

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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

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Policy and  
performance:  
who should  
decide?



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FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2019 | EDITION 176



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INVESTIGATES

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SCHOOLS WEEK

Meet the news team



John Dickens  
EDITOR

@JOHDICKENSSW  
JOHN.DICKENS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Laura McInerney  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

@MISS\_MCIENERNEY  
LAURA.MCIENERNEY@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Freddie Whittaker  
CHIEF REPORTER

@FCDWHITTAKER  
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Jess Staufenberg  
SENIOR REPORTER

@STAUFENBERGJ  
JESS.STAUFBENBERG@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Pippa Allen-Kinross  
SENIOR REPORTER

@PIPPA\_AK  
PIPPA.ALLENKINROSS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Nicky Phillips  
HEAD DESIGNER

@GELVETICA  
NICKY.PHILLIPS@FEWEEK.CO.UK



Shane Mann  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

@SHANERMANN  
SHANE.MANN@LSECT.COM

THE TEAM

- Designer: Simon Kay
- Sales team leader: Bridget Stockdale
- Sales executive: Clare Halliday
- Administration: Georgina Heath
- PA to managing director: Victoria Boyle

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

## Editor's top picks



**Is it the system that needs to change, or school leaders?**

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## AP heads reveal support staff pay deficit



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## News: Academies

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# ESFA pulls £3m offer when academy says no to MAT

**JESS STAUFENBERG**  
@STAUFENBERGJ

The government revoked a £3 million pledge to fix a school's crumbling building because its leaders refused to join a multi-academy trust.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency told Dorcan academy in Swindon it would "no longer qualify" for capital and school improvement cash after it decided it would not join the Excalibur Academies Trust, show letters seen by *Schools Week*.

A further letter from Lisa Mannall, the regional schools commissioner for the southwest, added that if the school requested future financial support "ministers are likely to request that funding only be granted on condition that Dorcan join a multi-academy trust".

Mannall said the move would "better secure a longer-term viability" of the single-academy trust school.

But Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said: "It seems that the Department for Education and RSCs are now using the most powerful level of all – money – to force schools to become part of a [multi-academy] trust. This seems to be arbitrary and unjustly punitive."

Academies can only apply to the government for capital funding. "Where has it been decreed that getting capital funding is dependent on joining a trust?" Bousted said. "We shouldn't be allowing any school buildings to crumble and collapse."

It's the latest example of the government using funding leverage to push schools into multi-academy trusts.

We reported in February that the government threatened to forcibly claim back a £110,000 loan to the Hinckley Academy and John Cleveland Sixth Form Centre in Leicester unless it joined a MAT.

Julia Harnden, a funding specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said that joining a multi-academy trust might be the right solution in certain circumstances "but when it's not, it should absolutely not be forced".

She added: "We would be concerned if single academy trusts feel they are under



pressure to join larger trusts."

Sherryl Bareham, Dorcan's headteacher, told *Schools Week* the letters were "a threat – you won't get any money from us unless you join a trust".

The school was required to join a new trust after being placed in special measures in May 2016.

The government promised the school's chosen sponsor, Excalibur, £2.8 million in capital funding and a school improvement grant of £230,000 to take it on.

The latter would have ensured no staff redundancies, Bareham said.

However, in February last year, Lord Agnew, the academies minister, decided the school's improved reserves would be deducted from its school improvement grant.

Bareham said she'd built up almost £300,000 in reserves, thereby wiping out the grant.



Sherryl Bareham

In November last year inspectors regraded the school "requires improvement" with "good" leadership. Without the grant to avoid redundancies, governors decided against joining Excalibur.

Mannall wrote: "Turning down a certain offer of £2.8 million for uncertain funding in future will exacerbate uncertainty and is, in my view, not in the best interest of the school or its pupils".

But Bareham accused the DfE of withholding "essential" cash for the school's Seventies buildings.

Astrid Broderstad, the chief operating officer at Dorcan, said the roofs were "leaking all the time".

She said it was difficult to get hot water in certain areas and electricity supply was lost in a whole block a few months ago.

However, Mannall told the school the offer was from funds "reserved to support the transfer of inadequate academies into new trusts".

She also sent a government school resource management adviser (SRMA) to the school in December, with Bareham's agreement, to check on its finances.

The adviser's report, seen by *Schools Week*, "strongly recommends as a priority that the school joins a MAT as it gives the school the opportunity to access better resources and support".

A DfE spokesperson said that when the academy chose not to join Excalibur, "the leadership team were aware this meant the school would no longer benefit from the transfer package".

Dorcan remained "eligible to apply for further capital funding".

## News

# £1.8m curriculum boost fails to stop 'inadequate' rating



**PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS**

@PIPPA\_AK

An academy in Preston was rated inadequate and criticised for its “embryonic” curriculum plans – despite receiving £1.8 million from its multi-millionaire sponsor to focus on computing and digital technology.

Ofsted rated Fulwood Academy inadequate across the board after an inspection in February criticised its “unacceptable standard” of education, ineffective leadership and “extremely poor behaviour”.

The report said the school’s new curriculum was “at an ‘embryonic stage’”, adding: “The sponsor’s vision for the future curriculum is to focus on computing and digital technology. He has pledged a substantial amount of capital investment into the school to support this.”

The school is sponsored by Sir Charles Dunstone (pictured above), who co-founded Carphone Warehouse with David Ross, head of the David Ross Education Trust.

According to the Charles Dunstone Charitable Trust’s accounts, he gave £722,800 to the school last year, following a £1,142,000 donation in 2016-17.

However, Ofsted said that Fulwood’s plans for implementing this curriculum were “vague” and it was “concerning” that school leaders were “so uncertain about what the curriculum for all pupils will look like from September 2019”.

The trust is now moving to a new curriculum “focused on delivering powerful knowledge”.

Philip Grant, the new principal, told *Schools Week* that Fulwood’s knowledge-based curriculum would be delivered through “principles of instruction, classroom oracy, high-quality resources and well-designed assessments”, with “high level 21st-century technology” phased in over the next three years.

Grant, who started on the same day that Ofsted visited, said that Dunstone and other trustees “have an input in the curriculum” but were “guided and advised” by school leaders.

In 2011 Dunstone became the UK’s first digital billionaire after the demerger of Carphone Warehouse and TalkTalk. According to the 2018 *Sunday Times* Rich List, his fortunes fell by £28 million last year, although he is still worth £918 million.

Dunstone and Ross are among a handful of multi-millionaires who have poured substantial sums into schools after founding academy trusts.

An investigation by *Schools Week* in 2016 found nearly £20 million in charitable donations had been handed over to just 12 academy trusts from 2014-16.

Others donors include Lord Philip Harris, the founder of the flooring retailer Carpetright and sponsor of the Harris Federation, Alan Howard, a hedgefund co-founder, who donated £5 million to United Learning in July 2014, and Lord Agnew, the academies minister, who founded Inspiration Trust.

But there are concerns over the level of influence such donations bring.

*The Guardian* reported in 2016 that the daughter of Lord Nash, the founder of the Future Academies trust, had been appointed to help draw up a new curriculum, despite being unqualified as a teacher.

Grant said that Fulwood “is in a very sound financial platform and it’s envisaged that Sir Charles will continue to invest in the academy for special projects and to enrich the curriculum”.

Dunstone added that the school was “committed to delivering a first-class education and preparation for adult life” and “is already a different school to the one visited by the inspectors”.

Ofsted said reasons for the delay in curriculum planning included the responsibility falling to a new vice-principal who was not due to start until Easter, with a range of subjects linked to a proposed staffing restructure.

The education watchdog has pledged that school curriculum will be the “central focus” of its new regime, due to start in September.

## Theft forces AQA to replace exam papers

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**

@FCDWHITTAKER

Pupils have been urged not to worry after the exam board AQA had to replace four exam papers after a batch was stolen in Milton Keynes.

Police have arrested a 16-year-old boy in connection with the disappearance of a package containing AS sociology papers 1 and 2, GCSE French reading, foundation and higher-tier and GCSE French writing, foundation and higher-tier.

The papers must now be replaced so that no pupils are unfairly advantaged.

A Thames Valley police spokesperson confirmed that it was investigating a theft from a vehicle in Milton Keynes on April 26 “in which exam papers were stolen”.

“A 16-year-old boy has been arrested on suspicion of theft and handling stolen goods. He has been released under investigation.”

AQA became aware of the theft more than a week ago when a school got in touch to say a package of exam papers had not arrived.

The courier was contacted and the board launched an investigation, informing Thames Valley police.

Pupils are due to sit sociology paper 1 and the French reading paper on Tuesday. All schools are expected to receive replacement papers in time.

Claire Thomson, AQA’s director of operations, said: “These exam papers were sent to a school, but never arrived. The police and the courier company are both investigating and an arrest has been made.

“We’ve known about this issue for over a week so the process of sending new papers to schools to make sure no one has an unfair advantage is well underway.

“Our message to students is that there’s nothing for them to worry about – they can carry on with their revision as if nothing’s happened.”

The theft follows high-profile leaks of Edexcel A-level exam papers in 2017 and 2018.

## News: School funding

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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# Support staff pay rises leave schools struggling

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

EXCLUSIVE

Pay rises for support staff are crippling academy trusts that have specialist provision schools – with one trust facing almost £670,000 in additional costs.

Heads say the government is treating alternative provision (AP) and special educational needs schools as the “forgotten sector” by failing to fund salary increases for the support staff they rely on.

Wellspring Academies, which has 20 schools, including three special needs school and six AP schools, has revealed it had to find £669,000 to fund pay increases for non-teaching staff this year.

It follows the Department for Education award of an up to 3.5 per cent pay rise for classroom teachers this year and next, with schools expected to contribute the first 1 per cent with the government covering the rest.

However, non-teaching staff, who are covered by local government pay arrangements, were awarded a 2 per cent rise last April, subject to local authority and academy trust agreement, with another 2 per cent for next year – but with no extra funding

Alternative provision and special educational needs schools are particularly affected because they rely on a higher percentage of non-teaching staff than mainstream.

Dave Whitaker, executive principal at Springwell special and alternative academy, a Wellspring school in Barnsley, said the government was treating specialist provision as “the forgotten sector.”

“We always feel like we are an afterthought. Processes such as pay rises are set up with mainstream in mind.

“Without any uplift in funding, it’s costing us hundreds of thousands as non-teacher pay rises had to come from our own budget.”

One Wellspring school paid £142,000 in salary rises for support staff, who make up 88 per cent of its workforce, Whitaker said.

The 2 per cent award agreed last April was for support staff on £19,430 a year or higher, “with those on lower salaries



## “The government needs to realise AP isn’t just full of teachers”

receiving higher increases”, guidance on the National Education Union’s website says.

“We’ve got a lot of staff under that salary, so the pay rise is a lot for us,” Whitaker said.

“These are highly skilled people, but we need more funding so we can pay them more.”

Edward Timpson’s review into exclusions, published on Tuesday, recommended the government improve the quality of AP, and in particular “ensure AP schools can attract the staff they need”.

But now heads of AP schools say the unfunded pay rises for non-teachers will force them to cut staff numbers, rather than to recruit more.

Debra Rutley, executive head at the Aspire AP academy in Buckinghamshire, said she spent £50,000 on support staff pay rises this year.

