2015 and January 2018.

INVESTIGATES

## Pooling cash stops trusts slipping into the red

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@JOHNDICKENSSW

Fewer academies are falling into the red because trusts are pooling budgets to iron out funding equalities across their schools, suggests a new report.

Academy freedoms allow trusts to move money from cash-rich schools to help those in trouble. Ministers like the flexibility as it can wipe out deficits in the present challenging funding climate.

But calls are growing for the government to investigate whether councils should take a firmer grip on their schools' funding.

*Schools Week* reported last month that the amount of "excess" surpluses posted by council schools last year was nearly £600 million – almost three times as much as the total £200 million deficits across all council schools.

A new report from the Education Policy Institute, published today, found that if councils recouped these surpluses, it would wipe out deficits in four-fifths of local authorities.

The Department for Education (DfE) defines an "excess" surplus as anything above 5 per cent of a secondary's total income or 8 per cent for primaries.

EPI's Jon Andrews warns that headteachers of these schools would be resistant to have that surplus stripped away to be handed to a school that may have been mismanaged financially.

But David Laws, the executive chairman of EPI, urged the government to "understand the reasons" for these variations, and "the extent to which it's down to a lack of funding fairness, or relative differences in 'school efficiency'".

The NASUWT supports greater controls for councils to clawback cash, a move that it claimed had been sidelined by the government's "drive to give excessive freedoms to schools".

The academy sector shows a different picture,

with the DfE "encouraging" the Ormiston Academies Trust to pool all the reserves of its schools from August.

The trust's accounts for 2017-18, published this week, state the "continued pressure on education funding amid rising costs within the sector meant that the financial environment in which the trust operated continued to be challenging".

Pooling seems to work, with the EPI report finding that academies were less likely to post an in-year deficit than council schools.

For instance, 51 per cent of LA primaries overspent, compared with 38 per cent of primary academies. Half of academy secondaries overspent, compared to just under two thirds of LA secondaries.

However, it is also controversial, particularly because more trusts are pooling their schools' general annual grant (GAG) funding, before redistributing it based on their own metrics.

The government has said its long-awaited national funding formula (NFF) – due to be rolled out fully in 2021 – will fund schools based on their needs and characteristics.

But Andrews said trusts using a GAG pool essentially decided their own metrics for distributing the money.

"There could be a school in one trust, in some circumstances, that has a pupil funded differently to pupil at a school down the road."

He also said while the NFF was based on transparent formulae, there wasn't such transparency on GAG funding decision.

"There's effectiveness and economies of scale [in GAG pooling] but the DfE has to realise its pulling against the wider intention of the NFF."

A DfE spokesperson said it was "clear that where GAG pooling take place that trusts must give consideration of the funding needs for each individual academy, to provide the correct support for the children at each academy".

## News: Ed tech

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# DfE taps in to quality-mark education apps

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EXCLUSIVE

The Department for Education plans to assess and "quality-mark" smartphone and tablet education apps for younger pupils.

Officials will also consider extending the assessment to apps for older children if the process is a success.

But experts in educational technology say that the scheme's success will hinge on whether teachers with experience of learning with apps are the ones chosen to test them.

Others have questioned why the DfE wants to regulate the ed tech market, but has been reluctant to regulate other areas, such as home education.

Applications to join the expert panel on early years language, literacy and communication apps closed earlier this week.

Once appointed, the team of between five and seven will draw up a set of quality assurance criteria "against which to assess educational apps aimed at 0-5 year olds", government documents show.

The process is aimed at helping parents choose the educational apps their children use at home, rather than as an aid to teachers seeking ed tech solutions for the classroom.

However, there is nothing to stop teachers



using the quality mark to help them to select apps for school use.

"It's really important that teachers using technology in the early years dominate this panel," said Bob Harrison, a school and college governor and former education adviser to Toshiba. "Its members must have relevant, recent experience of the use of apps in the early years."

It's not the first time a government organisation has sought to help schools access technology.

The National Council for Educational Technology was set up in 1967 as a conduit between schools and technology providers. It went through several guises and was eventually replaced with the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency, or "Becta", in 1998.

However, the organisation was mothballed

in 2011 and has not been replaced.

Towards the end of its life it was criticised for being under the influence of technology providers and for failing to keep up with new trends, leading the government to move away from its "top-down approach".

The Department for Education has confirmed that if the process works for it will consider extending assessment to apps for older children.

Harrison said the proposal was "really good news" and welcomed the focus on "expanding learning outside the classroom".

But he warned that ed tech could, if not correctly supported, widen the attainment gap between poorer and better-off pupils.

"There is a question about access to technology and connectivity that will need to be considered," he said.

Priya Lakhani, the founder and chief executive of CENTURY Tech, warned MPs this week that without input from schools, artificial intelligence could "create social mobility issues".

Ty Goddard, co-founder of the Education Foundation and chair of Edtech UK, said the kitemark would be a "positive development" as long as it "stays agile and responsive to a developing market".

Sue Cowley, an early-years expert and education author, said a quality mark "might be an OK idea", but she would not be encouraging youngsters to spend more time on phones and screens.

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## International exam 'not graded as severely' as GCSEs

The controversial international GCSEs used by private schools are "easier" than new reformed GCSEs, suggests a new study.

Research published by Education DataLab, based on information from the National Pupil Database, shows that iGCSEs are "not graded quite as severely" as reformed GCSEs, making it easier for pupils to reach top grades.

iGCSEs no longer count in school performance tables for state schools in subjects where a reformed GCSE has been introduced, effectively barring state schools from the qualifications.

However, government data released to Lucy Powell, the former shadow education secretary, shows many private schools still opt for iGCSEs.

DataLab's research, carried out by Dave Thomson, found about 66 per cent of pupils achieved a grade A\* or A in maths and English language iGCSEs in 2017, while between 18 and 20 per cent achieved the equivalent grades of 9 to 7 in reformed GCSEs.

Although he accepted that attainment "tends to be higher" in private schools, Thomson explored whether there would

still be such a disparity if those who took iGCSEs had taken the reformed qualifications instead.

This revealed that more A\* and A grades were awarded in English and maths iGCSEs than expected based on performance in legacy qualifications, but were in line with expectations for the reformed GCSEs.

Thomson concluded that "perhaps iGCSEs are indeed not graded quite as severely as reformed GCSEs", although further work was needed.

Expert, page 25



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WELLINGTON COLLEGE, CROWTHORNE



## News: Academies

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## Tory peer's trust seeks unpaid workers

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

INVESTIGATES

An academy trust founded by a Conservative peer is advertising for unpaid volunteers to fill key roles, as plans for another free school bite the dust.

Newly published accounts for the Floreat Education Academies Trust, founded in 2014 by Lord James O'Shaughnessy, a former aide to David Cameron, show "very low pupil numbers" forced it to scrap its plans to open a free school in Berkshire in September.

It's the trust's third proposed free school that has fallen through, leaving it with just two small primaries. It did have another school – Floreat Brentford – but that closed last year over site issues. At the time, it had 381 pupils across its schools.

It has also emerged that the trust is looking for volunteers to fill the roles of finance assistant, office administrator and personal assistant to the chief executive.

Each is expected to work between three and five days a week, with hours ranging from full-time to a minimum of two to three hours a day. The finance volunteer is wanted for a "minimum of six months".

Floreat also wants an unpaid project intern with no fixed hours.

A report from the Education Policy Institute in March warned of an "increasing reliance" on unpaid staff in schools, with volunteers making up as many as 16 per cent of staff in reception classes.

Hugh Greenway, the chief executive of the Elliot Foundation trust, which has 28 primary schools, said the scrapping of the education services grant meant the "minimum sustainable size" for a primary trust could be as high as 10,000 pupils. The grant's disappearance would leave academies £353 million out of pocket by 2020.

"We need to increase the average size of the average MAT, as until the majority are viable the only way to continue is through



Floreat Wandsworth

volunteering, external fundraising, accepting more risk than we would like or lowering our standards. All of which are very problematic.

"The problem is there's no more money to give and with Brexit looming there will be less for the foreseeable future. We need to be pragmatic."

Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said appointing volunteers to key posts "sends out a terrible and insulting message to professionals who fulfil these important roles in schools".

Floreat, which is not the only trust to court controversy over volunteers, did not respond to requests for comment.

In April, United Learning was criticised for seeking an artist to work weekends free in the boarding house of its private Ashford School in Kent. In August 2017, the trust withdrew a job advert for an intern to work free in its Walthamstow Primary Academy for up to a year, following criticism from Stella Creasy, the local MP.

Floreat now runs Floreat Wandsworth in south London and Floreat Montague Park in Wokingham, Berkshire.

The funding agreement to open Floreat Silver Meadow in Wokingham last September

was cancelled after "slower than projected growth of the housing development that the school was built to serve resulted in very low pupil numbers".

Schools Week reported in October that Floreat had been given £340,000 to establish another two primaries in London – Floreat Colindale and Floreat Southall – but neither opened.

A possible merger with another trust did not go through.

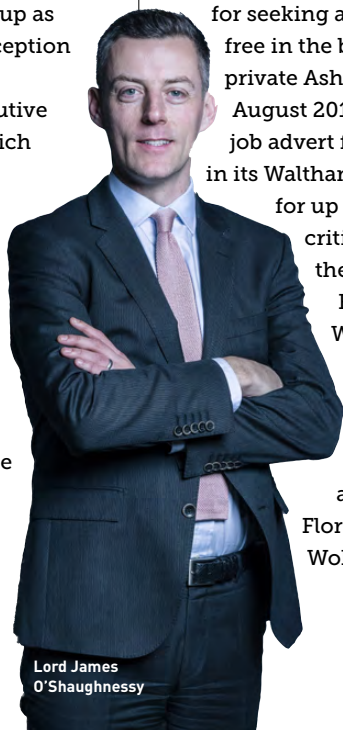
Floreat's latest accounts show a "principal risk" is that it maintains its "further sources of funding, including private donations, project grants and pre-opening grants".

However, the trust received no donations from its charity sponsor, Floreat Education Limited, last year compared with £82,000 in 2016-17.

Accounts show that the trust had nearly half as many management staff (6) as teachers (13). The pay of Janet Hilary, the chief executive, rose slightly from £126,583 in 2017 to £128,768 last year.

A spokesperson for the New Schools Network said opening a new school was a "significant challenge", but insisted that more than 100 standalone free schools and "a number of smaller academy trusts" had opened and "go[ne] on to thrive".

The Times reported in 2016 that two firms linked to O'Shaughnessy received payments from Floreat totalling more than £125,000. Most of that went to Mayforth Consulting, a company he founded.

Lord James  
O'Shaughnessy

## News

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# CPD spending falls for the first time in six years

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Spending by schools on professional development for teachers has fallen by £23.2 million in a year, the first fall in such spend since 2011.

Analysis by SchoolDash, the education data specialists, found schools spent £235.8 million on CPD for teachers in 2016-17, down from £259 million in 2015-16, a drop of almost 9 per cent.

The total was down 12 per cent in secondary schools and 7.5 per cent in primaries, reversing an upward trend in CPD spending since 2011.

The research also found that more than one in ten secondaries and nearly one in 20 primaries spent nothing on CPD in 2016-17.

David Weston, the chief executive at the Teacher Development Trust (TDT), which commissioned the research, blamed the fall on funding constraints.

"They've been cutting glue sticks and computers, and now headteachers are



having to cut investment in staff."

However, Sir Andrew Carter, the chief executive of the South Farnham Education Trust who chaired the government's review of initial teacher training, said more schools and trusts might be turning to free, in-house training to support their staff.

"In the old days, you might send someone off for £500 a day, plus the cost of a supply teacher," he said. "Now we've all looked at that and thought, 'hang on, we could be cleverer with our money'."

More schools now shared expertise free. This would not show up in the research, which focused on expenditure.

However, he said that standalone schools would struggle to find free expertise and may have cut teacher development to save on costs.

Stephen Tierney, the chair of the Headteachers' Roundtable, said CPD was often a "soft target" for school leaders trying to make savings because its impact on exam results was not immediately tangible.

By delivering their own CPD to other schools at a cost of £295 for three days, his trust of three schools had been able to send its own teachers without breaking the bank.

Tierney added that more analysis was needed to show whether the fall in spending was a "blip" or a more worrying long-term trend. The TDT was planning another analysis of the latest school financial returns in autumn when all the financial returns for 2017-18 were in.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said the government was "committed to improving support and professional development for teachers at all stages of their career" in particular through the new early career framework.

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## News

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## Heads enticed with conference tickets to attend 'hosted meetings'

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

A major new education conference is offering free tickets and expenses of up to £750 in return for headteachers having two hours of meetings with event sponsors such as Google.

Learnit conference, backed by the organisers of the established BETT education technology show, said the offer – which included tickets worth £550 – would allow cash-strapped schools to attend.

But to qualify for the freebie, heads have to complete 15-minute meetings with eight of Learnit's 12 sponsors, including Google for Education, Extramarks, a company that offers to make learning easier through videos, and Popcorn, a school furniture company based in India.

Lawyers have warned headteachers who attend the "hosted meetings" to be wary of potential conflict of interests.

Russell Holland, an education expert at the law firm Michelmores, said leaders would have to declare a "paid trip with a sponsor" should they sit on tender panels that involved any of the firms.

Holland said that in this situation, heads must "act appropriately" and reassure the panel of their objectivity.

Steve Edmonds, the director of advice and guidance at the National Governance Association, said that chairs would not expect heads or school leaders to account for their time hour-by-hour for conferences such as Learnit.

But it would be "useful for heads and schools leaders to use their chairs as a sounding board for how they manage potential conflicts of interest that may arise".

The conference aims to "unite the global learning community" to lead an "intellectually honest conversation about the current state and future of learning".

Speakers are from "the entire learning ecosystem", including government,



INVESTIGATES

corporates, edtech firms, and investors.

Katy Fryatt, Learnit's founder, said school leaders were only matched with sponsors that suited their interests and were under no obligation to buy anything from them.

"We do this to give schools the option of coming along, but be completely budget neutral," she said. "Schools are cash-strapped, so I don't think it would be fair for them to come along for hundreds of pounds."

Education leaders, government decision-makers, and heads of talent and training are all allowed to apply for the hosted meeting programme.

Those in the UK can get a free ticket, which is worth £550, plus VAT, for educators and £850, plus VAT, for non-educators, as well as up to £250 in travel and hotel expenses.

Those travelling from Europe can get up to £450 reimbursed and those from outside Europe up to £750.

So far 300 people are booked into the hosted meetings, just 15 of them UK school leaders, Fryatt said.

She said Learnit had been funded by \$1 million in venture capital, mainly from private investors but with a contribution from ITE Group plc, the organisers behind the Bett Show, which also owns a small share in Learnit.

Tamasin Cave, the founder of the Spinwatch

website, said hosted meetings were part of a "huge multi-million-pound push by Silicon Valley companies to digitalise education" because it was a "lucrative market".

These companies were lobbying governments to make it appear "inevitable" that pupils would soon be learning online, she said, adding it was "concerning" schools would have to listen to "marketing pitches".

In 2013, the Pearson Foundation, the charitable arm of the education company Pearson, ran into trouble in the US over its use of sponsored trips. It had to pay a \$7.7 million settlement after a US investigation found it had wooed clients towards its business arm by paying for education officials to attend conferences in Australia, China and Brazil.

The New York Times reported that some of those officials then went on to hand Pearson lucrative state contracts.

New York state law prohibit firms using charitable funds to promote and develop for-profit products. Pearson said it had always complied with the law, but recognised there were times when the relationship between its charitable and business arm could have been "clearer and more transparent".

The Learnit conference will be held in London on January 24 and 25.



## News: Careers

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## Most schools 'flout law' and ignore Baker clause

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

Two-thirds of secondary schools are flouting the controversial Baker clause a year after it was introduced, leading to calls for Ofsted to police whether schools are compliant.

A report published on Wednesday by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) has warned the Baker clause has "failed to achieve its aims".

The think tank found that two thirds of 101 secondaries did not have a policy statement, as required by the Baker clause since January last year, to show how they ensure education and training providers can access pupils to talk about technical education and apprenticeships.

Since September 1, schools have also had to publish details about the careers programme they offer, contact details for their careers leader, how the success of careers programmes is measured and when the published information will be reviewed.

Lord Baker has accused schools of "deliberately flouting and flagrantly disregarding the law of the land", but the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) says schools are juggling a "large number of requirements".

IPPR randomly selected ten schools within each region of England for its study. The other schools were from the constituencies of Damian Hinds, the education secretary, and Anne Milton, the skills minister.

The institute's report said that as schools were largely funded on a per-pupil basis, there was "a focus on pupil retention, rather than supporting students and their families to understand the options available".

In August Milton warned that the government would directly intervene if schools flouted the rules, but the IPPR said there had not been any intervention and providers were concerned about the "lack of any real consequences from failure to comply".

The report recommends Ofsted assesses compliance with the Baker clause as part of a wider judgment on a school's careers guidance,

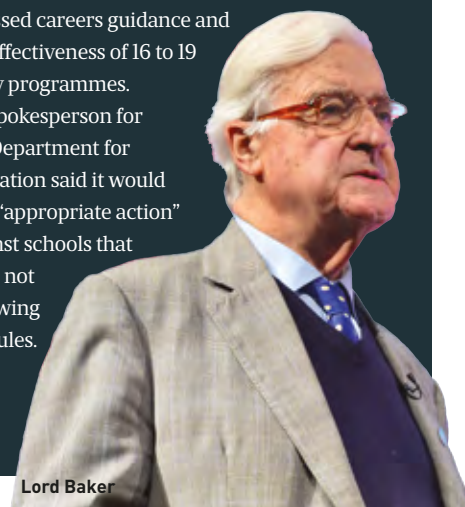
including speaking to local providers to understand how effectively the school works with them.

But Geoff Barton, general secretary of ASCL, this was "the last thing that schools need".

"We have to get out of the mindset that everything can be achieved by telling schools what to do. What they need is sufficient funding," he said.

A spokesperson for Ofsted said it already assessed careers guidance and the effectiveness of 16 to 19 study programmes.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said it would take "appropriate action" against schools that were not following the rules.



Lord Baker

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# Investigation: Isolation rooms

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## 'The strategy doesn't seem to be working'

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

**Opponents of isolation rooms claim they disproportionately punish the poorest and most vulnerable pupils. OGAT, one of the trusts under intense media scrutiny over isolation rooms, claims its strict behaviour policies are part of its "turnaround strategy" for the schools it takes over. *Schools Week* has data that sheds new light on those claims**

Some schools in the Outwood Grange Academies Trust are still sending about a third of their pupils into isolation nine years after the trust took them over, casting doubts on its claims that the practice is a "turnaround strategy" for challenging schools.

New data also shows that a disproportionate percentage of those pupils are on free school meals, although the percentage of eligible pupils has dropped at almost every secondary in the trust. Critics suggest the drop could be a consequence of more deprived pupils constantly being placed in isolation and so choosing to leave.

Data on 14 of the trust's 16 secondary academies was obtained under the freedom of information act by Simpson Millar, the law firm, which is pursuing a judicial review on behalf of an Outwood Grange pupil who it claims spent almost a third of his time in isolation rooms last year. It sent the data to *Schools Week*.

It shows half of pupils at two schools were put in isolation.

Martyn Oliver, the chief executive of the trust, has

Outwood schools	% of pupils issued C5	% of pupils issued C5 on FSM	FSM when joined trust	Current FSM %	How long with OGAT?
Ormesby Academy	53%	48%	50%	41%	3 years 4 months
Shafton Academy	50%	38%	26%	25%	3 years 10 months
Danum Academy	44%	25%	19%	20%	2 years 4 months
Acklam Academy	40%	36%	57%	32%	5 years 4 months
Bydales Academy	38%	7%	9%	10%	3 years 11 months
Adwick Academy	36%	25%	22%	18%	9 years 4 months
Portland Academy	33%	45%	18%	16%	6 years 7 months
City Academy	31%	35%	22%	22%	5 years
Grange Academy	29%	11%	6%	5%	9 years 4 months
Foxhills Academy	29%	49%	20%	19%	4 years 4 months
Brumby Academy	28%	21%	20%	18%	6 years 9 months
Valley Academy	25%	18%	11%	9%	6 years 7 months
Ripon Academy	23%	43%	12%	11%	7 years 4 months
Newbold Academy	21%	39%	20%	20%	4 years

previously said the strict strategies helped "to set a reasonable level of behaviour in turnaround schools".

But the new data – which is for 2017-18 only – suggests schools still issue large numbers of orders, known as "C5s", for pupils to go to isolation rooms.

For instance, Outwood Academy Adwick in Doncaster issued a C5 to 36 per cent of its pupils last year – the sixth highest rate across the 14 schools included in the data. The school joined the trust more than nine years ago.

Outwood Grange Academy, the trust's founder school in Wakefield, which opened in 2009, issued C5s to just under a third of its pupils. Outwood Academy Acklam in Middlesbrough, which joined five years ago, did the same for 40 per cent of its pupils.

A *Schools Week* investigation last year found the use of isolation rooms is common practice in many schools, with more than two-thirds of the country's largest trusts using such spaces. Many heads have said they are a helpful part of a supportive behaviour management policy.

An OGAT spokesperson also said staff would have revoked

many of the C5s. "Hundreds of detentions and isolations are not completed as part of the schools' work on intervention strategies."

Many pupils sent to the rooms also received one-to-one tutoring and time in "nurture" spaces.

Jules Daulby, an education consultant and inclusion campaigner, said the trust's argument that isolation rooms were used as a turnaround strategy in new schools "clearly isn't valid anymore".

"These figures show the strategy doesn't seem to be working. Until the trust looks at the root cause of poor behaviour, these figures will remain very high. It's as though there's a separate school, all in isolation."

She said that putting pupils in isolation sent "subliminal" messages to the most challenging pupils and their parents that they were not wanted, prompting them to move to other schools.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSMs) are disproportionately more likely to be issued with a C5 at all except one of OGAT's secondaries – although national data shows the poorest pupils are among the

most likely to be suspended or excluded.

At Outwood Academy Foxhills in Scunthorpe, almost half (49 per cent) of pupils issued a C5 were on FSMs, although only 19 per cent of pupils in the school were eligible.

At Outwood Grange Academy Valley in Worksop, 18 per cent of pupils handed the orders were on free school meals; 9 per cent were eligible.

In response to the new data, OGAT told *Schools Week* that more FSM pupils had entered its academies. However, data shows the proportion of pupils eligible for FSMs had fallen at 10 of the 14 secondary schools since they joined the trust.

OGAT said this could be attributed to more pupils from better-off backgrounds joining schools as they improved.

Leora Cruddas, chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said it was "unfair to single out a particular trust in this way".

She called for "a much calmer, more proportionate and evidence-based conversation about behaviour. Learning support units have long been a policy to create continuity of learning and avoid exclusions, particularly of more vulnerable children."

## News

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## OECD chief heads Seldon's 'influencers' list

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

Andreas Schleicher, the OECD's education chief, Nick Gibb, the schools minister, and Amanda Spielman, the head of Ofsted, have topped a new list of the most influential people in education.