“The government needs to realise AP isn’t just full of teachers. We’ve got instructors, therapists and behaviour support staff.”

Next year’s pay award will cost her £68,000, meaning the school may have to reduce staffing.

“That has a massive effect, as the first people to go are the non-teaching staff like behaviour support, which then becomes a health and safety issue.”

Simon Knight, co-headteacher at the Frank Wise special educational needs school in Oxfordshire, said he paid “more than double” for support staff pay rises than the £13,000 for teaching staff.

“It is not right that schools continually have to pay the cost of this unfunded government policy.”

Rob Gasson, the chief executive of the Wave multi-academy trust, which has 10 AP schools in Cornwall and Devon, said his support staff budget was £3 million a year, making any pay increase “more and more difficult” to fund.

A DfE spokesperson said the national high-needs budget was £6 billion this year. An additional £250 million was announced for this and last year to help local authorities “manage their cost pressures, including paying for all staff in special schools and alternative provision”.

# Let's get to work on a future-focused careers strategy



## Andrew Gladstone-Heighton Policy Leader at NCFE

**E**quipping young people with the skills and knowledge they need to be ready for the workplace is a challenge and schools need to be sure that they are getting their part right.

Only half of the 18,000 employers in the Employer Perspectives Survey, published by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2017, said recruits coming from education were prepared for work. This was reiterated by respondents to a Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) survey in 2018, which found that 8 out of 10 British school leavers lack the 'essential business skills' needed for work.

The report 'Joint Dialogue: How are schools developing real employability skills?', from Education and Employers, The Edge Foundation and National Education Union shows that young people face increasing expectations from employers that they are work ready as well as increasing competition for work from older, perhaps more qualified, workers. A growing number of employers now place significant value on the ability of workers to be personally effective in applying their knowledge and skills in new situations.

The research suggests that current government policy, such as the narrower curriculum and increased content and exam-focus of GCSEs and A Levels, are



standing in the way of young people developing the skills necessary for working life. Nearly half (47%) of teachers believe that there are fewer opportunities to develop employability skills and competencies since the introduction of the reformed GCSEs and A levels, with only 31% of head teachers saying the new GCSEs are good preparation for the work of work.

The requirements for careers information, education advice and guidance aren't specific in their content as to what skills learners should be expected to attain. However, it's in the learners' and prospective employers' best interests if the school provides opportunities for them to develop these skills. So how can schools ensure that they're helping learners to develop the transferable skills and qualities highly valued by employers, such as team working, communication and creativity?

Schools are obliged to fulfil their careers guidance duties and are recommended to

follow the 8 Gatsby benchmarks. A rich and varied programme of learning is advised, to give learners a comprehensive overview of their possible next steps and where they can upskill themselves.

To give school leavers an edge when it comes to the competitive labour market, NCFE has a range of solutions for schools to ensure that they're able to meet the benchmarks and the differing needs of learners and their preparedness for the world of work. This includes high-quality blended learning resources, an online diagnostic tool to identify employability skills gaps, and qualifications with customisable units to help schools target the specific areas that they need to.

Find out more about our solutions for schools to support your careers education, information advice and guidance duties on our website.  
<https://direc.to/bw4k>

# Investigation: NDAs

## Will gagging clauses stop whistleblowers in schools?

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

EXCLUSIVE

The use of non-disclosure agreements is increasing in some large academy trusts, just as senior ministers are questioning their use.

Lord Agnew, the academies minister, told MPs last week that he is worried about the “endemic” use of the “gagging clauses” in the public sector, while Matt Hancock, the health secretary, has vowed to end the use of NDAs that prevent NHS whistleblowers coming forward.

Figures obtained by *Schools Week* shed light on the trusts’ use of the controversial agreements, which prevent people from discussing confidential information, often as part of a financial pay-out.

They are under the spotlight for their use to cover-up sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying in a series of scandals that have included Harvey Weinstein, the disgraced Hollywood mogul, Sir Philip Green, the multi-millionaire who has been accused of bullying and harassment, and the Presidents Club dinner in London at which female staff were allegedly groped by attendees.

*Schools Week* asked the 20 biggest trusts for details of any NDAs – also known as settlement agreements – they entered into in the calendar years from 2014 to 2017. Eight provided full responses, with six showing a rise in the number made.

Richard Moorhead, a professor of law and professional ethics at University College London, said employers had “strong leverage” to pressure individuals into signing NDAs to get a reference for a new job.

“NDAs can be too strong, too firm, too controlling of the information that’s released,” he said. “They can inhibit the disclosure of public interest concerns about the management of schools, including safeguarding issues around children. They are a worry.”

However, Louise Taft, an associate solicitor at Freeman’s Solicitors, said recent scandals had “skewed the debate” on settlement agreements. Most were “bog-standard voluntary redundancy



agreements” rather than having a “nefarious purpose”.

She said employees often just wanted to “move on” from a situation, rather than face an employment tribunal and its related cost.

“If that’s what those people want to do then the confidentiality clause enables that. They should be free to make that deal.”

The number of settlement agreements with “NDA provisions” agreed by the Harris Federation almost doubled from 14 in 2014 to 27 in 2017, but Harris refused to comment on the reason for the agreements.

Outwood Grange Academies Trust agreed four settlements in 2014, rising to 22 in 2016, before falling slightly to 16 in 2017. Reasons included staff members with long-term absence, agreed mutual exits and redundancy.

A spokesperson said the increase came when the trust took on a school in which agreements had already been reached with the previous employer, and insisted they were “never used where safeguarding or serious conduct concerns exist or are under investigation”.

GLF schools’ use of settlement agreements rose from two in 2014 to nine in 2017, with none relating to whistleblowing or sexual harassment complaints. A spokesperson said the increase “is a direct consequence” of having to restructure its schools “given the financial challenges which the sector as a whole is currently facing”.

Harris federation’s accounts for the financial year 2016-17 show that 19 non-statutory or non-contractual severance payments totalling £193,050 were made. OGAT made 16 non-statutory

TRUST NAME (FOI RESPONSES BASED ON CALENDAR YEARS)	2014	2015	2016	2017
HARRIS FEDERATION	14	12	17	27
OUTWOOD GRANGE ACADEMIES TRUST	4	8	22	16
GLF SCHOOLS	2	4	7	9
GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST	2	14	9	9
PLYMOUTH CAST	1	1	4	5
DIOCESE OF NORWICH EDUCATION AND ACADEMIES TRUST	0	1	3	4
THE KEMNAL ACADEMIES TRUST	29	9	17	11
OASIS ACADEMIES TRUST	50	52	22	6

# Investigation: NDAs

or non-contractual severance payments, totalling £227,719 for the same financial year: GLF Schools' made five, totalling £19,000.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said the "intense pressure" on funding in recent years had forced many schools to undertake restructuring programmes. It was "likely this will have played a part in any general increase".

Last Tuesday, the education committee questioned Lord Agnew about NDAs when MP Thelma Walker mentioned almost £350,000 spent by the failed Bright Tribe Trust and Adventure Learning Academies Trust on 35 NDAs to allegedly protect commercial interests.

Agnew said NDAs were "endemic across the whole public sector. That is the problem with them". He agreed they were "not a good thing when public money is involved".

Their use is not confined to the academy sector. Last month, the BBC revealed that UK universities had spent almost £90 million on up to 4,000 settlements since 2017. Local authorities had also spent millions, including Hackney council (£2 million in five years), Sheffield council (£2.5 million in five years), and Northumberland county council (£1.1 million since May 2017).

The Department for Education, Ofsted and Ofqual all told *Schools Week*, under FOI, that they did not use NDAs.

In March, the government said it would toughen legal measures to stop the agreements preventing workers from reporting crimes, harassment or discrimination. Proposals in a consultation



Remziye Ozcan



Stephen Tierney

that closed last month included restricting their use around discrimination, excluding all information reported to police, ensuring agreements highlighted what could be shared and increasing independent advice available to employees.

Stephen Tierney, the chair of the Headteachers Roundtable, said NDAs could be "useful" to bring an "amicable end" to employment, but should be entered into "freely" and infrequently, and never to try to "bury" any wrongdoing.

Remziye Ozcan, a senior associate at Slater and Gordon Lawyers, said that "not having an NDA does need to become a

more acceptable way of settling a dispute.

"If it's used to mask unlawful behaviour then obviously it's a concern if nothing is being done about it, but if it's just for an employer who reasonably doesn't want other employees to know the level of compensation packages, and it's a fairly uncontroversial exit like a redundancy or mutual termination, I don't think it's as concerning."

Some academy trusts reported a decrease in the number of agreements.

Oasis Academies made 50 in 2014 and 52 in 2015, but just six in 2017. A spokesperson said the trust took on 16 conversions in those years, including eight schools in 2013, which contributed to the figures.

The number of NDAs at the Kemnal Academies Trust fell from 29 in 2014 to 11 in 2017.

Other trusts refused the FOI. United Learning, one of those that refused, said the idea that NDAs were used to cover-up misconduct "is a journalistic fiction". Implying anything was wrong with NDAs was "grossly misleading".

But David Ward, an associate solicitor, said the users of NDAs had a "responsibility" to "consider whether they were appropriate, particularly in education".

"One would expect that extreme forms of harassment, malpractice, safeguarding concerns and other unlawful behaviour would be identified as inappropriate and would not become the subject of an NDA."

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said academy trusts could use NDAs "to protect confidential or sensitive information where appropriate", but that they must be "entered into voluntarily by both parties".

## No answers on defunct trust's 'golden goodbye' payouts

The government has refused to explain why a now defunct academy trust set aside more than £100,000 for golden handshake pay-offs.

Overdue accounts for the Education Fellowship Trust, which is in the process of being wound up after giving away its 12 schools, reveal that £217,000 was spent on staff restructuring costs last year.

However, £115,000 of that is listed as non-contractual severance payments, £30,000 of which was paid to a staff member in May last year, with another £1,339 paid out in June.

That left £83,339 "accrued" by August 31 last

year – meaning the money had been set aside to be paid out at a later date.

The accounts suggest this payment is set to go to just one person, whose salary for the year was listed as at least £210,000.

The unnamed employee was paid between £100,000 to £110,000 in the previous year. The difference in salary for 2018 is down to "accrual for statutory and non-statutory/non-contractual severance payments" totalling nearly £117,000.

The Department for Education's website states such "special" severance payments are

"under close scrutiny". Any payments over £50,000 have to get government approval.

When asked if this had been sought, the DfE refused to comment. It also refused to provide further information about the payments as it "relates to third-party personal data".

VSH Law, solicitors acting for the trust, did not respond to repeated attempts for comment.

The Education Fellowship Trust was founded by Sir Ewan Harper, an architect of academies policy under Tony Blair. It gave up its schools across Northamptonshire and Wiltshire and in Maidenhead, blaming financial constraints.

# Civil servants take RSC posts in regime shift

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**  
**@FCDWHITTAKER**

Two senior civil servants have been appointed as regional schools commissioners – seemingly signalling the end of school leaders getting the jobs.

Hannah Woodhouse, a deputy director in the office of the south west RSC Lisa Mannall, will replace her boss on September 1.

Claire Burton, a former chief executive of the Standards and Testing Agency, will become the RSC for south London and southeast England in August. She replaces Dominic Herrington, recently made national schools commissioner on a permanent basis.