The list, drawn up by Sir Anthony Seldon with the help of a panel of 20 educationists, is likely to be controversial as it dominated solely by education "traditionalists", and includes only one woman yet features Aristotle, who died more than 2,300 years ago.

The list is Seldon's second. The first, produced without the input of others, was released in 2017 in *The Sunday Times*, but the University of Buckingham vice-chancellor and former Wellington College master wanted to change its format.

"I thought it needed to be more rooted in what people said, so therefore we came up with a panel of 20 people and they produced sometimes very long lists."

Seldon then whittled the lists down to produce a top ten.

Schleicher, who presides over the landmark PISA study at the OECD, takes first place on the final list.

The second-placed Gibb features prominently not just because of his longevity – he has served on the education frontbench for most of the past eight years – but because of his "ideological approach", Seldon says.

Spielman shares third place with DT Willingham, the American psychologist.

Seldon says the final list shows the extent of the current influence of traditionalists on English education in 2019.

Dr Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the list was "interesting, but highly contestable", and warned the failure to include any progressives was "a real own-goal".

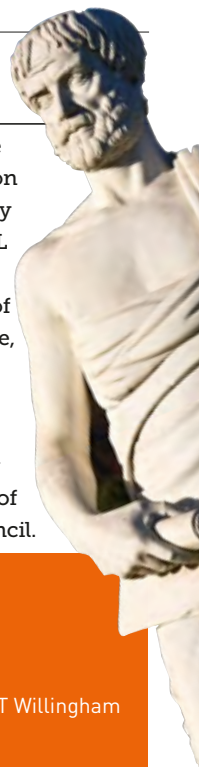
She accepted that traditionalism "is the current zeitgeist in terms of the political establishment", but argued that was "not the case" in education more broadly.

Seldon was advised by a panel that

included Sir Kevan Collins, the chief executive of the Education Endowment Foundation, Becky Francis, the director of the UCL Institute of Education, Neil Carmichael, the former chair of the education select committee, Tom Bennett, the government behaviour tsar, Dame Alison Peacock, the leader of the Chartered College of Teaching and Barnaby Lenon, the chair of the Independent Schools Council.

## THE LIST

1. Andreas Schleicher
2. Nick Gibb (below)
3. Amanda Spielman (below)/ DT Willingham
5. Sir Michael Barber
6. ED Hirsch
7. Dylan Wiliam
8. Geoff Barton
9. Anant Agrawal
10. Aristotle



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# Celebrating the new year's honours



## 'Honoured' head slams education secretaries

A long-serving headteacher recognised in the New Year's honours has taken a swipe at education secretaries for being "more concerned with the furthering of political agendas than they have with improving schools".

Elizabeth Booth, awarded an MBE after 18 years as headteacher of Dalmain School in south London, also told *Schools Week* that England was in danger of losing its position as a leader in the creative arts if subjects such as music were not better supported in schools.

Booth, who retired in August, said her school had "stood firm in the face of political pressure" to provide an arts-based curriculum to its 400-plus pupils.

Andria Zafirakou of Alperton Community School in northwest London was also awarded an



Elizabeth Booth

MBE. The winner of last year's global teacher prize has also often spoken of her "frustration" over cuts to arts education.

Booth said a skills-based curriculum was "essential for the development of every child".

She added her school had found success in recent years by taking Michael Gove's "extremely dry" agenda, and adding to it "to make

it exciting".

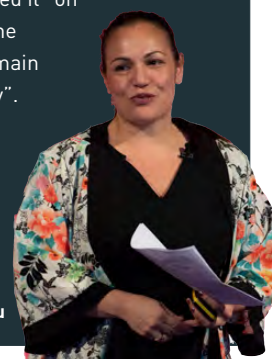
"In the course of my 18-year stint at Dalmain, I saw 11 education secretaries come and go," she said. "Only too often, they have been more concerned with the furthering of political agendas than they have with improving Britain's schools."

"At Dalmain, though, we have stood firm in the face of political

pressure, providing an arts-based curriculum that reflects our belief that education is about more than just ticking boxes."

Other recipients of honours this year include Ruth Miskin, the phonics champion, awarded the CBE, and academy trust leaders Duncan Jacques, Lorraine Heath, Patricia Kane and Dr Josephine Valentine.

Booth added she was "very honoured" by the award, which she accepted it "on behalf of the whole Dalmain community".



Andria Zafirakou

## Educators on the 2019 New Year's honours list

### COMMANDERS OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (CBE)

**DUNCAN WADE JACQUES**, Chief executive officer, Exceed Academies Trust. For services to education.

**RUTH MISKIN OBE**, For services to education and reading.

**IAN CORNELIUS THOMAS**, For services to local government and children's services.

### OFFICERS OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (OBE)

**CAROL ANN BROOKS**, Lately chief examiner, CACHE.

For services to early years education.

**ANN COLETTE CONNOR**, Lately education adviser, Department for Education. For services to education.

**LORRAINE MARGARET HEATH**, Chief executive officer, Uffculme Academy Trust. For services to education.

**BRENDAN JOSEPH HENEGHAN**, Principal, William Henry Smith School, West Yorkshire. For services to special educational needs.

**MARY SHEILA ISHERWOOD**, Headteacher, Camberwell Park School, Manchester. For services to children and young people with special educational needs.

**PATRICIA DENISE KANE**, Executive headteacher, The Education and Leadership Trust. For services to education.

**GARY SMITH**, Headteacher, Market Field School. For services to children with special educational needs in Essex.

**ELEANOR POULSOM TOBIN**, Lately principal, Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College. For services to education and young people.

**DR JOSEPHINE ANNE VALENTINE (JOSEPHINE STRETCH)**, Executive head, Danes Educational Trust. For services to education.

**DAVID MCDONALD WATSON**, Executive Principal and chief executive officer of the Changing Lives in Collaboration Multi Academy Trust. For services to education.

### MEMBERS OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (MBE)

**FRANCES FAITH BELL**, Teacher, Newport Primary School. For services to the Arts in Devon. (Barnstaple, Devon)

**JOHN ALFRED BENNETT**, Lately Chairman, board of governors, Guildhall School of Music and Drama. For services to the City of London and education.

**ELIZABETH TARN BOOTH**, Lately headteacher, Dalmain Primary School.

For services to education and the arts in the London Borough of Lewisham.

**VALERIE ANN DUNSFORD**, Lately headteacher, Sheffield High School for Girls. For services to education.

**COUNCILLOR PETER ROBIN EDGAR**, Executive member for education, Hampshire County Council. For services to education and the community in Gosport.

**PAUL ANTHONY IRONS**, Chair of governors, Fernwood School, Nottingham. For services to education.

**PROFESSOR VALSA KOSHY**, Emeritus professor, Brunel University London.

For services to education.

**VIVIENNE MURIEL MORGAN**, Founder and proprietor, Northleigh House School. For services to education.

**ROGER GORDON OPIE**, For services to education and the community in Bristol.

**SUSAN SCURLOCK**, Founder and chief executive officer, Primary Engineer. For services to education and engineering.

**DOUGLAS STEPHEN SEYMOUR**, Chair of governors, Frank Wise School Banbury.

For services to education and the community in Oxfordshire and North Devon.

**PROFESSOR JACQUELINE STEVENSON**, Sociologist and head of research, Sheffield Institute of Education, Sheffield Hallam University. For services to education.

**EILEEN ANN VASSIE**, Governor, Chelsfield Primary School.

For services to education.

**JASHU VEKARIA**, Deputy headteacher, Uxendon Manor Primary School.

For services to primary education.

**ANDRIA ZAFIRAKOU**, Associate deputy head, Alperton Community School.

For services to education and young people in Brent.

### MEDALLISTS OF THE ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (BEM)

**SUSAN ELIZABETH BARRATT**, Lately governor, Castle Hill High School.

For services to education.

**REGINALD DUNNING**, For services to education and the community in Sandbach, Cheshire.

**KAREN JOY GOLDSWORTHY**, Governor, Sparhawk Infant School and Nursery.

For services to education.

**ROSEMARIE PYSARCZUK**, Cabinet committee correspondence Officer, Department for Education. For services to education.

While you were away...

# Hinds gets into the spirit of things

Damian Hinds used a festive flurry of announcements to urge schools to shun single-use plastic and to introduce a new "activity passport".

In an announcement on Thursday, December 27, the education secretary challenged all schools to eliminate single-use plastics by 2022, with school leaders urged to shun plastic bags, straws and bottles in favour of sustainable alternatives.

No funding was attached to the announcement; the only government commitment was to "increase [its] communication" with school suppliers over their use of plastic packaging.

Two days later he launched a downloadable "activity passport".

The printable document, which will be sent to schools this month but is not mandatory, allows pupils to tick when they've completed one of 140 prescribed activities such as searching for butterflies and taking part in a Roman banquet.

Some in the sector pointed out that the passport, aimed at boosting resilience in pupils, goes directly against the government's knowledge-based curriculum reforms of recent years.

Others said the two announcements were inspired by the actions of single schools, which Jonathon Simons, the director at policy and PR consultancy Public First, described as the "absolute worst type of policymaking".

On plastic use, Hinds urged schools to follow the lead of Georgeham Primary in

## JANUARY REFUNDS AND EXCHANGES



Devon, which became the UK's first school to achieve single-use plastic-free status.

The activity passport was inspired by a visit to St Werburgh's primary in Bristol where every pupil is encouraged to take part in a list of tasks and experiences. Key achievements for each school year are then ticked off.

The passport has 20 activities for each primary year group. These get more complicated as children progress through school.

For example, reception pupils are encouraged to visit a farm, fly a kite or dress up as a pirate, while year 6 pupils are urged

to write a speech, learn how to access the news or visit a new city.

Hinds was criticised by some for making the announcements in the festive break, but that didn't deter him.

On Thursday last week, he rounded-off his festive news by revealing the government would make it easier for would-be teachers to try out the profession.

Hinds said a new programme to "help interested people discover what a joy teaching can be" would feature in the government's recruitment and retention strategy, due to be published later this month. But he would not reveal any details.

# TV campaign costs £4,291 for every hit of interest

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

The Department for Education's TV advertising campaign to boost teacher recruitment cost more than £4,000 for every person who later registered an interest in teaching a shortage subject.

The government published two reports last week by the business consultancy London Economics, which analysed the impact of the Your Future/ Their Future marketing campaign over the past six years.

The latter report, which looked at the impact of marketing between 2014 and 2018, found TV



advertising cost £4,291 for every registration of interest on the Get Into Teaching website.

The next highest spend was £1,992 for radio marketing and £584 for press advertising.

However the report said the marketing spend

had "substantially boosted" the number of website registrations, without which recruitment could have been much worse.

But the report said that an improving graduate labour market would force the DfE to crank up its efforts to meet targets in shortage subjects. The government has missed its own target for recruiting to secondary schools for six years running.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said the marketing campaigns were an "important part of our overall approach to increasing teacher recruitment", adding that the research showed "the impact this work can have in making people aware of the many routes into the profession".

## While you were away...

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## Court of Appeal overturns Durand's Ofsted challenge

Ofsted has won an appeal to overturn a decision by the High Court to quash its negative inspection report into the troubled Durand Academy.

It was rated inadequate in 2017, but the south London school blocked the report's publication by successfully challenging the inspectorate over its "unfair" complaints process.

However, the Court of Appeal ruled last month that the High Court was wrong to quash the report.

The original judge had "erred in focusing exclusively on the complaints procedures and not considering the overall fairness of the process of inspection, evaluation and reporting", the court said.

Ofsted hailed the ruling as an endorsement of its "fair and rigorous" complaints process, adding all judgments were subject to additional scrutiny and quality assurance before they were finalised.

Durand Academy ceased

to exist earlier last year after it was rebrokered to the Dunraven Educational Trust and rebranded as Van Gogh Primary school.

It followed years in the public eye for the school, which came under fire for the £400,000-plus earnings of its former headteacher, Sir Greg Martin (pictured), who was paid an annual fee by the commercial leisure facilities on the school site on top of his headteacher's salary.

The inspection report, published shortly after the High Court decision was overturned, revealed inspectors were critical of safeguarding, teaching, leadership and governance at the school.



## We're not going to tell you about the £35m 'savings', says DfE

The Department of Education has refused to release details about the £35 million of savings its new cost-cutting consultants identified in a pilot project to help schools to balance their budgets.

Lord Agnew, the academies minister, said in November that the government's school resource management advisers found average savings of nearly £500,000 across the 72 schools or trusts they had visited.

His claim was used as justification to expand the project, with £2.3 million set aside to recruit 160 more cost-cutters to help more schools.

But the DfE refused to release a breakdown of the £35 million on the grounds that it would "undermine the effectiveness" of the programme.

In response to a freedom of information (FOI) request from *Schools Week*, the DfE said that advisers' reports contained commercially sensitive information.



The department was also "clear" with schools that findings would not be shared; releasing the information would undermine these working relationships.

Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the department's refusal was "astonishing" and "all too typical" of a government that made "unsubstantiated claims about its failing education policies on a regular basis".

The FOI said savings identified under the pilot included staffing, sale of unused building and land, marketing, contracts and exam fees.

## AGNEW CHOOSES THE FRONT OF THE PLANE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

The academies minister has come under fire after it emerged he flew business class to an education summit in Argentina – weeks after telling cash-strapped schools to find more savings.

The latest ministerial overseas travel document, published late last year, says a "return international flight to Argentina" taken by Agnew (pictured) and three officials in September cost £8,122.

Another £314 was spent on internal flights in Argentina, with a further £570 on hotel accommodation.

Agnew travelled to Argentina between September 4 and 7 to attend the first G20

education ministerial summit and a joint meeting of education and employment ministers.

The DfE said flights were booked at the last minute.

According to Google Flights, a last-minute booking for economy flights from London to Buenos Aires for four people would cost between £2,800 and £4,200, depending on the airline.

Agnew provoked controversy after telling school leaders at a conference in November that he would bet them a bottle of Champagne that he could identify more potential savings in their schools.



He said he was "like a pig out hunting for truffles when it comes to finding waste in schools", and insisted more could be done – despite protestations from leaders they had cut to the bone as funding stagnated.



# EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## Don't be fooled by the grammar school zombies

Our former editor Laura McNerney once compared the grammar schools policy to zombies in a B-movie.

"Just when you think our heroes have flattened it and there are celebrations all round, a hand bursts through the window and starts strangling them all over again," she wrote.

Well that hand has burst through again this week. It's clutching a new report, from the Higher Education Policy Institute, that claims grammars actually DO boost social mobility.

Not only that, it essentially wants the government to let grammars open new schools through the back door (branch sites in poor areas).

But what about the stacks of evidence showing grammar schools don't have an impact on social mobility, I hear you ask.

Well, the report says this is down to "unconscious bias" from lefty academics who are dead set at shooting down grammars.

Don't be fooled – as several of those academics point out on page 5, the new report's claims don't really stack up (see page 5). Like those academics, we'll keep following the evidence to shoot down the grammar zombies.

## DfE failed to protect schools from council cuts

It's no surprise the government's decision to axe essential school support funding for councils is having an impact on schools themselves. In fact, that's what the whole sector predicted when George Osborne announced the move in 2015.

Given that at the time the government was set to strip all schools from council control, it made sense that their support budget would become nil eventually.

But having abandoned its pipe dream of a fully-academised system, it was incumbent on the DfE to ensure schools were not adversely affected by what was effectively an out-of-date policy.

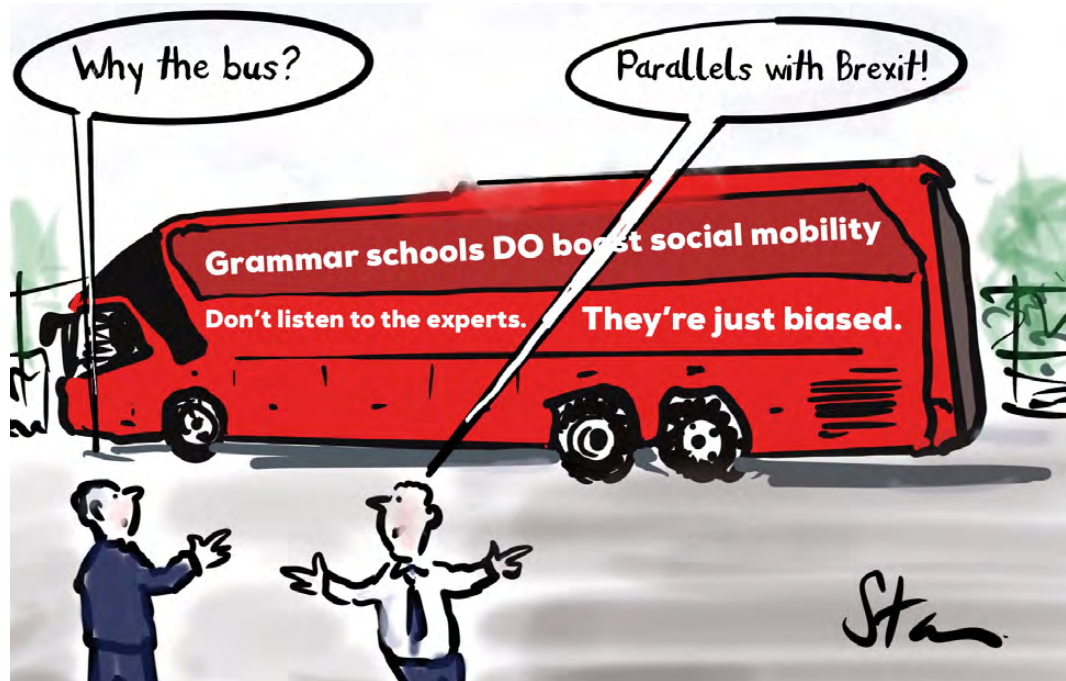
As councils top-slice millions of pounds to make up the shortfall, a new report by the Education Policy Institute shows more of their schools are in deficit. However there's still lost of schools sitting on surpluses of cash, some pretty large.

While we wouldn't recommend this is taken from schools, the EPI's calls for the government to investigate how funding can be better redistributed seems very sensible.

SCHOOLS WEEK



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# The school using inclusion to reduce exclusion

## Thomas Tallis school

CATH MURRAY  
@CATHMURRAY\_

How can schools reduce exclusions? Last year groups from the education select committee to Ofsted to the mainstream press berated schools over bad practice without offering much in the way of solutions or guidance as to what “good or promising” practice (the Department for Education’s new buzz phrase – “best practice” is apparently now banned) looks like.

A large comprehensive in south-east London has spent the past five years developing systems to proactively prevent exclusions by embedding inclusive practice throughout the school. We visited to see how it’s working.

Managing behaviour is “the kind of job that’s hard to plan”, says Carolyn Roberts, the headteacher of Thomas Tallis school in Blackheath. “You’re on the go all day – reacting, reacting, reacting. It’s relentless.” So when she had a senior leadership team vacancy back in 2014, she decided to appoint a staff member who would systematise behaviour in the same way as the school had already done for achievement, exams, curriculum. “I was looking for a person who had the intellectual capacity to work out the structure that we needed, so behaviour management in the school wasn’t dependent on one person’s big personality,” she says.



All photos supplied by Tallis Photography

That person turned out to be Shaun Brown, a geography teacher who’d left mainstream in 2004 for a large pupil referral unit in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, where he worked his way up to head of inclusion.

The main change Brown brought to Tallis – in addition to the systems – was to train all staff in a trauma-informed approach. Sam Sheedy, the school’s assistant head for behaviour, explains: “If a child has suffered childhood trauma, such as maternal abandonment, that is scientifically proven to impact brain development. They shouldn’t be treated just as a naughty student. They should be treated as ‘this is an issue that we need to address.’”

Staff are taught to look out for behaviour that might indicate a student has an underlying issue that needs deeper investigation, and refer them to the pastoral support team of five full-time and five part-time staff. Having a conversation with a student who’s behaved badly allows the team to probe for any potential safeguarding issues. “Kids don’t come in and shout about their problems,” says Jessica Wing, the leader of the pastoral welfare team.

Depending on the outcome of that meeting, the next step might be time in the

## “Pupils who have suffered trauma shouldn’t just be treated as naughty”

withdrawal room, a restorative meeting, a referral to the learning support unit, SEN or safeguarding team, or a sanction in the internal exclusion room.

This all means that rather than a strict tariff system, where a specific behaviour earns a specific sanction,



(L to R) Jemma Brown (family support worker), Deran Parris (pastoral welfare officer, year 8), Sam Sheedy, Carolyn Roberts, Francesca Kamei (assistant head, inclusion), Jessica Wing, Ashley Tomlin, Lisa Sproat



# The school using inclusion to reduce exclusion

“We have standards where we think they matter”



their consequences have more flex. The challenge, Sheedy says, is to make it appear fair to students and staff, but still make allowances for individual circumstances.

It sounds like a fine line, but Roberts says that it's no different to the British justice system.

We're discussing the recent Ofsted blog that suggested exclusion might not be the right punishment for a girl who brings in a knife to self-harm. Roberts agrees. "What we have is a system that's been built up by precedent and case law. And so we would say, 'This is what we would usually do when someone brings a knife in. Is this case sufficiently similar to all of the other cases, or is there a new precedent that needs to be set?'"

The blog drew criticism from some advocates of a "no excuses" approach, who argued that failing to exclude one child for bringing a knife on to school premises for any reason sets a dangerous precedent.

Brown is having none of it. "There's an inherent laziness and unprofessional dimension to not wanting to know and understand what's behind someone bringing a blade into school."

He believes schools should be a therapeutic community, where students

can express themselves and learn to regulate their behaviour, and he worries that overly strict schools might be causing children to repress behaviour that, if allowed to manifest, would communicate important information. "All unexplained behaviours are cause for concern. If you take a zero tolerance approach what you are essentially saying is, we don't want to see them.

"Implicitly behind a zero tolerance approach is the idea that essentially all children want to cause trouble and be difficult. But most children, most of the time, come to school because they want

to be there. When they're not doing what you've asked them to do, there's a reason for that, and we should be curious and interested about why that is. If they tell you to fuck off, that's unusual. It doesn't mean there isn't a sanction, but you should encourage your staff to think 'crikey, what's going on there? We need to investigate this.'"

While Roberts has high expectations for the 2,000 young people in her care, she rejects the idea that schools should indiscriminately "sweat the small stuff". The Tallis uniform policy is incredibly relaxed. Students can have any kind of hairdo and





# The school using inclusion to reduce exclusion



wear earrings, any coat and any kind of shoes, including trainers.