The appointment of two more senior civil servants to the RSC network comes as the government prepares to shake-up the influential role.

The Department for Education announced last month it would make “operational changes to the work of regional schools commissioners” to make their teams more “joined-up”.

A source told *Schools Week* the changes were about “broadening the regional systems with a senior civil servant in charge”.

It’s a big shift from the current system. The DfE website says commissioners are appointed for their “extensive knowledge of



the education sector within their regions”, adding they “typically have backgrounds as highly experienced academy heads, chief executives of trusts or leaders in education”.

The National Association of Head Teachers said the voice of headteachers must not be lost. A spokesperson said: “It’s really important that the RSC network continues to listen to headteachers and looks for other ways to make sure school leaders’ voices are represented in the work that the RSCs do.”

The DfE has also confirmed that Janet Renou, the RSC for the north of England, is to leave when her contract runs out this summer, as reported by *Schools Week* last week.

Her departure came to light after Martin Post, the RSC for northwest London and south-central England, who, like

Renou, has served since the first RSC appointments were made almost five years ago, announced he would leave when his contract was up. He was applauded at a recent Westminster Education Forum event when he said he was “one of the few that’s actually going to serve out the five-year contract”.

The original RSCs were given five-year fixed-term contracts.

The departure of the pair, both former headteachers, leaves few school leaders in key school-facing roles at the DfE. It said their replacements would be confirmed “shortly”.

Herrington is the only RSC to have been in post for a similar time. He was appointed in July 2014 on a rolling contract because he was already a civil servant.

Mannall is due to leave this summer to head the Cornwall Learning Education Trust.

She joins a long line of former RSCs to take up jobs in the academies sector, including Tim Coulson, Rebecca Clark, Pank Patel and Paul Smith.

Lord Agnew, the academies minister, said: “Hannah Woodhouse and Claire Burton will both bring deep expertise to the roles, which will be invaluable in helping to support and challenge school leaders across each of their regions.”

Vicky Beer, Andrew Warren, Sue Baldwin and John Edwards continue to serve as the other four RSCs.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## Afzal appointed to mediate in Birmingham LGBT protests

A leading former prosecutor has been appointed by Birmingham City Council to mediate between two sides in a dispute over LGBT relationships education.

Nazir Afzal, a former chief prosecutor for the northwest of England, and Crown Prosecution Service lead on child sexual abuse, offered his help in a *Schools Week* interview last month. He claimed it was “scandalous” that schools were forced to pull lessons about LGBT relationships because of pressure from parents.

Protests by parents and other members of the community began earlier this year in

response to concerns about No Outsiders, a programme of LGBT lessons taught in some Birmingham schools.

The programme, which teaches pupils about LGBT relationships and rights, was designed by Andrew Moffat, deputy head of Parkfield Community School, and had been used by other schools across the city.

The lessons were recently suspended at Parkfield, nearby Anderton Park Primary School and at four trusts run by the Leigh Trust in response to the opposition from the schools’ majority-Muslim parent body.

Afzal said on Sunday: “I don’t want payment, I don’t propose to give a running commentary.

I would prefer if nobody did, so that we can try and make progress for the children at the heart of this.”

Afzal’s appointment comes after Sarah Hewitt-Clarkson, the head of Anderton Park, told the National Association of Head Teachers’ annual conference over the weekend that unclear government guidance was exacerbating the protests at her school and others.

She also revealed how she and another staff member have been forced to have police markers put on their homes following threats of violence.

# News: Academies

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## ESFA 'doubts legitimacy' of free schools' payments

**PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS**

@PIPPA\_AK

The former chair of two free schools broke the law over payments of more than £500,000 to his own company, a government investigation has found.

A probe by the Education and Skills Funding Agency said there were "significant doubts on the legitimacy" of money paid by Collective Spirit Free School and Manchester Creative Studio to the Collective Spirit Community Trust, a company with links to a number of its trustees.

However, investigators encountered "substantial difficulties" establishing "any reasonable audit trail of financial transactions or evidence to assure the regularity of funds spent by the trusts".

The agency concluded that the schools' former chair of directors, Alun Morgan, breached the Companies Act 2006 over failure to meet requirements to exercise independent judgment and reasonable care, skill and diligence, failure to avoid a conflict of interest and failure to declare

interest in a "proposed transaction or arrangement".

Morgan was a 50 per cent shareholder in CSCT, which also had "unclear" links to the schools' former chief executive, Raja Miah. According to the report, Miah had sent emails to the free schools chasing payments on the company's behalf, the probe stated.

The DfE did not confirm whether any further action has been taken.

The ESFA first received allegations of financial irregularity at the two schools in February 2017. It identified "a number of significant failings in both the governance and financial control arrangements" at the schools, including the failure of trustees to declare their connections with CSCT and failure to properly manage or disclose related-party transactions.

The two schools were run as separate organisations but governed by an overarching board of directors. They had the same chair and same chief executive, although they had separate local governing



bodies.

Collective Spirit, in Oldham, closed in the summer of 2017 after being placed in special measures. Manchester Creative Studio, which was also in special measures, closed last summer despite an emergency government funding injection of over £400,000. Both free schools were founded by Miah, who won an MBE for his social integration work in 2004.

The investigation report, published yesterday (Thursday), said the ESFA could not confirm if services had been provided "at cost", in accordance with the rules around related-party transactions, because of the "lack of any robust financial control system, adequate financial oversight and relevant documentation to support contractual management and financial transactions" at the trusts.

The investigation found "limited or no evidence" for delivery of certain CSCT-invoiced items, and asked why invoices had been paid before the delivery of services.

The two trusts spent at least £500,000 with CSCT in 2016-17, but the ESFA was "unable to confirm with any assurance the totality of the spend with CSCT".

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# News: Politics

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## Education fails to set local elections alight

**JOHN DICKENS**  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Politicians in councils ranked among the worst in the country for school performance held on to their seats at last week's local elections.

Political parties at 11 of 14 councils identified as having poorly performing schools held on to power on Thursday.

Just three had a change in control: Wirral, Walsall, and Southend. The remaining 11 were all held by either Labour or the Conservatives, or remained under no overall control (see table).

The results challenge the argument of anti-academy campaigners who say that local democracy holds to account those failing pupils in schools overseen by the local authority.

It also follows a similar *Schools Week* analysis in 2015 that found four of five Labour councils labelled "ineffective" by Ofsted remained in power – with two increasing their majority.

However, this year's analysis shows a slightly different picture with all 11 councils that held on to power losing seats.

We based this year's analysis on the councils identified by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) as being among the lowest-performing in the country.

Alasdair Smith, secretary of the Anti Academies Alliance, said there were "circumstances that explain why the electorate isn't seeing it as an opportunity to take action against failing authorities and



replacing them. Education is not a priority."

John Fowler, a policy adviser at the Local Government Information Unit, said it was "possible, but rare" for a local election to be decided on an education matter.

However, he added that any attempt to interpret local election results was "difficult at the best of times", but was made "much harder" as Brexit had "divided most of the main parties and confused the electorate".

Of the 14 councils identified in our analysis, five had all their seats up for election. In each of those cases, the ruling parties held on to power.

The remaining nine had a third of seats up for election. Of those, more than half lost between one and three seats.

We identified councils based on an analysis published by EPI last year that compared school performance and pupil improvement at every academy trust and local authority in England.

We looked at councils that featured in tables showing the worst-performing 20 bodies at key stage 2 and key stage 4.

Bedford council was ranked the lowest at key stage 2.

The council will continue to have no overall control, although the Conservatives, the biggest party, lost four seats.

Dave Hodgson, a Liberal Democrat, was re-elected as mayor.

At key stage 4 Nottingham was the lowest-ranked local authority (although the table noted it had just one key stage 4 school). Labour kept control, but lost two seats.

Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said the public voted in "ways that are not determined by a single issue".

"It is simply not the case that the public will routinely vote administrations out over a failure to improve local schools."

The debate over democratic control – or lack of it under academies – was reignited in February when a campaign group opposing the academisation of the John Roan school, in Greenwich, south London, wrote an open letter stating the school should be "run democratically through local education authorities and that all our schools should be returned to local democratic control".

The letter was addressed to the United Learning trust, which campaigners said was being lined-up to take over the school.

However Jon Coles, United's chief executive, questioned the democratic accountability, writing: "Can I ask how parents have been able in practice to hold to account officers and members of the council? Who, there, has taken personal accountability for the failures at the school? Which councillor or senior officer has resigned, apologised or accepted responsibility?"

But Fowler said the essence of local democracy was "local people collectively having a say, advised by professional officers, in the shape of local public services".

"School improvement does not come from the ballot box: no one stands for election on a platform of making public services worse."

Smith said our findings should be used to make the case for a "different model of accountability", such as Labour's proposed National Education Service.

### At the ballot box: how politicians at failing councils kept power

Local authority	Party	Election result	Change in seats	Full election?
Barnsley	Lab	Held council	Lost 7 seats	Third of seats up
Bedford	No overall control	Held council	Con (largest party) lost 4	All
Bracknell Forest	Con	Held council	Lab 3 seats	All
Derby	No overall control	Held council	Lab (largest party) lost 6	Third of seats up
Luton	Lab	Held council	Lost 1 seat	All
Milton Keynes	No overall control	Held council	Con (largest party) lost 4	Third of seats up
Newcastle upon Tyne	Lab	Held council	Lost 2 seats	Third of seats up
Nottingham	Lab	Held council	Lost 2 seats	All*
Rutland	Con	Held council	Con lost 1	All*
Solihull	Con	Held council	Con lost 5	Third of seats up
Southend-on-Sea	Con	Lost majority	Lost 8	Third of seats up
Walsall	No overall control	Con won majority	Con gained 2 seats	Third of seats up
Wirral	Lab	Lost majority	Lost 2 seats	Third of seats up
Wolverhampton	Lab	Held council	Lost 1 seat	Third of seats up

\*boundary has changed since previous election

# News: Timpson review

The Department for Education has finally published the Timpson review on exclusions with ministers agreeing to implement its 30 recommendations “in principle”.

But what has the government ACTUALLY committed to? We look at how closely the response matches the pledge (in a lot of cases, it's pretty vague)

**Timpson** Schools should be accountable for the results of pupils they exclude, and take greater control of the funding and commission for alternative provision (AP).

**DfE** A consultation will be drawn up over the summer, for an autumn launch.

**RATING: DOES THE JOB 9/10**

**Timpson** Update statutory guidance on exclusions to provide more clarity.

**DfE** Tom Bennett, the behaviour tsar, will oversee new guidance that will include advice on in-school units and managed moves. Published by summer next year. The SEND code of practice will also be revised.

**RATING: GOES ABOVE AND BEYOND 10/10**

**Timpson** Establish a “practice improvement fund” for councils, mainstream and special schools to share best practice to support children in need.

**DfE** Will establish a practice programme (note, no “fund”) that embeds partnership working.

**RATING: SNEAKY TO DROP THE ‘FUND’ 2/10**

**Timpson** Promote the role of AP with new teacher training placement opportunities and action to develop “high-quality inspirational leaders” in the sector. Rename pupil referral units (PRUs).

**DfE** Will inform the next stage of AP reform. Plans to “go further” to improve outcomes for AP pupils, with a new AP workforce programme, will be outlined in autumn.

**RATING: NON-COMMITTAL, BUT HAS PLANS 7/10**

**Timpson** Invest in buildings and facilities for pupils who need AP.

**DfE** The spending review will set future capital budgets.

**RATING: LAME – BLAMES TREASURY 1/10**

**Timpson** Give councils “clear role” to systematically track pupils moved out of schools and allow them to take action if needed.

**DfE** Highlights the new register of children not in school. A consultation on working together on exclusions will consider the role of local authorities in tracking pupil moves.

**RATING: WATERED DOWN 2/10**

● **Timpson** Consult on options to revise the 45-day limit a pupil can be suspended in a single year.

**DfE** Will consider reducing the limit and whether to strengthen a requirement to arrange AP during suspensions.

**RATING: FULLY COMMITTED TO REVIEW, AND CHUCKED IN THE AP COMMITMENT. KUDOS 10/10**

**Timpson** Review the reasons for exclusions – including the “other” category.

**DfE** Will work with schools to understand the circumstances “other” is used and update the list of options available.

**RATING: WILL ACT, AND LISTEN TO SCHOOLS 7/10**

**Timpson** Schools should submit information on their use of AP through school census.

**DfE** Will consider how it can build the evidence base on schools’ use of AP on a national level.

**RATING: FLAKY 3/10**

**Timpson** Government’s £200 million Youth Endowment Fund, which is testing interventions to keep young people out of a life of crime, should be open to schools.

**DfE** Not mentioned. Instead, schools told to take part in a Home Office consultation on knife crime.

**RATING: POOR 0/10**

**Timpson** Extend funding to equality and diversity hubs to widen reach and impact.

**DfE** Will continue to promote diversity and consider recommendation as part of spending review.

**RATING: COP-OUT 3/10**

**Timpson** Review training and support for SENCOs, including specific focus on attachment and trauma for senior leads.

**DfE** Will fund development of new SENCO induction pack and support schools to train a designated senior lead for mental health (part of the NHS mental health cash).

**RATING: NOT FAR ENOUGH 5/10**



# News: Timpson review

## 'But how can we make accountability work?'

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**

@FCDWHITTAKER

Damian Hinds had promised to "work with the sector" to ensure proposals for schools to be accountable for the pupils they exclude are workable – after policy experts warned of "unintended consequences".

In its response to the long-awaited Timpson review into exclusions, the Department for Education has pledged to implement a recommendation tying the results of pupils to the school that excluded them.

But the failure of the government to flesh out the policy has led to questions about how it will work – and whether it will come to fruition.

Every education secretary since Michael Gove in 2010 has signalled their intent, but failed, to introduce accountability for exclusions.

James Bowen, head of policy at the National Association of Head Teachers, said it "has the potential to open the door to all sorts of unintended consequences".

When he was a headteacher he was often asked to take pupils as a result of a "managed move" to give them a second chance and to avoid an exclusion.

"We always tried to support this wherever possible," he said. "My concern is that this proposal could mean that some schools are less willing to support such moves. In that sense there is a very

real chance that this policy could inadvertently increase the number of exclusions."

In its response, the DfE pledged to produce "clear guidance" on managed moves to "provide school leaders with clarity".

Malcolm Trobe, the former deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, was one of 17 members of a reference group assembled by Timpson to help with his review.

Trobe, now an education consultant, told Schools Week that although he agreed with the principles highlighted in the review, it would be "very difficult" for schools excluding pupils in year 7 to be held responsible for the outcomes of those pupils five years later.

"The fact there's not a clear proposal in there indicates that it is an issue, but they haven't got a clear understanding of how to fix it."

It is not the first time tying excluded pupils' results to the excluding school has been mooted.

In his 2010 *Importance of Teaching* white paper, Gove, then education secretary, proposed that schools be "held accountable", with the academic performance of excluded pupils counting towards their place in the league tables.

The policy was also included in Nicky Morgan's 2015 *Educational Excellence Everywhere* white paper, but was never implemented.

The idea resurfaced last summer when Angela Rayner (pictured), the shadow education secretary, announced that

Labour would hold schools accountable for all pupils who left their rolls, whether they were excluded or off-rolled.

The government confirmed this week that the accountability regime would only apply to permanent exclusions and not to off-rolling.

The latter would be tackled through Ofsted inspections and strengthened guidance on what schools should and should not do, it said.

This week, an Ofsted survey found that a quarter of teachers believe their schools have off-rolled and two thirds that the practice is on the rise. The survey also found a "mixed understanding" among teachers of what off-rolling is.

Rayner told Schools Week that if accountability was not extended to those who left school rolls in other ways, the reforms could make off-rolling "more likely and see more children drop off school rolls and even out of education altogether".

In the Commons on Tuesday Hinds said the government had considered "a number of potential approaches" to accountability.

"Obviously, I think that some have more potential than others, but I am also conscious that there is a big risk of unintended consequences when we change anything to do with the system in education."

The government will consult on the proposal in the autumn.



Opinion: Stephen Tierney on how exclusions accountability could work, page 23

### IT'S BEEN MOOTED BEFORE

Education secretary  
**Michael Gove**  
Document *Importance of Teaching* white paper



Education secretary  
**Justine Greening**  
Document *Response to the Bennett behaviour review*



2010

2015

2017

2019



Education secretary  
**Nicky Morgan**  
Document *Educational Excellence Everywhere* white paper



Education secretary  
**Damian Hinds**  
Document *Timpson review response*

## News: Timpson review

# Councils should have 'clear role'

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**

**@FCDWHITTAKER**

The government will consider giving councils a key role in tracking pupils who move out of schools – sparking warnings they could “get in the way” of turnaround academy heads.

The Timpson review calls for a “clear role” for councils in reviewing data on pupil movement, including the power to “take action” to ensure children are getting an adequate education.

The government tentatively pledged to “consider the role of the local authority in tracking pupil moves”.

Nevertheless, a potential greater role for councils goes against the grain of recent reforms, and academy advocates are concerned town halls could now interfere too much.

Mark Lehain, the director of Parents and Teachers for Excellence, which campaigns for school autonomy, said it was “reassuring” to see the review and for the

government to back heads over exclusions.

“However, given that schools will remain accountable for the students on their roll, it’s vital that heads retain authority to act as they see fit. Involving councils and others must not get in the way of this.”

Dr Jeffery Quaye, the director of standards and effectiveness at the Aspirations Academies Trust and a member of the reference group for the Timpson review, also warned that “not all councils are effective, so you don’t want to create another problem”.

However, Anntoinette Bramble, Hackney’s deputy mayor for education and chair of the Local Government Association’s children and young people board, said the position for councils was still “all very vague”.

“Local authorities have serious concerns about the extent of off-rolling and other abuses of the system,” she told *Schools Week*.

“So yes, we do need to give powers and funding where necessary to local authorities so they can monitor and take



Dr Jeffery Quaye



Cllr Anntoinette Bramble

action where necessary, but it needs to be properly resourced.”

Bramble pointed out that councils asked to monitor pupil movement would need additional staff and funding to cover them. She also questioned whether the same rules would apply to academies as to LA-maintained schools.

“As the local authority you need the powers to go into every school if there are concerns, irrespective of their status. They haven’t put that in the briefing, so that’s a concern.”

In his review, Timpson said councils should identify trends and take action “where necessary” to ensure children received “a suitable education at their destination”.

## ‘We need funding for AP, not just warm wishes’

The government is “disingenuous” to claim it has accepted all of Edward Timpson’s recommendations on exclusions, claims an adviser to the review.

Timpson called for the Department for Education to establish a practice improvement fund “of sufficient value, longevity and reach” to identify children in need of support and deliver “good interventions for them”.

His review found “much variation in the quality of the offer within AP (alternative provision)”, with not enough support to attract high-quality subject-specialist staff, to invest in good facilities or “to remove the stigma attached to being educated in these settings”.

The government said it had agreed to all 30 recommendations “in principle”.

However, its detailed response, published later on Tuesday, showed it

had only pledged a “practice programme” relating to the AP recommendation, with no mention of funding.

Dr Kiran Gill, an AP expert who served on the reference group for the review, said vulnerable children needed more than “warm wishes” from ministers, warning that expertise for the system “is not going to come from nowhere”.

“The fact that no funding has been pledged is a huge matter of concern,” said Gill, the founder of The Difference, a charity that aims to boost the skills of the AP workforce.

“It is disingenuous for the government to say it is accepting all of the recommendations of this independent review if actually it’s not investing in it.

“We need to make sure we all hold it to account to make sure this isn’t like other reviews, where time lapses and in that period nothing really happens.”

Research by the charity Barnardo’s found one in three local authorities had no spaces in pupil referral units.

Gill urged ministers to “put their money where their mouths are and fight for funding for the most vulnerable”.

“Let’s not think the job is done simply because the government says it has accepted all the recommendations. We don’t just need warm wishes for these children.”

Alongside a proposed shake-up of AP, the government has pledged to look at capital funding for the sector in this year’s spending review.

Luke Tryl, the director of the New Schools Network, said the “obvious conclusion to draw from the Timpson review is that we need more high-quality alternative provision places”. He urged the government to “urgently” build more AP free schools.

# News: Computing

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## £84m centre won't stop pupils missing out on computing

**JESS STAUFENBERG**

@STAUFENBERGJ

The architects of the computer science qualification have warned ministers that the new National Centre of Computing Education will not stop the haemorrhage of pupils taking the subject.

A report by the University of Roehampton has revealed that pupils last year took about 144,000 fewer qualifications in either the computer science GCSE or other ICT qualifications compared with 2017.

The number of hours teaching computing or ICT at key stage 4 also dropped by 31,000 hours a week from 2012 to 2017.

It follows schools abandoning the ICT GCSE in droves after Nick Gibb, the schools minister, scrapped it from league tables in 2015.

Meanwhile, the proportion of pupils taking the computer science GCSE dawdled up from 12.1 per cent in 2017 to 12.4 per cent last year.



Peter Kemp, one of the report's authors, said: "Young people are now less likely to access any computing education than they were before computer science was introduced."

The slump follows a Department for Education injection of several million into computing "master teachers", and a further £84 million for a National Centre of Computing Education to train secondary school teachers and to support primary schools.

Julia Adamson, the director of education at the British Computer Society, said although the new centre was "certainly part

of the solution" to increase uptake, "it will not on its own solve the underlying problem, because whilst GCSE computer science fills part of the gap left by the ICT GCSE, it does not cater for everyone".

*Schools Week* has previously reported girls and poorer pupils appear particularly put off by the qualification's emphasis on coding.

Kay Sawbridge, a computer science and IT teacher, said a number of schools had dropped ICT and computer science "because computer science is proving too difficult" and ICT was scrapped.

At her school, pupil uptake of computer science fell from 52 last year to 42 this year. Similarly, the numbers taking a vocational IT qualification have dropped from 74 to fewer than 50 this year.

A DfE spokesperson said it "continued to offer schools a range of support to improve the teaching of computing", adding "entries for computer science GCSE continue to rise, from just over 4,000 when it was introduced in 2013 to over 70,000 in 2018".

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# News: Behaviour

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## Behaviour tsar: 'It's the certainty of sanctions that matter'

FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools that demonstrate "consistency" in behaviour management are being sought for a new £10 million government project – and there is no preferred strategy, the government's behaviour tsar has said.