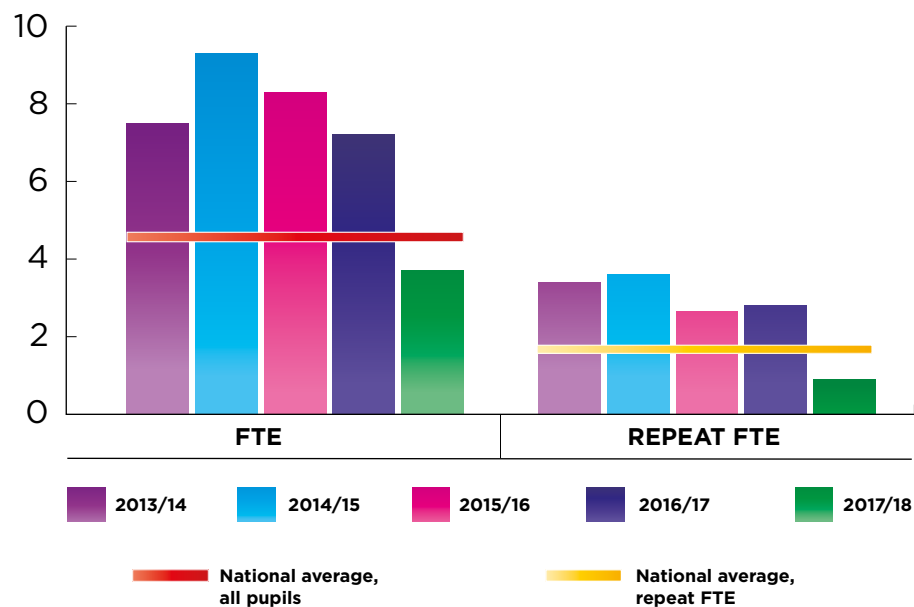
"There's a misunderstanding that uniform is the same as standards," says Ashley Tomlin, the deputy head for achievement. "We have standards where we think they matter."

Hoods, however, are banned on school property. Pupils also wear bright turquoise polo shirts and sweaters, which makes them easy to identify in the community – and for the senior leadership team to enforce a 4pm curfew in a problem area just across from the school.

The measurable outcomes of their changes to the behaviour system have been a 5 per cent drop in persistent absence; a two-thirds reduction of managed moves, a halving of their fixed-term exclusion (FTE) rate, and a drop from 4 to 1 per cent in repeat FTEs, all of which is worthy of note. But it's the qualitative benefits that I've come to Thomas Tallis to try to get a sense of.

As Lisa Sproat shows me around the learning support unit that she runs, she tells stories of pupils who've spent time here to help them to cope with life-changing tragedies – parental death, traumatic separation, abuse. We look through some of the "All about me" projects

## Tallis fixed-term exclusion rate



– scrapbooks in which students can express the traumatic experiences in their home lives. Sproat manages a small team of trained counsellors, but she also works one-on-one with students who are going through difficult times, for six weeks, three hours a week.

Brown is critical of the government's narrow view of inclusion, as set out in the SEN code, which, he says, simply supports

those with disabilities and cognitive learning needs to better access the curriculum. Inclusion needs to be broader than focusing on those kids who've been given an official designation, which is why the Tallis framework includes provision for all students, as well as those with identified needs.

Learning is one of the framework's strands, along with wellbeing, safeguarding

# The school using inclusion to reduce exclusion



and behaviour support. "It doesn't make sense to box off curriculum and pastoral," Tomlin says. "Especially where students are underachieving. Often there are significant links between their wellbeing, their learning and their behaviour."

Early intervention is key. "Hear that sound?" Wing asks as we're scrutinising the whiteboard in the pastoral support office. "Those pings, they're emails coming in from teachers letting me know about something that's happened, or requesting an RM". That's a restorative meeting, and there's a whole load scheduled, even for today. Teachers are encouraged to flag incidents with students that they feel would benefit from a mediated discussion. "It's 20 minutes of awkwardness right now, in return for a year without awkwardness," Wing says with a grin, parroting the sales pitch she gives to reluctant first-time students. Once they've done one, she never has to sell it again, she says – in fact, students request them to try to sort things out with teachers or fellow students.

Understanding the reasons behind bad behaviour doesn't mean allowing pupils to behave badly, Roberts says later in her office. And the school isn't trying to eliminate FTEs altogether – it believes they are a necessary stage in a

behaviour system. "There does have to be a punishment that means they have to be removed from the community for a while," she says. "Because the most important thing in having a stable and happy school is that you've got a community that feels happy and confident and includes everybody, and that a child who assaults

## "All unexplained behaviours are cause for concern"

the integrity of the community has some kind of sanction for that."

What's really important, though, is to use the serious sanctions sparingly so that the school community views them as undesirable.

"If you've got 30 per cent of a school getting a FTE over the course of a year, nobody cares," Sheedy says. "Once a student's had it, they're much more likely to get others, because they realise it's not the end of the world. But for a student that's never had it and has never had anyone within their cohort that's had it, it's a really

significant consequence."

Brown has just left Thomas Tallis to head community and inclusion at the charity The Difference, which wants to improve the links between PRUs and mainstream. The idea is to train more leaders with experience of behaviour management in alternative provision, to return to mainstream and prevent exclusions in the first place. Which is precisely what Thomas Tallis is aiming for with its pre-emptive approach to behaviour.

There's been talk that the new Ofsted framework might try to shift schools to be more inclusive. Roberts is keeping her fingers crossed: "Schools like us would welcome Ofsted taking an intelligent interest in inclusion," she says, choosing her words carefully.

Brown is also hopeful about the long-awaited Timpson review, and he feels the tide is changing. "There's this great big group of students who are just bumping around the system because schools won't keep them, and that's not acceptable," he says. "We all need to think about who they are and what we're doing with them."



Shaun Brown



# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## Don't blame independent schools for sometimes choosing IGCSEs, says Shaun Fenton

The political football that is IGCSEs has been kicked around the pitch again, amidst cries of "foul" and "unfair, referee!" Independent schools were lined up to compete with state schools, despite the teams having no real heart in the game and the spectators – the poor old pupils and their parents – being thoroughly confused by the rules.

To recap, the new GCSEs have been publicised as setting a higher standard, and initial research suggests that independent school pupils get slightly better results in English and maths IGCSE than in their GCSEs in other subjects. This poses more questions than it answers.

However, an inquiry is being called for, amid claims that all IGCSEs are now easier. At the same time, the government has removed IGCSEs from the approved list of qualifications for state schools, leaving only independent schools free choice. Oddly, this has been taken to mean we are suddenly engaged in a massive cheating exercise to inflate results.

Well, no. To start with, most entries from independent school last year were for GCSEs (46 per cent IGCSE v 54 per cent GCSE), according to the annual Independent Schools Council census.

This is because independent school heads, like their state colleagues, want to make decisions based on what is best for pupils. Put simply, how do children learn the most? I am reasonably well placed to know this, having been a teacher or head in a failing state school, flourishing



SHAUN  
FENTON

HMC chair and head of Reigate Grammar School

## We make our exam choices on what is best for our pupils

state school, grammar school and independent school.

For years, IGCSEs have been considered to provide the best educational value and the best preparation for A-levels. Independent school heads have used them because we thought they were better, not easier; IGCSEs aren't shown in the

department have reported that some maths IGCSEs contain more algebra, and therefore are better preparation for A-level.

Experience shows that IGCSE assessment is more nuanced with less formulaic hoop-jumping. Credit is given for originality and insight, rather than regurgitating information

**“ This has become an over-politicised slanging match**

league tables, so we aren't doing them to show off our results.

From 2010-14, the government promoted IGCSEs in state schools. And let's not forget, IGCSEs were key to helping develop the new GCSEs.

My colleagues and I make choices on a subject by subject, year by year basis. For example, heads of

in the way the exam board wants it.

But how do they compare to GCSEs? And what about fairness?

First, harder and easier are very loose terms in this context. Do we mean the syllabus? Exam questions? How the grade boundaries are compared across qualifications?

The much-used and internationally

admired Cambridge IGCSE is pegged to GCSEs using complex comparability studies. This is backed up by external assessment.

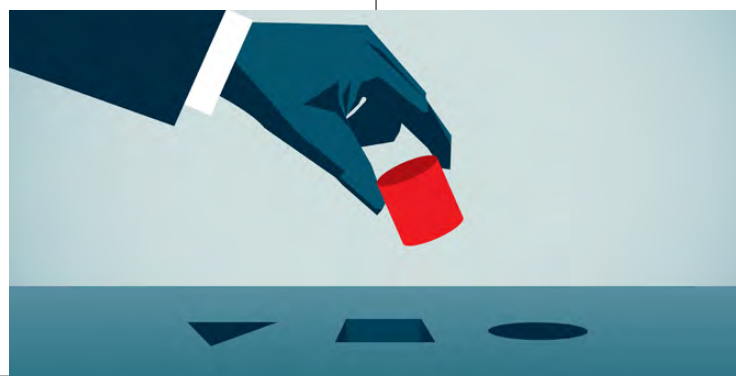
UCAS is also key. It's normal for university applicants to come with A-levels, Pre Us, IB, GCSEs, IGCSEs and, increasingly, overseas qualifications. Universities determine the predictive value of each, using the UCAS tariff system. If it were true IGCSE is easier, this would soon be factored in. IGCSEs are highly regarded, and if new evidence is thought robust enough to change that, universities and independent schools will take heed.

The jury is out on the latest research. If it is proven that IGCSEs are somehow easier, and the new GCSEs gain credence, I predict that more independent schools will move over. If they stay it will be for reasons of rigour, reliability and relevance.

It's understandable that teachers in state schools might be worried about fairness, but independent teachers are too. It serves no one for young people to be set against each other in this over-politicised slanging match.

The real unfairness, as Geoff Barton of the Association of School and College Leaders and Fiona Millar, the education author, have pointed out, is centred on choice. There are good educational reasons why the government should not have denied state schools the right to choose their qualifications.

Independent school heads would welcome their colleagues on to a level playing field – without politicians as the referees.





# Opinion

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KATIE  
MICHELON

Solicitor at education law specialists  
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## The Durand decision and how it might affect your school

**The Court of Appeal last month found in favour of Ofsted against Durand Academy's challenge to its procedure. In the light of the court's decision, Katie Michelin lists the steps you should consider if you want to make a complaint against the inspectorate**

The Court of Appeal ruled last month that Ofsted's complaints procedure is fair and proper – overturning a decision by the High court to quash an inspection report placing the Durand Academy in special measures.

Durand claimed that Ofsted's complaints procedure was unfair in that, unlike those graded as "outstanding", "good" or "requires improvement", schools deemed to be "inadequate" were unable to challenge judgments under step 2 of the procedure.

The High Court agreed with Durand that, as Ofsted's complaints procedure did not allow a substantive challenge to be made to the special measures judgment, it was neither fair nor rational. Despite the High Court's ruling, Ofsted did not amend its complaints procedure and took the matter to the Court of Appeal.

### Why the Court of Appeal overturned the decision

The Court of Appeal found in Ofsted's favour. Its analysis explains that, to determine whether the process in question is fair, there needs to be

**“Keep a record of the concerns raised and the response(s) received**

a review of the overall process of inspection, evaluation and reporting, not just a review of the complaints procedure itself.

The Court of Appeal highlighted the "additional statutory and non-statutory procedural safeguards" that justify the Ofsted complaints procedure's different treatment of schools judged to be inadequate. It also emphasised that most of these protections operate before finalisation and publication of the report.

### So what are the implications for schools?

Some of these "safeguards" are

perhaps more valuable than others. Even the arguably more meaningful stage of extended quality assurance is ultimately an internal exercise with no facility for the school to respond or understand the reasoning involved.

However, in light of the Court of Appeal's decision, we would advise schools graded inadequate to make full use of the relevant stages. In particular:

#### 1. Raise a step 1 complaint

As soon as concerns arise during an inspection visit, speak with the lead inspector. Ofsted's complaints procedure is clear that a step 1

complaint can include concerns about the provisional judgments. If the school's concerns cannot be resolved through the lead inspector, the school can ask to speak to an Ofsted manager. We would also advise that, even at this more informal stage, the school keeps a record of the concerns raised and the response(s) received.