The government appointed Tom Bennett (pictured) last week to lead the three-year project to support up to 500 schools across England in developing better behaviour management policies.

He and the Department for Education will recruit a network of lead schools and advisers across England to drive the project forward.

Bennett is perceived by some as favouring more hard-line behaviour policies, such as isolation and exclusion.

But he told *Schools Week*: "It is a misunderstanding that I'm really going to work hard to try to dispel.

"I think that nationally we often lack a language to talk about behaviour sensibly. So there's this massive assumption that because I, for example, support the right to use exclusions, therefore my model is punishment and exclusions.

"But this just indicates how poorly developed the conversation, the dialogue, is about behaviour."

Bennett said the government would be looking for lead schools that "understand what their culture is, they understand how to create high levels of consistency, high levels of expectations and how to communicate and train staff and how to roll that culture out over time".

"We're looking for different phases and ranges of schools that can demonstrate different types of strategy, as long as they're very good at this

core model," he said.

His desire to see a "broad range of schools" on board is prompted in part by the findings of his 2017 government behaviour report.

"When we were looking at the very best schools despite challenging demographics, what we found was that there was enormous consistency," he said.

"They were proactive in teaching social behaviour, they had very, very tight consequence systems and they were very good at things like accountability, they were very good at staff training and they were very good at managing and curating their own cultures.

"Those broad things universally tended to work very, very well. But strategically how these things were rolled out at the ground level could vary enormously."

The government behaviour tsar is keen to shake off the assumption that he is simply in favour of "harsher punishments and harsher sanctions".

"What we do know from as much evidence as we've got in this matter is that the severity of sanctions isn't really of key importance, it's the certainty of sanctions that matter. So if you are going to use sanctions, there needs to be a very high level of consistency, and when there are exceptions, they must be exceptional."

His appointment caused a stir amongst some sections of social media. But Bennett said: "There's a lot of pushback but there's also a lot of encouragement. There's a lot of people who massively support this, and I'm happy for that because education is an enormous debate. But one thing I'm quite resolute about is, I've seen far too many teachers, schools and pupils suffer massively because schools need a lot more support in terms of how to improve their behaviour management."

## Bennett glides into top behaviour post

FREDDIE WHITTAKER  
@FCDWHITTAKER

The Department for Education insists it will launch a recruitment process for its new "behaviour network" experts, after the project's lead adviser was appointed without competition.

It was announced on Saturday that Tom Bennett, who led the DfE's independent review of behaviour in schools, will head a £10 million project to share best behaviour practice with about 500 schools.

*Schools Week* understands he was appointed without a formal recruitment process, and that the government felt this was justified because one of the functions of the network would be to implement his 2017 report.

A source said he was "uniquely placed" to do so.

But when pressed by *Schools Week* on how the other advisers for the project would be selected, the DfE insisted a formal recruitment process would be followed, with applications opening "in due course".

The lead schools will also be chosen through a formal bidding process, *Schools Week* understands. The DfE does not have a specific number of lead schools in mind, and will base its final decision on the calibre of the applications.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said the DfE wanted schools to "instil cultures of good behaviour top to bottom" and described improving pupil behaviour as a "key priority".

"With £10 million of funding, the support provided to schools will allow teachers to get on with what they do best – teaching – and empower school leaders to implement their behaviour policies correctly and robustly."

*Schools Week* understands Bennett will be paid on a pro-rata basis. His hourly rate is not known.

# Schools Week Live at NAHT

## Motion on industrial action hints at how heads will respond to a poor spending review

The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) held its annual conference in Telford last weekend. Our veteran conference-goer Freddie Whittaker gives his take on the key stories

### 1 Heads could refuse to make redundancies after backing industrial action

The NAHT voted to put industrial action on the table in its fight over school funding, but this doesn't mean heads will go on strike.

The motion simply instructs leaders to explore options to challenge the funding crisis "up to and including industrial action", but the extent of such action would have to be properly agreed through a ballot of members.

Instead, heads could refuse to make redundancies or change the pay and conditions of their staff to balance the books, the motion states.

In practice, it commits the NAHT to explore options, not to ballot its members, but it does give us an insight into how it might respond to a disappointing spending review.

### 2 Leaders want an independent Ofsted complaints body

Leaders have for some time been irate about Ofsted's internal handling of complaints about its inspections and reports.

Only if the complaint and an "internal review" bear no fruit can a school go to the Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted, and even then, the body cannot change the outcome of any complaints.

Delegates voted to instruct the union's leadership to campaign for a new independent body that would give schools a statutory right to appeal against an Ofsted judgment "where they believe the outcome is irrational or unfair".

The vote means the NAHT will make this an official campaign issue.

### 3 DfE guidance is to blame for the LGBT education protests

Headteachers warned of parents' confusion about the new relationships, sex and health education curriculum, which they say has been prompted in-part by unclear guidance.

The DfE's official statutory guidance tells primary schools they must teach pupils that families "sometimes look different" and that they should "respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care".

But a FAQs document, which is more accessible to parents because it is less technical, insists that though primary schools are "enabled and encouraged to cover LGBT content if they consider it age-appropriate to do so", there is no requirement for them to teach it.

Sarah Hewitt-Clarkson, the head of Anderton Park Primary School in Birmingham, said the singling-out of LGBT issues in the FAQs document was spurring on parents who were against LGBT teaching.



Education secretary Damian Hinds and NAHT general secretary Paul Whiteman



Shadow early years minister Tracy Brabin

### 4 Teachers face a barrage of abuse and threats of violence from parents

During a debate on a motion calling for better government support for headteachers, the conference heard shocking stories of the abuse teachers faced on the frontline.

Alice Middleton, a head from the Midlands, said a parent had threatened to kill her in the playground of her school before Easter.

And Michelle Sheehy spoke of two colleagues in a nearby secondary school who had suffered "racist and homophobic abuse and were then subsequently threatened with an axe".

Members voted to back calls for better government support, including training on how to deal with physical and verbal violence.

### 5 Labour won't make MAT chief executives redundant

During a Q&A on Sunday Tracy Brabin, the shadow early years minister, sought to reassure academy leaders about Labour's plans to restructure the school system.

Proposals announced by the party last year have prompted concerns that Labour could close existing academies, but the party denies it intends to forcibly take all schools back under local authority oversight.

Brabin insisted "this isn't about making anybody redundant", adding it was "about accountability. We can't have schools run from Whitehall and big organisations that are going into schools and education because it's a way to make money".

# EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## Not fair to attach strings to capital funding

There's plenty of logic in encouraging schools to join multi-academy trusts. If a school is struggling, and the MAT can help it improve – both academically and financially – it makes sense.

But threatening to withdraw much-needed capital funding for a school if it doesn't join a MAT seems a step too far.

Academies are reliant on the government for capital funding. Handing out the funding with strings attached to meet the government of the day's wishes is a dangerous move.

This is just the latest attempt to strong-arm single academies into joining MATs.

But what next? Could a future grammar school-friendly government decide you can only have your roof fixed if you introduce selection? It has the potential to be abused.

As Mary Boustead points out, "Where has it been decreed that getting capital funding is dependent on joining a trust?"

## Government too woolly on Timpson

So, the Timpson review is finally here. As expected, the main pledge is to hold schools accountable for the pupils they exclude.

As we point out on page 14, this could solve a lot of problems in the system – but the government has to get it right to ensure it doesn't have unintended consequences.

All the talk prior to publication was how the government was toning down some of the language used regarding exclusions. And education secretary Damian Hinds was very keen to point out he backs heads to use their exclusion powers.

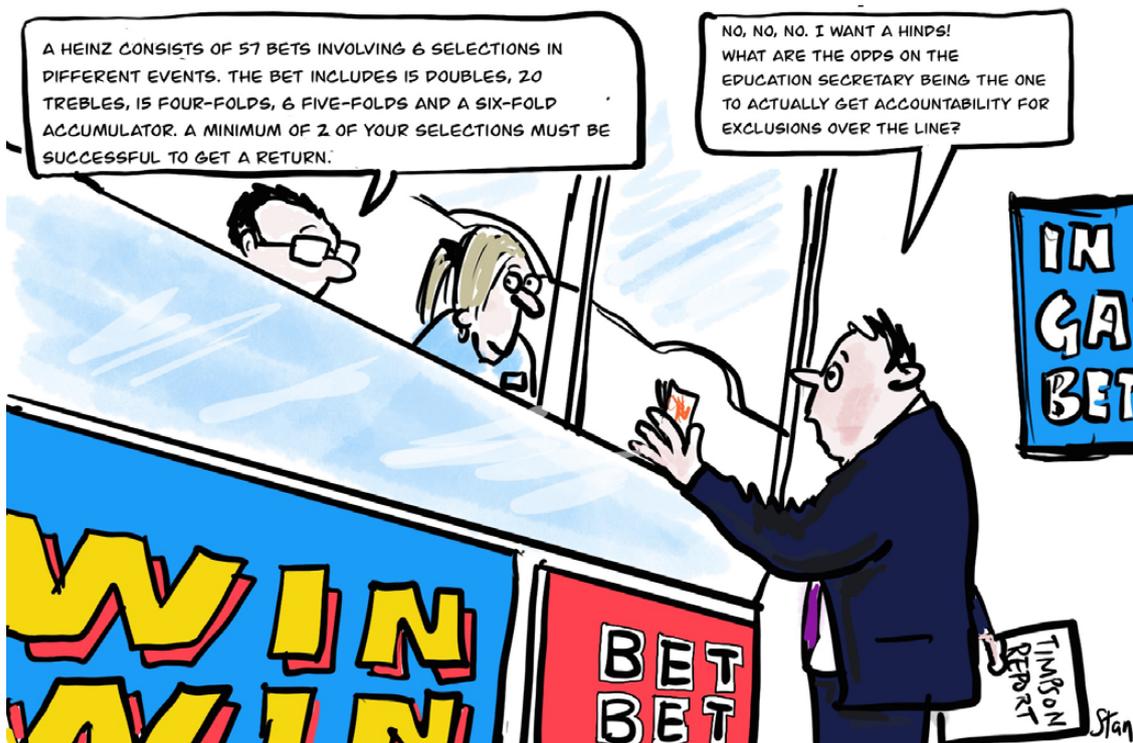
But more worrying is the government's very woolly response to some of the recommendations. The pledge to reform AP, especially, is reliant on funding to improve and expand the sector.

The government said extra cash depends on the spending review. But we've waited so long for this, it's all just warm wishes if there isn't any money to back it up.

SCHOOLS WEEK



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# The Debate

Amanda Goodall, senior lecturer in management, Cass Business School



## Policy and performance: who should decide?

CATH MURRAY

@CATHMURRAY\_

### Who should make policy, politicians or educationists?

**Jonathan Simons** I guess the not very helpful answer is, in some instances, both. Making education policy is about balancing different groups and interests: kids, parents, teachers, employers, taxpayers, etc. If you give that to experts or teachers, by definition, they're only going to understand part of the picture, whereas policy-makers or politicians are uniquely placed to, in theory, understand all those issues.

**Amanda Goodall** I couldn't disagree more. Do you think a teacher isn't capable of thinking about the student, their family, the community? Do you think that a consultant in the NHS isn't going to think about the patient, the patient's family, health in the community? An expert is tied to the outcomes that are associated with their expertise. A politician is tied to the outcomes that are associated with his or her political party.