#### 2. Submit full comments on the draft report

Having received the draft report, the school will be asked to complete what is still referred to as the "factual accuracy check". For a school provisionally graded inadequate,



this stage is about more than factual accuracy and represents the school's opportunity to detail in writing exactly why it disagrees with the draft report.

#### 3. Consider requesting a delay to publication

Ofsted will only delay a report's publication in exceptional circumstances, but if you believe there are clear and serious issues with the inspection that go to the heart of the judgments and report, it is worth seeking further advice on this option.

#### 4. Raise a step 2 complaint regarding process and/or conduct

Although the judgments within the report are usually the main concern, often it is the failure to follow process or the manner in which an inspection has been carried out that has resulted in fundamental flaws to an inspection. There is nothing that prevents schools graded inadequate from submitting a step 2 complaint in respect of process or conduct concerns. Indeed, given the amount of discretion Ofsted has when it comes to judgments, the reality is that a school is more likely to successfully challenge a report on matters of process or conduct.

# Opinion

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TIMO  
HANNAY

Founder of the education data-analytics  
company SchoolDash

## Finding your way through a deluge of data

**We need to become more nuanced  
in our reactions to research findings,  
says Timo Hannay**

We are awash in data about education. The Department for Education routinely releases information about schools in England, covering everything from academic attainment and pupil demographics to school staffing and finances. (Schools in other parts of the UK are administered separately and data provision there is patchier.)

Many other government bodies, from Ofsted to the Office for National Statistics, do much the same. Increasingly, private companies are collecting and analysing data too. This is an admirable contribution to transparent government and an empowered citizenry: if none of us truly knows what is happening in our schools then how can we hope to hold to account those who run them? It is also (full disclosure) a godsend for data analysts like me.

The rise of social media has rightly generated concern about personal privacy (not to mention its effects on social discourse and democracy). Education is no different. We must

all abide by the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which empowers individuals against organisations that might otherwise undermine their autonomy or privacy.

“ It won't be easy, but  
positive change rarely is

Yet data protection should not be our only concern. If we're going to be faced with more information about schools, then we also have to become more discerning in our reactions to it. A recent piece of research in which SchoolDash was involved provides a case in point.

We conducted an analysis of academic performance at high-deprivation primary schools, as well as a comparison of boys' and girls' performance at reading and maths. The deprivation results were picked up and recirculated by a campaigning organisation to illustrate the way in which poorer pupils were being let down. In contrast, results that showed girls



falling slightly behind in some maths topics during later primary years were discretely criticised by another advocate, concerned that they would reinforce gender

stereotypes. The graph that showed boys underperforming in reading received, to my knowledge, no significant response at all.

Three statistically identical analyses, but three very different reactions. In a sense, though, all were correct. The deprivation campaigners were right to imply that differences in average performance between groups can provide important insights into our education system. The expert concerned about gender stereotyping was also correct that such collective differences effectively tell us nothing about individual students. And anyone who merely shrugged at the graph showing boys behind girls in reading is arguably

right to be unconcerned in the sense that such inter-group differences tend to be modest in the overall scheme of things.

Yet, while such different responses are understandable in their own terms, it's unfortunate that they tend to come from different people. If we're being intellectually honest, we should feel all of these sentiments simultaneously: concern at persistent inter-group differences, recognition that such gaps tell us nothing about likely individual performance, and a sense of perspective in appreciating that most such differences tend to be relatively small.

So would we be better off ignoring or even banning such analyses? Emphatically not. Most people's understanding of school effectiveness is based on a worryingly narrow and potentially misleading set of indicators. Exam league tables mostly tell us how able pupils were when they arrived at a school, not how much they benefited from being there – and they don't go beyond narrow measures of academic performance. Ofsted reports are more nuanced, but only provide a snapshot and are often out of date.

If we want to improve education then we must do better than this, which means embracing the increasingly rich and varied sources of information now at our disposal. But that will also require us to be more discerning and balanced in our judgments. It won't be easy, but positive change rarely is.

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**A focus on professional development will get us closer to where we need to be, says Emma Hollis**

Last year was one of great promise for those of us working in initial teacher training.

At the heart of that promise was the Department for Education (DfE) consultation on strengthening qualified teacher status and improving career progression for teachers, which set out the possibilities for a seismic shift in teacher training, revolutionising the early career support offered to teachers and going some way to making the profession attractive once more.

The coming year will arguably be the most critical yet in terms of addressing teacher recruitment. I see three key priorities – all centered on professional development for those most in need.

## 1. Entitlement for early-career teachers

The Early Career Framework (ECF), which was supported by almost 90 per cent of respondents to the consultation, offers a longer period of support and guidance with clear entitlement (a key word) to professional development, access to mentoring and coaching and, potentially, reduced timetabling.

By clearly setting out the entitlement to support that every early career teacher should receive, this is now far more transparent and less dependent on the whims of a particular school leadership team. We must ensure, however, that political instability does not disrupt these potentially transformative plans. Schools are concerned about the costs of such an ambitious programme and yet, if funded and resourced appropriately,



EMMA HOLLIS

Executive director, National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers

## How can we improve recruitment and retention?

it really could be a game-changer. All eyes are on the next government spending review to see if it becomes a reality.

## 2. Effective mentoring and mentor support

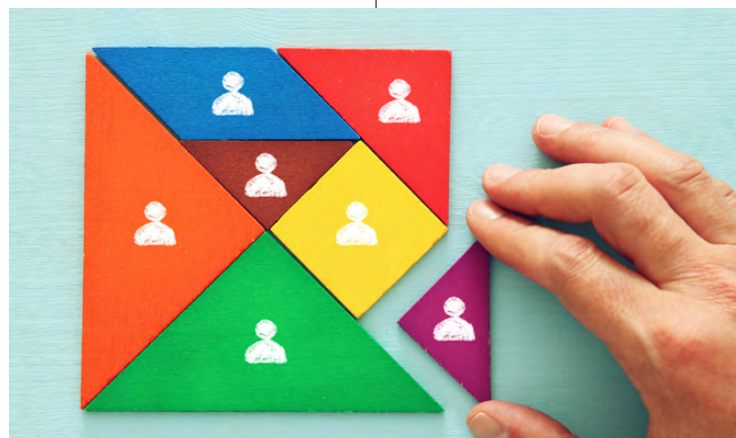
The entitlement to a longer induction means a greater need for highly qualified mentors. Quality mentoring

deployed into schools. I can foresee schools having a dedicated mentoring lead as they do for safeguarding and special needs. The position would be on a par with those two roles and would be rewarded and valued as such. The lead would have overarching strategic responsibility for mentoring early career teachers, training all staff on what it means to be a mentor – this

“Quality mentoring must continue to be a focus

must continue to be a focus of the DfE, and initial teacher training (ITT) providers are ideally placed to develop a network of mentors who could be

should be a set of skills that all teachers have – and to whom all staff report. Again, this will need appropriate funding and genuine recognition.



## 3. Teacher educator development

We've heard lots of rhetoric

around in-school recruitment and retention, which can only be a good thing. The feedback we have received from the sector, however, indicates that there has been little corresponding growth in professional development for those responsible for the education of teachers.

As yet, there is no formal qualification or status (such as one might see with a special needs co-ordinator or safeguarding lead) for the school-based teacher educator. The introduction of the ECF will give the role greater priority and it is imperative that those tasked with the professional development of trainee and early career teachers are given the training and recognition they deserve.

The ITT sector has been celebrating over the past 12 months, with 99 per cent of provision now rated either good or outstanding and a staggering 43 per cent of school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) provision rated outstanding. It was right to raise the fee cap for SCITT providers from £9,000 to £9,250, which removes any artificial distinction between SCITT and higher education (HE) providers. However, we need to ensure there is continued support for partnership working and a move away from the debate between schools-led versus HE teacher-training providers, to a recognition that both are valuable and are needed for a vibrant, choice-driven marketplace.



# Reviews

## BOOK REVIEW

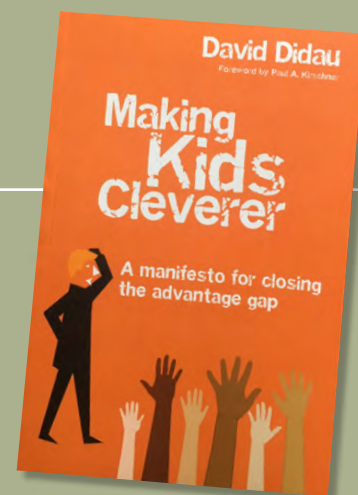


### Making Kids Cleverer

Author David Didau

Published by Crown House

Reviewed by Cath Murray



David Didau's new book is basically a trad manifesto for closing the advantage gap, whose core argument runs: we should try to make children cleverer because it's the best bet for improving their welfare. Schools can do this by teaching them a knowledge-rich curriculum full of powerful, culturally useful information, using the principles of cognitive science.

Essentially, he opens, whatever we're after in life (happiness, fulfilment, wealth, good health), you can't go wrong by trying to boost everyone's intelligence. This is because intelligence correlates with lots of societal and personal goods (although he's careful to note that the causal links have not necessarily been established).

While it's hard to come up with a universally accepted definition of intelligence, we know it has multiple components, says Didau, some of which are more genetically determined than others. With traits such as mental acuity and speed of information processing, "what you've got is all you'll ever have," but one important thing schools can influence, he argues, is the "quantity and quality of what children know".

He doesn't make a big fanfare about it, but this is essentially his underpinning for the knowledge agenda in schools.

In fact, he argues, if we fail to teach knowledge, we will disproportionately disadvantage the disadvantaged. This is because some cognitive skills are just easier to learn – they are the ones that we are predisposed to pick up through observation and include problem-solving, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.

You'll notice that these are the same

attributes commonly referred to as "21st-century skills". Didau challenges us to think of these instead as "Stone Age skills", because they are "biologically primary" – ie, kids can learn them by copying.

What they can't learn by copying is "secondary" knowledge, stuff that has to be taught explicitly, and if schools don't teach this, it's only the privileged kids that will get it – thus increasing disadvantage. His argument has nuance, acknowledging that some children will come from homes where even the primary skills need to be taught, thus justifying their inclusion in early years education.

In chapter two, Didau scores a stealth goal for knowledge transmission over discovery learning, by piggybacking it in off the argument that throughout human evolution, social learning (wisdom of the tribe) has been more efficient than asocial learning (trial and error). I can't work out whether this is a stroke of genius or a Jedi mind trick. In any case, it merits discussion, and he makes a compelling argument for schools being a place where the accumulated wisdom of the tribe is transmitted, rather than where children "tinker around the margins of human culture, maybe discovering something useful".

Referencing well-respected academic findings that suggest genetics and peer group are more important than parenting in determining life outcomes, he argues that schools are well placed to curate the peer-group experience. Successful schools in disadvantaged areas often work, he thinks, by creating the sense for pupils that they are part of

a privileged "in-group" that values learning. The important thing is to help children develop habits that will serve them well in the long term.

Didau is careful to point out that the "science of behavioural genetics is probabilistic not deterministic". In fact, he points out, the impact of genetics is much higher for those from privileged backgrounds. "Your genes might indicate something about your potential, but you're far less likely to develop a high IQ if you're abused and neglected."

Environment matters most for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, so the culture of a school is crucial. This is a scientific justification for the social justice heart of the trad manifesto (which those of us who align more with a progressive view of education don't always acknowledge!).

In his chapter on what knowledge schools should teach, he makes an impassioned case for a broad, powerful, culturally rich, coherent curriculum that children should be not only taught, but encouraged to critique.

Whether or not you end up agreeing with all his points, he writes beautifully and presents thoughtful arguments that deserve to be debated. It is a work of maturity that strives genuinely to take into account the counter arguments to his points. Oh, and with a Tango-orange cover that almost wills the reader to think "yes, I can – I can make these kids cleverer, dammit!" what's not to love?

# Research

Every month Laura McInerney shares some insights from polls of people working in schools, conducted via the Teacher Tapp app.

## Christmas? It's enough to make you sick

**Laura McInerney, Co-founder, Teacher Tapp**

Hands up if you were ill over Christmas and New Year? If you stayed healthy, then well done you. About half of teachers get sick during the holidays, according to our Teacher Tapp survey data, so be aware it might get you next time!

Why are teachers so prone to Christmas illness? In part, it doesn't help that classrooms are germ magnets. Thirty sticky, sweaty humans milling about in a confined space with restricted air-conditioning is a quick way to spread bacteria. Add into this mix the general grimness of children and their forgetfulness about washing hands or covering their noses when they sneeze, and teachers find themselves amid a plume of disease opportunities.

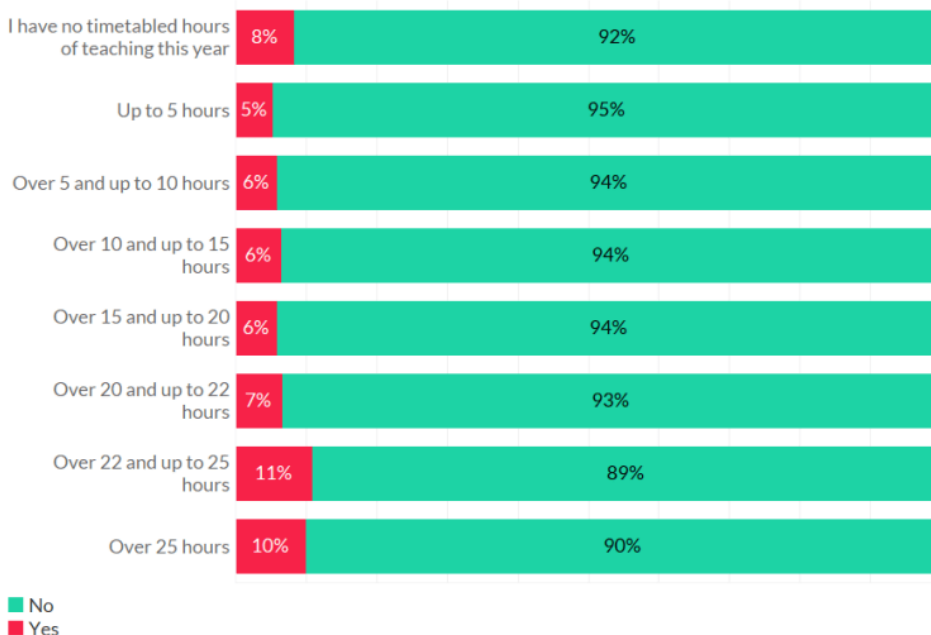
Parents don't help. Stuck for babysitters when their child has a cold or infection, many send their offspring to school. Between the October half-term and Christmas, we found that in any given week about half of teachers had to send a sick child home (or to a nurse). Little wonder that 10 per cent of teachers also took a day off with either a cold, flu or a cough in the same period.

Another, larger, group of teachers seem to have been holding on until the holidays before their fluey meltdown. People who feel stressed in their jobs are likely to feel ill and yet not take time off – either because they are too panicked to notice their illness or because they feel an absence will only make their stress worse. When these teachers finally do get a rest, the whole thing catches up with them and lays them out.

So what can teachers and school leaders do to limit the level of sickness, especially during holidays?

One policy (although difficult to achieve) is a cap on the number of hours a teacher spends in classrooms. When we looked, we found that teachers who do more than 22 hours of classroom teaching a week had a sickness absence rate that was almost twice as high as those who taught for fewer than 22 hours. We're not clear why it's 22 hours – but that

### Timetabled hours versus any days off sick last week



seems to be where the cliff-edge happens.

One school trialled a second (ingenious) solution. Using staff absence data from the past few years, leaders identified two weeks in the year with the highest levels of illness. Both were during longer terms with no natural break of a bank holiday. The school now plans two "long weekends" during these periods, where staff are off on the Monday or Friday. In return, the school runs for two days longer at the end of the academic year, as the leaders found that absences for sickness were rare before the summer holidays. By giving these mini "health breaks", the school has substantially reduced the sickness rates (and the cost of additional cover).

Finally, over the year of analysing Teacher Tapp data we've found that while headteachers work long hours they are among the happiest and healthiest of school workers. Why? Because they have the most autonomy. Researchers in the 1960s Whitehall studies found that managers tend to have better health than the people they line manage, simply because they have more choice over how they manage their work.

Nevertheless, as the former



headteacher Tom Sherrington said in a recent blogpost, there are many ways for teachers to gain control over their environment – whether it's changing your classroom environment to suit you, instituting hard boundaries about times when you will and won't work, and creating personal goals for your work this half-term.

Feeling in control won't always fight the germs. For that you will also want antibacterial hand gel, tissues, a good night's sleep and a daily dose of vitamin C. Put it all together and you might just stay healthy this year. Good luck!



# Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is  
Jon Hutchinson

@JON\_HUTCHINSON\_

## Reflections of 2018 Pt1: Great Yarmouth Charter Academy: pinnacle of teaching [@naveenfrizvi](#)

Like so many of us, Naveen Rizvi has been reflecting on 2018. Giving an insider's view of the controversial Great Yarmouth Charter Academy, she avoids the bombast and reveals how it was "the best school I ever worked at". What made teaching there so satisfying? She outlines how she got close to what she calls the "pinnacle of teaching" – "teaching where the highest possible proportion of pupils learn what is being taught on the first attempt". The key was a combination of "radical transparency" and "pre-emptive planning", both explicated in the post. I love having a nose in other classrooms to pick out elements that I can pinch and incorporate into my own lessons; Rizvi generously shares video examples to exemplify the strategies discussed.

## Who cares how it is meant to work? [@greg\\_ashman](#)

Greg Ashman is a prolific writer – he published six blogs in the week-long period

## TOP BLOGS of the week



that I was reviewing, which is more than I managed in the whole of last year. It's fair to say that he has something of a reputation for forthright views on education; he certainly doesn't pull any punches where bad ideas or dodgy practice are concerned. What's also undeniable – infuriatingly, for his critics – is his knowledge of research and chalkface experience. The selected blogpost beautifully characterises his academic insight and strident tone, criticises the "unscientific current" and "cultivated incuriousness" found in some educational research. In his crosshairs is a study undertaken by the Education Endowment Foundation, ostensibly testing a knowledge rich approach to the curriculum. I'll let you read for yourself what he makes of the research design...

## Recall: what is it good for? (absolutely loads of things) [@MrBoothY6](#)

With Ofsted's new inspection framework ready to make "knowledge" the buzzword of 2019, you can expect a renewed focus on the factual recall of students during your

observations this year. I'm on record as believing that this is a Good Idea, but we all know that schools have a pretty poor track record when it comes to implementing good ideas (remember growth mindset?). Thankfully, the primary teacher Ashley Booth has written a post full of strategies, games, activities and techniques that will embed retrieval practice into your teaching. From "Just A Minute" to "Heads Up", he talks through the different approaches that he has tried and tested in his classroom. Why not give one of them a whirl with your class this term?

## Making kids #cleverer – chapter 1: the purpose of education [@DavidDidau](#)

Here's a question: what's the purpose of education? Is it socialisation; preparing children for the world of work? Or perhaps it's enculturating them, whatever that may mean? This may sound like an ice-breaker exercise on the first week of a PGCE, but I've been asking everyone I know this question and have been surprised at the variety of responses. I was delighted, therefore, that David Didau begins his new book, *Making Kids Cleverer*, with a chapter on the subject. In this post, he summarises his thoughts, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of common views before offering his own thesis. The purpose of education? Making kids cleverer. Posts summarising each of the following chapters are a bonus. Having almost finished the book, I can confidently and enthusiastically recommend it to anyone who works in a school – and to anyone who doesn't.

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +





## Study suggests iGCSEs are 'easier' than reformed GCSEs

**Anne Brown**

May I introduce you to the elephant in the room?

Pupils at private schools have smaller classes, more resources, are selected and benefit from taking qualifications that aren't changed every time the wind changes. Teachers have less paperwork and more autonomy, and parents are paying for education so are more likely to ensure that their little darling actually does some work.

Is it not possible that pupils with all these advantages will gain higher grades than pupils in state schools? Apparently not, so the view is that the exams must be easier than these wonderful new GCSEs. And who's analysing them to say they're wonderful? Our beloved and entirely trustworthy government.

## Ministers will make it easier to 'try out' teaching as survey shows appetite for career change

**Janet Downs**

How will "have a go for short time" teaching benefit pupils? Teaching needs high-quality teacher education. Schools won't benefit from a jump-in-at-the-deep-end approach. No one would suggest this approach for other professions.

**Joseph Dunn**

Teaching is not a try-out exercise. It is a vocation and those who enter it do so early on because they have a zeal to make the world a better place. This idea seems to be like a flavour of the month if you are fed up with your present job. Being a teacher is mentally and physically challenging; only those who have been teachers understand this. Perhaps I should ask my doctor if I could try out being a doctor as I think I would be good at it!

## Pupils should ditch gadgets and climb trees in 2019, Damian Hinds tells schools

**Barry**

Encouraging students to take part in experiences is laudable and an important part of responsible parenting, but all the school has arguably done towards it is come up with a ticklist of activities parents should do with their children. How on earth they carry out an evaluation of the impact of these many and varied "activities" on the students is a significant issue. Without this

## REPLY OF THE WEEK **KT**

## Study suggests iGCSEs are 'easier' than reformed GCSEs

I work with lower-ability students, ones who will not achieve their potential by having to study for two years and then sit 100 per cent exams. iGCSE works for them as they can still complete practical and coursework elements.



And they gain a GCSE grade that they would not be able to achieve under the reformed GCSEs.

The government needs to stop deciding that "one size fits all" when it comes to qualifications, and from changing them every other year, so that the students have a fighting chance of achieving their potential.

Some children work better practically, some via a mixture of coursework and exams and some love exams. Anyone who has ever taught a child knows this! Why can't we play to the strengths of the children we teach?

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

evaluation it is little more than an arbitrary list of things to do and nothing more.

## New Year's Honours

**Martin Matthews**

It's fantastic to see people in education honoured, but as usual a large number are headteachers.

One teacher (in England) recognised, five governors and zero support or admin staff; that's from a group of more than 800,000. Proportionate? Representative? Nominate great people – if you don't, chances are no one will.

## DfE paid £9,000 for minister's business-class trip to Argentina

**Luce**

This is a complete non-story trying to drum up criticism for its own sake. Do you really expect a peer of the realm (and an old man) to be forced to fly economy long-haul for work to save a few hundred quid? Get real! Bear in mind that Lord Agnew does not get paid a salary, only expenses, and purportedly works 12-hour days.

# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

## FRIDAY

Schools minister Nick Gibb was in fine voice as he reeled off a list of dodgy stats about music education on Twitter. With each claim adorned with the treble clef emoji (stay classy, Gibbo), the politician claimed that music is compulsory in the curriculum for five to 14-year-olds, arts is the second highest-funded behind PE and that pupils are benefiting from 600 funded music bursaries at elite arts schools and instrument tuition via music hubs. What he failed to mention was that music is not compulsory for pupils in the thousands of academies in England, which make up the majority of secondary schools and almost a third of primaries, and that the music hubs group tuition reaches less than 9 per cent of pupils nationwide. He also provided no further information about his funding claim. Clearly the schools minister was just playing things by ear!