**JS** Both of those are debatable. It is a natural human behaviour for people to, at least in part, think about things from their perspective, which means that teachers, while caring about children and outcomes, will have as part of their calculation what is beneficial to them.

There ought not to be a dilemma between doing what is right for a politician's party – let's use as shorthand them getting re-elected – and achieving good policy. Within education, given that parents and teachers are voters, if a politician deliberately does something horrendous for education . . . that ought to have electoral consequences. That's what keeps politicians in check.

**AG** In my research I've found that leaders associated with the best organisational performance are the ones who are experts in the core business activity. We've looked at that now in lots of different settings and found best experts are clearly capable of widening that lens and being able to think about the whole, overarching organisation.



“There's no such things as a neutral group of experts”

It's much easier to train an expert in leadership management than it is to train a manager in medicine, for example. What government does, and what people who do not understand the core business do, is they put in these little controls.

### Should schools be subject to government performance measures like SATs?

**JS** I think Amanda Spielman is suggesting that left to their own devices, public sector workers will essentially do not just a good job, but a better job than if they are forced to comply with government performance measures. But in many instances, the counter is true: left to their own devices we see a huge variation in performance.

Because teachers and nurses and academics are humans, they exhibit human biases and behaviours; some perform less well than others. Some are not entirely intrinsically motivated, and therefore it is perfectly reasonable, as a government who represents everyone, for there to be some sort of metrics put in place. I'm not saying they're all the right ones. But I don't think the basic premise that government should butt out because otherwise public sector workers would get on with it is true.

**AG** Why should a bad teacher, a bad doctor, a bad academic, be allowed to go into leadership? That's where you get poor quality. What we're suggesting is that you pick the best people, the best school teachers and you give them training.

Obviously, government has to keep an eye on how schools and universities are doing, absolutely. You want to tweak the incentives. But politicians don't know what "tweak" means. All they know is how to come rolling in like the tanks into Czechoslovakia. Read my book, *Doctors in the Boardroom*. I'm not against performance measures.

### Who should set school performance measures?

**AG** Who knows best what "good" looks like in your job?

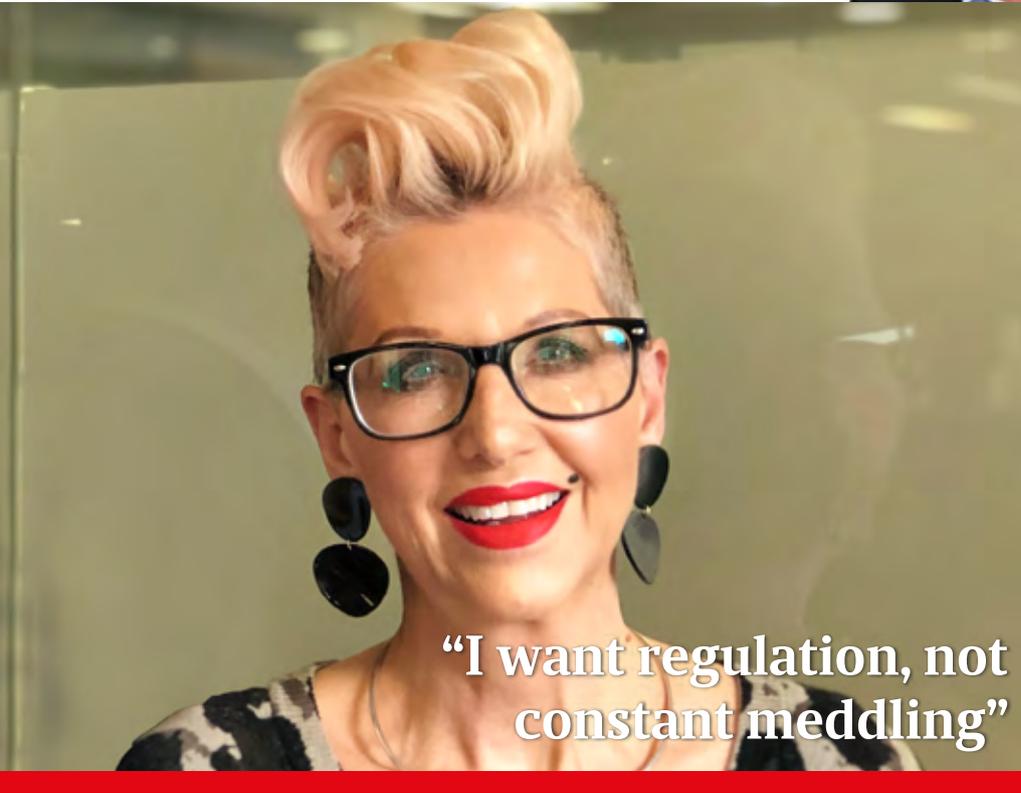
**JS** My boss. But we're a private company. If I were a school, it is not just about whether my boss thinks I'm doing a good job or not, because I'm accountable to more than just my boss.

**AG** You say politicians represent children and parents. Actually, what politicians have done is emasculate experts. Michael Gove

# Policy and performance: who should decide?



## The Debate Director, Public First



“I want regulation, not constant meddling”

said it all: “We’ve had enough of experts.” The fact is that a teacher does know better about the education of a child. A doctor does know better about healthcare, but politicians have emasculated us. What we need is a strategy worked out with experts and politicians together, and whoever else you want as stakeholders in there. Then they should be left alone to do it. Autonomy is the No 1 thing that is associated with performance as well.

**JS** Let’s stick in the health sector. You’ve got your ten-year strategy, it’s been designed by clinicians and whoever else. Hospitals are left to get on with it, in your own words. A year or two later we see that some hospitals are much more financially efficient. Some hospitals have mortality rates that are wildly different. Who holds them to account?

**AG** There should always be regulation. I want to know that when I eat in a restaurant that the council is regulating whether that place is safe or not. But you need a particular kind of regulation and you need some level of “hands-off”. You need to allow these organisations to be regulated from afar and not to have people running in and changing things all the time.

**JS** I accept that reform fatigue is a weakness in the system. But it is a necessary part of public management of public services. However frustrating, however expensive, it doesn’t trump the right of the elected government to change its mind.

### Wouldn’t it be better if policy were set by a group of education experts?

**JS** That is superficially attractive. But there’s no such thing as a neutral group of experts. Let’s take the curriculum. Who decides whether children should study British history vs European history vs Commonwealth history vs whatever? There’s no empirical answer. You can’t do a research study that says “this is the better than this”. Because it’s a values judgment, it can only be done with a political lens. You can’t come to an agreement on a values proposition.

**AG** The idea that experts can’t come to a decision and politicians can, is laughable 2.5 years down the road after they can’t agree on simple terms of leaving the EU. I’m sorry, experts, school teachers, all these people are used to negotiating. If your child goes into hospital and has an operation,

do you think they’re left in the hallway shouting at each other while the child dies on a bed? No, of course they can agree. Do you think school teachers can’t do the same?

**JS** But it is possible to study empirically the most effective way to do a hip operation. About the history curriculum, there is no study that can be done. It’s a values judgment, and this is the difference between education and other areas of policy. You would either get no agreement, which is very possible, or you would get agreement at the level of generality.

### Might that not be a good thing, because schools would be given a lot of flexibility?

**JS** I am broadly in favour of schools making autonomous decisions on elements of curriculum. I’m not after government micromanaging all of that. But I come back to the testing. If we know that certain children are not being taught in the most effective way, and, as a result, are learning less English, less maths, less history, less sex education, whatever, is it reasonable enough to say, “Well, look, that’s the school’s choice. The school has chosen to do it in this way or that way?”

**AG** I want regulation. What I do not want is constant meddling. There are certain areas where what goes into teaching and educational policy should be guided by research and expertise, and there is a lot of fantastic research out there. Then there are certain issues that should be political: people should have sex education in schools, and we have democratic values that should be practised throughout the whole country.

### POINTS OF AGREEMENT

- It is important that expert educationists have a voice in policy.
- Schools should have some freedom to choose their curriculum.
- There needs to be some kind of measurement of how schools are doing.
- Performance management can, however, lead to perverse incentives.
- Initiative fatigue is a problem under the current system.

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On Sunday (May 12th) we'll be joining the South & City College Birmingham Cure Leukaemia team to cycle the 100 mile (!!) Velo Birmingham & Midlands, to raise funds for Cure Leukaemia.

Riding will be Shane Mann, (publisher of Schools Week & FE Week), John Dickens (Schools Week editor) and Nick Linford (FE Week editor).

Every £ donated will be a great motivator on the day for Shane, John & Nick as they cycle over 100 miles.

Please donate whatever you can and help us donate an impactful sum of money to Cure Leukaemia.

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# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**Schools should be responsible for all the children they educate for as long as they educate them, says Stephen Tierney. And that means proportionate accountability...**

The Timpson review is an attempt to address a small but significant issue; the pretence of school improvement through cohort change with a consequential negative impact on children and young people's life chances. Recommendation 14 reads, "DfE should make schools responsible for the children they exclude and accountable for their educational outcomes..."

This covers two critical areas that may well be affecting the rise in permanent exclusions; funding and accountability. It fails to address the impact of austerity on the disappearing and disappeared local provision available to schools and the vulnerable young people themselves. In the same way that we cannot sum up a school's performance using a single word; nor can we devise a single statistical measure that will adequately allow us to determine a school's effectiveness. There will be plenty of naysayers, when and if the consultation proposed by Timpson comes to pass, about the inadequacy of any proposed changes to measures such as Progress 8. But a slightly less imperfect measure is preferable to the status quo.

Here are some thoughts to start the debate. We must move beyond Timpson's recommendation that schools should be "responsible for the children they exclude". Schools should be responsible for all the children they educate for as long as they educate them. This is essentially another call for



STEPHEN TIERNEY

Chair, Headteacher's Roundtable

## Here's how exclusions accountability could work ...

proportionate accountability. At its simplest, a secondary school would be proportionately accountable for each year a child attends the school; 20 per cent accountability a year. However, a very small number of

education (forced or otherwise) or who are part of a "managed move" (agreed or foisted on the host school)? In 2016, Headteachers Roundtable proposed the following in its Alternative Green Paper:

**“ The October census should become a universal children's census**

schools may just look to move pupils on sooner rather than later.

One suggestion would be to reweight proportionate accountability so that a school would be held responsible for 40 per cent of the GCSE outcome of pupils on its roll in the year 7 October census, increasing by 20 per cent each year. It would be held 100 per cent accountable for a pupil's final GCSE outcomes if he or she had been on roll from year 7 all the way through to the October census in year 10.

No problem for most pupils. But how do we deal with accountability for pupils who are permanently excluded, move to elective home

- a. For a pupil who leaves a school except at the normal leaving age, the time a pupil is at a school plus one year (up to the maximum length of time for that particular phase of schooling) if transferring to another mainstream school.
- b. Any time spent in alternative provision or elective home education would be included in the proportion allocated to the school the pupil left.
- c. For a school who takes in a pupil outside of the normal point of entry the weighting would be the time spent at the school minus one year (with the minimum time being zero).

This increases the likelihood that schools will love the ones they've got and use permanent exclusion as a final resort, as was always intended.