## MONDAY

Brexit

## TUESDAY

The National Education Union found itself in hot water this week over a letter published in its magazine *Educate* criticising the publication for accepting an advert from SodaStream, an Israeli company often criticised for previously having its headquarters in the West Bank.

Responding to the letter, the magazine's editor announced it "will not be carrying adverts from SodaStream

in future", and posted a link to the BDS movement website, which encourages the boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel in response to its actions against Palestinians.

However, this was news to Dr Mary Bousted, the NEU's joint general secretary, who insisted the union has no policy of banning Israeli companies from advertising and said a clarification would be published. The response was "made in error", she said.

While it's not uncommon for unions to hold a view on matters of foreign policy – indeed these issues are often debated at annual conferences – this does raise an important question: was a genuine error made, or has the editor of *Educate* been thrown under a bus?

## WEDNESDAY

Former schools minister Andrew Adonis took a break from Brexit this week to remind us all he's got some \*interesting\* ideas about education, too.

"Oxford and Cambridge must launch new colleges for disadvantaged young people," he proclaimed in *The Guardian*, to almost immediate backlash from educationalists.

"Good god no what a horrendous idea," said Sam Freedman, ex-DfE adviser and former TeachFirst director. "How about letting more disadvantaged young people into the existing ones?"

Meanwhile, Parents and Teachers for Excellence boss Mark Lehain took some time out from cheerleading everything the government ever announces to come up with some ideas for what these

new Oxbridge colleges could be called, including "Paupers' College, Oxford and Pupil Premium Hall, Cambridge". Chortle chortle.

Still, the main take-away from the whole enterprise is that lots of people at the heart of the political establishment went to Oxford or Cambridge. Who knew?!

## THURSDAY

Clearly forlorn at the lack of love free schools have been getting of late, the government orchestrated a debate in the House of Lords to champion the institutions.

And boy what a balanced discussion it was.

The debate was called by Lord Nash, an academy trust founder and former education minister, and closed by Lord Agnew, an academy trust founder and current education minister.

Contributions also came from Lord Harris, an academy trust founder, Lord O'Shaughnessy, an academy trust founder and Lord Hill, who has, as far as we know, never founded an academy trust but did set up the entire free schools programme when he served as schools minister under Michael Gove.

Despite the best efforts of opposition peers (including a broadside from former education secretary Estelle Morris – herself a member of an organisation that has sponsored free schools), the whole thing ended up being exactly what you'd expect – an hour and a half of mutual back-patting with very little substance.

The DfE will be thrilled.



Department  
for Education



# School Teachers' Review Body – Vacancy

The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) is an independent body which makes recommendations to the Government on the pay and conditions of school teachers in England.

The STRB assesses evidence from Government and organisations representing schools and the teacher workforce, and visits schools and local authorities to develop its understanding of issues facing teachers. In recent years, the STRB has been asked to report on a variety of matters, including establishing a stronger link between teachers' pay and performance, and providing greater flexibilities for governing bodies to produce individual pay policies for their schools.

## Further information on the STRB is available at:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/school-teachers-review-body](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/school-teachers-review-body)

The STRB is now seeking to fill a vacancy, and is looking to recruit a member that demonstrates the following criteria:

### Essential Criteria:

- Recent senior leadership experience within an educational setting, for example, a former headteacher.
- A detailed knowledge and understanding of workforce issues and operations within an educational setting, including recruiting, retaining and motivating an effective teacher workforce.
- An understanding of pay, remuneration, performance management and reward issues and an appreciation of the policy, financial and operational constraints that impact on remuneration decisions.
- The ability to analyse and interpret a large amount of complex and sensitive information, providing insight and a working knowledge over the impact of any potential decisions on the teacher workforce.
- An ability to communicate effectively in collective decision making, providing sound argument and assessing/debating conflicting opinions within a group to form a coherent set of recommendations.
- A sound understanding of and commitment to equal opportunities, public service values and principles of public life and the ability to act impartially and uphold the independence of the STRB.

## Eligibility and disqualifications from appointment

### *Serving teachers and headteachers*

Serving teachers or headteachers may apply but can only be appointed if they resign from their post. Serving civil servants may also apply but can only be appointed if they resign from their Civil Service post.

### *Consultant headteachers*

The eligibility of consultant headteachers very much depends on the nature of their work. Advisory work as a consultant headteacher would not in itself disqualify a candidate, as long as the work is distinct from actually being a headteacher.

Most importantly, consultant headteachers work should not be able to be interpreted as benefiting from the decisions taken by the STRB or taking payment for providing an STRB perspective. All candidates must declare actual or potential conflicts of interest as part of their applications.

## Appointment

This position will provide an influential and intellectually stimulating challenge for the right individual, who will contribute to the recruitment, retention and motivation of an effective teacher workforce. As a member of the STRB you will bring your own expertise, alongside a high degree of analytical ability, strong communication skills and, ideally, an appreciation of public sector reward issues.

The time commitment for this position is approximately 25 days per year, for which an attendance allowance of £300 per day is payable, along with reimbursement for reasonable travel and subsistence costs. This is a ministerial appointment and will initially be for up to three years.

## The closing date for applications is 7 February 2019.

We value and promote diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity for all and appointments made on merit.

**Please visit the public appointments website for full details of this vacancy and information on how to apply, available at:**  
[Home - Centre for Public Appointments](http://Home-Centre-for-Public-Appointments)





## SQA SEEKING QUALIFIED TEACHERS TO ACT AS TEST ADMINISTRATORS

SQA is looking to recruit Test Administrators to manage the administration process within schools during the Key Stage 1 Technical Pre-test. SQA has been commissioned by the Standards and Testing Agency to conduct a Technical Pre-test from 23 April – 3 May 2019. The work is on an occasional basis and involves visiting schools to administer tests that are of a particularly confidential nature.

The rates of pay vary dependent upon the nature and scale of the work. Fees and expenses will be paid for all work undertaken as well as full training provided.

The main duties of a Test Administrator are:

- Ensure that all aspects of the test administration is carried out meticulously and to the set instructions

- Communicate with various SQA/Schools/STA within agreed timescales set out by SQA
- Receive test materials and ensure secure storage and management of them
- Visit participating schools to administer the tests in accordance with SQA standards

Applicants must have Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and key stage 1 and/or 2 experience. If you would like to be considered for this role, please visit our website [www.sqa.org.uk/testadministrator](http://www.sqa.org.uk/testadministrator). Application closing date is Sunday 20 January 2019.

If you have any queries regarding this role, please email [adminbank@sqa.org.uk](mailto:adminbank@sqa.org.uk) or telephone 0345 278 8080.



### HEADTEACHER

Portsmouth/Hampshire

**Start date:** September 2019  
Competitive Salary within Group size 3

We are a collaborative multi-academy trust, believing that education is the key to transforming lives and securing social mobility. The success of our academies is due to our people.

The uniqueness of each of our academies is highly valued and recognised as a strength. Our strong, inspirational Headteachers lead the dedicated teams within their

academies and are co-leaders across the Trust ensuring our values and ethos are lived out in every classroom.

Joining the Trust family, you will find us welcoming and collaborative. Your understanding of the unique needs of your academy's local community will guide how you approach your headship, and this in turn leads to a strengthening of the Trust.

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The Shared Learning Trust

THE STOCKWOOD  
PARK ACADEMY

## HEAD OF MEDIA STUDIES

The Stockwood Park Academy is a vibrant and supportive 11 – 19 secondary academy based in Luton. We believe in providing excellent learning opportunities to all students and we promise to equip all our staff with the right training and qualifications to excel in their role and progress their careers.

We are looking for a talented and passionate Head of Media Studies to lead the department and deliver consistently high quality lessons across KS4 and KS5. You will motivate your team to raise attainment and ensure all students reach their potential.

### TO APPLY:

Please complete an application form via our careers site:

<https://www.mynewterm.com/trust/The-Shared-Learning-Trust/135337>

If you have any questions, or would like to visit the academy, please contact **Katherine Anderson** on 01582 211 226 or [academyrecruitment@thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk](mailto:academyrecruitment@thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk)



## PRINCIPALS SHARNBROOK ACADEMY FEDERATION

**Sharnbrook Academy Federation (SAF)** is a successful, popular and growing Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) comprising of two secondary and three primary academies with plans for further expansion. We exist to provide an outstanding education for all our pupils, putting their progress at the heart of everything we do.

We are currently seeking to appoint two dynamic, energetic and experienced principals for our secondary academies, Sharnbrook and Lincroft. Each principal will be part of the SAF Executive Leadership team.

Reporting to the Chief Executive of SAF, Iain Denning, the principals will provide leadership in all areas of the academies' work, ensuring that the strategic vision, ethos and values of the Federation are embedded in each academy.

The principals will be accountable for the continued improvement in the quality of education in each academy and work with the senior team to ensure that high standards of teaching and learning are achieved. They will inspire colleagues to strive for excellence in every aspect of their work and be committed to the highest aspirations and expectations for all pupils.

These are senior roles and will be remunerated accordingly based on experience. The benefits for working for SAF include:

- A stimulating and creative working environment;
- Exceptional CPD provision tailored to your needs;
- Membership of MAT Executive Leadership team;
- A subsidised on-site gym membership option.

Sharnbrook Academy Federation has retained Wild Search to advise them on these appointments.

For more information regarding these roles, and details of how to apply, please visit [www.wildsearch.org/opportunities/saf-principals](http://www.wildsearch.org/opportunities/saf-principals) or contact **Edward Wild**, who is leading the process, on **0207 233 2115**.

**Closing date for applications: 12 noon on 11th February.**

**Interviews at Sharnbrook: 26th and 27th February.**

**Candidates who are shortlisted will be notified by 15th February.**



## Dane Court Grammar School

### Head of School

This is an ideal opportunity and a unique environment for an ambitious Assistant Head or Deputy Head to gain excellent, supported training to be a Headteacher. Dane Court is an outstanding, mixed, selective 11 – 18 school. We are an IB World School, offering only IB and IBCP post 16. We are federated with King Ethelbert School and are part of the Coastal Academies Trust which includes four secondary schools and a large primary school. We are also a Teaching School working in partnership with schools in Sandwich, Canterbury, Herne Bay, Dover and Thanet.

Should you require any additional information please contact **Carolyn Hobbs** on **01843 864941** or ask to speak to **Kate Greig**, the Executive Headteacher. Pre-application visits and/or discussion are welcome. To apply please complete the online application form and submit a covering letter.

**Applications should be submitted no later than  
Monday 28th January.**



## Assistant Headteacher (Primary)

Salary : £55,000

Reach Academy Feltham was opened in 2012 and was the first all-through free school to be graded Ofsted 'outstanding'. We believe passionately that all young people, regardless of background, can achieve great things. Our goal is to provide all of our pupils with the opportunity to go to university if they wish and to live happy, healthy and productive lives. We have created a community of pupils, parents and teachers united by the highest expectations of what every young person can achieve, and by the commitment to help young people to excel.

At Reach Academy, we believe that an excellent education is built on a thoughtfully designed curriculum, backwards planned to make use of our whole-school model. This Assistant Headteacher role will be a part of the **Curriculum and Assessment** team to oversee the maintaining of an inclusive curriculum offer, and support curriculum leaders to build curricula that are thoughtfully planned and provide opportunities for application in relevant and rigorous ways.

**Closing Date : 18/01/2019**

For further information visit our website:

<https://www.reachacademyfeltham.com/join-our-team/vacancies/>

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