There is a need to align the funding and proportionate accountability metrics; the annual October census should be used for both purposes.

The use of the year 11 January census as the sole point of registration helps to explain why there is a peak in pupils coming off schools' rolls in year 10 and the first term of year 11; its use is historic and no longer appropriate.

The October census should become a universal children's census with a set key of key identifiers used to cross-match against GP records. Long term this could significantly improve our safeguarding of the most vulnerable children and young people.

These changes or something similar don't lead to a utopian measure, just a slightly less imperfect one in a fundamentally flawed and increasingly dysfunctional accountability system.



# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## KATY THEOBALD

Researcher and Churchill fellow

### Is it the system that needs to change, or school leaders?

Katy Theobald went to the other side of the world to learn about innovative education systems. What she found was innovative schools ...

Educators have been working hard in the past decade to meet the increasing expectations set for them by government. Whether it was the shift from levels to expected standards at key stage 2, the introduction of the EBacc or the regrading of GCSEs, the focus has been on ensuring students can meet new benchmarks.

But now education faces a challenge barely acknowledged by politicians. While most employers say they are satisfied with young applicants' literacy and numeracy skills, they find that a broader set of capabilities is lacking: young people do not have the analytical skills or international cultural awareness needed for the world of work.

As the routine tasks that were often given to entry-level workers are swallowed up by automation, it's increasingly important that young people are not just knowledgeable, but can deploy that knowledge critically and creatively.

Other countries are already responding to this challenge. Singapore, Australia and New Zealand have a set of 21st-century

capabilities – broader educational outcomes to prioritise alongside academic knowledge and skills. I was awarded a Churchill fellowship to see how schools in these countries, serving lower income communities, were building capability development into their practice.

In the schools I visited educators took the introduction of capabilities as an opportunity to experiment with a broader range of pedagogical

approaches. However, they felt their wider system context made this easier.

In contrast to England's inspection regime, school reviews in the Australian states of Victoria and New South Wales focus on verifying the school's self-evaluation. Reviews are not graded and the results are not published – they are provided to principals to guide their priorities for the next four to five years.

The leaders I interviewed also had a healthy view of Naplan – Australia's national standardised testing programme. As Gail Doney, principal of Wallarano primary school in Victoria put it: "Accountability is really important. I love that because



if kids aren't learning you aren't doing it properly. You've got to do something different."

The New Zealand government, meanwhile, has removed reporting on national standards.

It would be easy to conclude from my research that it is the high

the system, it was the mindsets of the leaders who grabbed the opportunities available to them. They were always looking for gaps in the system that allowed them do the right thing for their students. As Karyn, a deputy head in New Zealand, put it: "There are all these ongoing myths. They'd say 'you can't do that'. I'd say OK, so show me where that's written down, and it wouldn't be".

This mindset isn't unique to the southern hemisphere. Sir Tim Brighouse talks about findings "gaps in the hedges" and building on the choices we have.

I went to the other side of the world to learn about innovative education systems. What I found was innovative schools. True system change doesn't come from policies, it comes from the choices educators make every day. I still believe England needs systemic change to reduce the pressure on leaders and ensure every child is well-prepared for their future. However, innovation depends as much on the creative mindset of leaders as it does on policy. That's a vital ingredient we've already got.

“ True system change comes from choices educators make daily

stakes of the English accountability system, with the lack of any national framework articulating the broader capabilities that education should develop, which is preventing the innovation our system needs. To be honest, none of this helps.

However, the schools I visited were outliers. In a submission to the federal government, the Australian think tank the Mitchell Institute recently argued that in many schools Naplan was given "disproportionate emphasis" which resulted in "the tail wagging the dog ... driving the priorities of teachers, school leaders and education departments".

The differentiating feature wasn't

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**Researchers' shift in the consensus on school leadership is welcome, but the conversation doesn't end here. A focus on the expertise of school leaders – rather than their individual traits or generic management competency – is a better route to improving education, argues Tom Rees**



TOM REES

Executive director, School Leadership at Ambition Institute

## Substance over style is the key to great school leadership

The renewed debate around school leadership is an important one. With one of the youngest teacher workforces in the world and a significant shortfall of school leaders, we need to think harder about how we help our leaders to keep getting better.

While we've managed to debunk several dubious classroom practices in the past decade, there remain a number of accepted truths about school leadership we should expose to the same scrutiny. There's a lot of out-of-date and ill-informed stuff out there.

For a while now, I've been arguing we need to rethink our conception of school leadership, which has become rooted in the ideas and language of transformational leadership theory. This focus on the individual traits of leaders (such as how motivational, dynamic or inspirational they are), alongside a focus on generic leadership activities (such as setting a vision, implementing change or having a difficult conversation) has built a narrative around leadership more about style and signalling than competence or expertise.

These management practices undoubtedly have their place and form part of a capable leader's repertoire, but evidence and insights that have emerged in recent years suggest that we shouldn't prioritise

these to the detriment of developing domain-specific expertise.

With this in mind, I was encouraged to revisit *Seven claims of successful school leadership*, an influential study published as I was starting my first headship in 2008.

traits by themselves have "quite limited value" and have added in a classroom focus to what previously read as generic influence on motivation, skills and working conditions.

It's a step in the right direction,

**“ We need to rethink our conception of school leadership**

It made a series of claims that included proposing that successful school leadership could be attributed to "a small handful of personal traits". It also claimed that leaders worked "most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions" and that successful leaders predominately drew on the same "basic leadership practices".

Eleven years on and the authors have made some welcome amendments. They have acknowledged that results of research about leadership

but we have further to go in shifting our thinking around what school leadership is and how we can make it more effective.

I became gradually more competent in my ability to run a school through my ten years of headship. In the early years I found myself making decisions about things I simply didn't know enough about. Through more time in the job and opportunities to experience and learn more, I became better at many things; not through personal traits or because I perfected my management practices, but because I knew more about running a school

and was able to respond better to the myriad and context-specific problems I faced. In short, I developed expertise.

The research exists to support this argument for expertise, suggesting school leaders who make the most difference have significant domain-specific knowledge (Sternberg, 2005) and get involved in the development of teaching and learning (Robinson, 2009).

The literature is clear that domain-specific knowledge is essential for the development of expertise (Berliner, 2004), an idea reinforced by Goodall & Baker (2015) who argue that – in knowledge-intensive organisations – leaders who have a positive effect on organisational performance have strong leadership skills and management experience, but also expert knowledge, "experience and expert ability in the core business activity".

But an argument for expertise isn't one for simply more academic knowledge, it's one for more expert use of knowledge in action. This expertise is what I see personified in the most effective leaders I'm privileged to work with and visit.

As more research and opinion flows into the discussion around school leadership, I hope we will develop our approach to value the knowledge and expertise we see in our most competent leaders, often away from the limelight.

These are my leadership heroes: they know their stuff and inspire others through their substance, not just their style.

# Research

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

## Developing pupils' vocabulary is about more than words

**Tom Colquhoun, director, West Somerset Research School, The Blue School, Wells, Somerset**

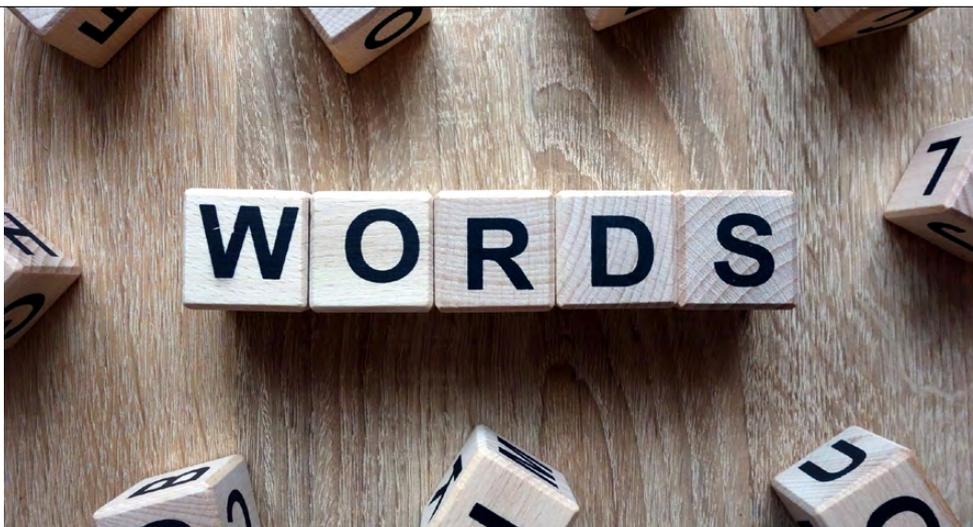
In their 2017 report *Early Language Development: needs, provision, and intervention for preschool children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds*, James Law et al wrote: "A child's ability to put words together may be a better predictor of later abilities than the number of words they know."

The implication is that if we want to enhance a child's ability "to put words together", learning lists of new words is not enough: vocabulary acquisition needs to be alongside general language and reading development in a way that will support successful literacy and learning longer term.

The language of very young children is best developed by involvement in the "tennis match" of conversations with parents and carers. A child who grows up in a communicative family builds their language in an environment geared to language development. Word meanings are established by being related to familiar contexts and supported by repetitive use. Young children who have experience of nursery rhymes and songs are also better placed to develop phonological awareness (recognising and working with the sounds of spoken language), without which they may struggle to become proficient readers and writers.

As children reach school age, what Beck et al refer to as "oral contexts" are less effective. At that point, the content of texts needs to be more complex and challenging than is likely to be encountered in everyday conversation.

Their research suggests that being read books containing language just beyond what is familiar is beneficial, with sustained, topic-related follow-up activities that build on the introduction of new words. These include multiple exposures to new words, as well as "deep engagement" with meanings, plus applying new words in different contexts.



Beck et al also report that stories just beyond pupils' scope for independent reading provide not only an opportunity to build vocabulary, but also help in building comprehension and verbal reasoning, both key elements of becoming a proficient reader.

According to Castle, Rastle and Nation in *Ending the Reading Wars*, texts like these also allow children to build phonological awareness and concepts of print: its appearance, relationship to spoken language, the rules that govern its production and the relationship between spoken and written words. In a nutshell, the importance and impact of shared reading cannot be overestimated.

They say that to read well, "First and foremost, we need to identify the individual words. This in itself is hugely challenging," and that "Words are the building blocks of comprehension, but it's not just a matter of identifying words: Their meanings need to be activated, appropriate for the context." Their research also cites the challenge of pragmatics (understanding words in specific contexts). Add background knowledge and grammar into the mix, and the challenge for learning readers and writers is complex.

This matters for our disadvantaged pupils most of all. Law et al present the idea that



children who experience a rich preschool language environment fare better in learning to read. However, while some settings are more successful, according to *The Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) Project*, (2004), EYFS and key stage 1 can play an important role in helping pupils to develop their language toolkit. For our disadvantaged pupils, the benefits are disproportionately positive. A good guide for teachers who want to focus on this would be *Time to Talk* by Jean Gross, which outlines whole-school approaches for language development.

In summary, the successful development of pupils' language skills to support reading and writing depends on a range of strategies including, but not exclusively dependent on, learning new words.

# Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is **Robin Conway**, director of research and innovation at John Mason School

**@JMSREFLECT**

### Research leads . . . what is all the fuss about?

**@MissLLewis**

The case for research in education is clearly and effectively laid out here. However, @MissLLewis makes a powerful argument reflecting on the experience of poor-quality CPD and the risks of professionals acting in certain ways “just because” they believe themselves to be right. She shows how research can be used to give us our “best bets” when helping children to learn, more so with effective critical engagement. To help with this, she shares the questions that she finds supports the critical consumption of research and explains how a research lead can help teachers to access high-quality research to develop their teaching.

### Examples of dual coding in the classroom

**@87History**

@87History’s blog is a perfect way into thinking about dual coding. The concepts are clearly but knowledgeably explained, with links to useful instructive videos and wider reading. At the heart of the piece is a range of examples from the classroom



that demonstrate the application of this idea and that clearly sustain the author’s argument that it is suited to a range of ages and attainment levels. This piece makes a great introduction to dual coding, but also contains several useful reflections and great links for anyone considering how to make more of this strategy.

### Something that helped with caring for my voice as a teacher

**@amymayforrester**

@amymayforrester tends to offer clear, practical advice based on her own experiences. Here she touches on an issue that is too often overlooked in teacher training, or other well-being discussions around teaching.

Too often teachers feel the need to push on and not make a fuss, especially over something as “insignificant” as a sore throat. And yet, as @amymayforrester points out, “no voice, no job”.

I know of a number of teachers who have experienced serious consequences from misusing their voices or pushing themselves too far – to the point of needing surgery and several months’ out

of teaching in one case. And yet I think I’ve broken every single piece of advice here – some without even realising I was doing the wrong thing.

@amymayforrester is clear that she is not offering medical advice, but she is sharing the things that helped her. After all “When your voice is your job, it pays the bills. Look after it and treat it with care and respect. It’s the most powerful thing you have.”

### Ramble #9: #TeamBoxSet @Mr\_AlmondED

In *HMCI Commentary: curriculum and the new education inspection framework* Amanda Spielman noted that: “Too many teachers and leaders have not been trained to think deeply about what they want their pupils to learn and how they are going to teach it.”

I’m not sure that this piece analogising curriculum design to creating *Game of Thrones* is what she had in mind, but it certainly makes an interesting start. The “box set” analogy is a well-constructed one that conveys some important ideas about curriculum design and planning.

The importance of having an overall plot arc, spanning the whole series and individual seasons (years) also needing careful construction is memorable and effective. The idea of “sowing the seeds” of the main narrative is ingenious and one I intend to take back into my planning.

For those of a less esoteric bent, @Mr\_AlmondED then links his ideas to more conventional educational research, particularly Rosenshine’s principles of instruction. However, underpinning it all is his key idea that, too often, the curriculum is like *“The Simpsons – just one individual episode and when it is over is never referred to again, it needs to be a Game of Thrones.”*

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +



**What happened to teacher-training colleges?**

**Jackie Willis**

I am saddened that teacher-training colleges have been closed, having trained at a first-class college in Leeds. I see this as a return to the poor teaching skills of my grammar school teachers - highly qualified in their subject, but with no clue as to how to impart that knowledge to the young. From what I can see, teacher training is now done "on the cheap" in schools, with overworked teachers acting as the trainers! I am saddened at this state of affairs and glad that I got out ten years before retirement to become a self-employed driving instructor, a role to which I bring sound teaching skills to complement the coaching and client-centred approach demanded by the DVSA. How apt this should be so after the child-centred methodologies I learnt at college were later so viciously ridiculed.

**How to make collaborative learning worthwhile**

**Roger Titcombe**

Collaborative learning will make little impact if it seen as a "standalone, theory light" initiative. On the other hand, it has the potential to result in huge gains when well-practised by teachers who understand the underlying learning theory justifications of Piaget and Vygotsky, that have been so brilliantly researched by the late Philip Adey and by Michael Shayer.

**There are no easy answers to school refusal**

**Rachel Spurr**

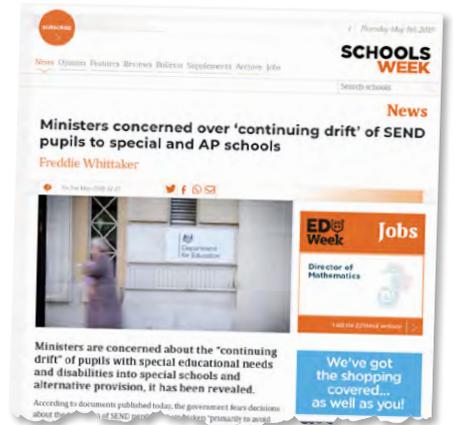
You have made some fantastic points that I, and I'm sure most parents in this situation, can easily relate to. There is, however, another point that should be raised here and that's the issue of academies, which are unaccountable to anyone and can refuse to make much-needed adjustments because no one can make them.

This is definitely true in our case and I believe that if made these adjustments, our situation could have been improved. Instead we are coming up to almost two years of sporadic attendance at best in a school that receives funding for my son, but provides almost no education.

**REPLY OF THE WEEK** **Justine**

**Ministers concerned over 'continuing drift' of SEND pupils to special and AP schools**

Schools, in my experience, want to do what is best for the young people in their care. Where schools endeavour to obtain a place in a specialist school for a child it is because they think it is best for the individual children in the school. Mainstream schools do not have the specialist staff or equipment to meet the needs of the young people in many cases and they are funded at a much lower rate. Specialist schools will specialise in a particular SEN need; mainstream schools will have SEN students with a wide variety of needs and cannot therefore benefit from economies of scale. If government wants children with SEN to attend mainstream schools they need to give schools more funds.



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

**Nick Gibb: 'The crisis of capitalism' review**

**Janet Downs**

Brilliant review. Loved the summary of a Gibb speech, although I don't agree with them getting better because they've been "honed" over time. It's more like being repeated so often they sound as if delivered by a robot programmed with soundbites.

**DfE tsar Tom Bennett to oversee £10m 'behaviour network'**

**Dr James Biddulph @Biddulph13**

For all human beings, behaviour is expression of what is needed. Rather than more punitive measures we should expect better from our children by teaching them the value of behaving in pro-social ways. Otherwise they conform and don't really change.

**Emma Dawson @tweeds44**

It is a shame that the DfE has already decided that detentions and sanctions are so important. Wouldn't it be wonderful if schools had the wherewithal/funding to support our most vulnerable students who often present us with the most complex behaviour.

# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

### FRIDAY

Damian Hinds is so proud of his policy to end coasting and floor standards, he's now announced it three times.

"And today I am confirming that – after a very strong response to our recent consultation on identifying schools for support – that the 'floor' and 'coasting' standards will be dropped," the education secretary said at the NAHT annual conference.

To be fair to Hinds, he was probably making sure heads hadn't missed him making the exact same announcement at the exact same conference the previous year.

He was also probably ensuring they hadn't missed the same pledge in the government's shiny new teacher recruitment and retention strategy, which came out in January.

Thanks for making sure we got the message, Damian

Dashing off after his speech, the education secretary barely had a minute to say hello to education journalists gathered to speak to him outside.

He did immediately dial in from his ministerial car for a hastily-arranged conference call with reporters, which was reminiscent of episodes of *The Thick of It* as reporters battled to hear him over the speaker of an iPhone and as he travelled through patches of poor signal across the midlands.

The government published its first statistics on the number of schools



offered improvement support under a new scheme today.

Take-up of the offer of help was highest among LA-maintained schools, at 81 per cent, followed by academies on 80 per cent. But just 60 per cent of eligible free schools took up the offer.

Maybe their experience of working with the DfE during the pre-application phase put them off...

### SATURDAY

The main hall at Telford's international centre was reminiscent of a comedy club on Saturday morning as Amanda Spielman took to the stage.

But it wasn't the chief inspector's jokes making the headteachers laugh, rather her insistence that England has "one of the lightest" inspection frameworks in the world.

"We do!" she insisted as heads guffawed in their seats.

The remark earned Spielman some criticism from NAHT deputy general secretary (and ex-Ofsted staffer) Nick

Brook, who said delegates were "mystified by the suggestion".

"In fact, England has one of the most highly-regulated education systems in the world, which is limiting schools' ability to deliver a first-class education," he said.

### SUNDAY

Sleeping

### MONDAY

The government was so keen for everyone to write about its landmark Timpson review of exclusions that it waited until the weekend to brief journalists about it, and then made the education secretary available to talk it through on a sunny bank holiday Monday morning.

Unfortunately for the government, the education press duly gave up a rare day off during conference season to cover the report and their response, which turned out to be a bit of a damp squib.

No idea why they'd want to keep it under wraps!

### WEDNESDAY

This week the government announced it will spend another £9 million on holiday hunger projects and other activities over the summer, something *Schools Week* revealed last December.

Keep up!

### THURSDAY

Sleeping off the Timpson review



## VACANCIES AT COPPERFIELD ACADEMY - GRAVESEND, KENT

**Salaries: MPS – UPS with TLRs available**

Having been inspected, and judged overall as 'inadequate' in January 2019, we continue our journey of radical transformation in developing our learning community, where pupils are engaged in developing the skills, knowledge and understanding needed for global citizenship in the 21st Century.

We are looking for the 'right people' to help us get there. Could this be YOU?

This is an exciting time at Copperfield, and it will be for anyone who joins us!

We are offering: progression and CPD; the chance to work with outstanding senior leaders and in partnership with outstanding schools; potential TLRs for the right skills, and retention bonuses of up to £5000.

The incredible pupils of Copperfield Academy are looking for class teachers who...

- ...will ensure they are always our priority
- ...are willing to take risks with learning
- ...are irresistibly optimistic
- ...are passionate about the challenge of learning
- ...are committed to improving children's life chances
- ...deal in hope and aspiration
- ...are committed to an all-inclusive approach to learning
- ...are experienced in/across the primary phase

Does this sound like YOU?

If so, we need YOU – please get in touch!

Copperfield Academy is committed to providing the highest standards of educational opportunity to every one of its pupils.

### The Process:

- A tour of the school, prior to any application, with pupils and a member of the senior leadership team. These will take place week in the afternoons of the week beginning Monday 13th May.
- A completed application form that addresses the person specification
- A covering letter to the senior leadership team (no more than two sides of A4) evidencing the following aspects:
  - your personal philosophy of education and view of how children learn;
  - the learning environment that you would want to create to promote quality and high standards;
  - the climate that you would want to create to support effective learning and personal development;
  - your understanding of, and commitment to, teamwork and a school in very challenging circumstances;
  - the areas of teaching expertise and curricular specialism that you can offer, or would wish to develop;
  - whether you would be interested in being considered for a subject leader role
  - your understanding and experience of safeguarding children and promoting

a safe learning environment;

- the principles which you believe should underpin a curriculum for pupils of all abilities to make better than expected progress and achieve appropriately high levels of attainment;
- A 20-min group activity observation at your current school.
- A short interview, only upon successful completion of your group observation

**'Children are our Priority  
Change is the Reality  
Collaboration is our Strategy'**

### The successful candidates will:

- be able to carry out all duties as described in the School Teacher's Pay and Conditions Document
- work directly to the Teachers' Standards 2012
- have all the essential attributes as described above

Copperfield Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

The successful applicants will be required to possess an Enhanced Disclosure certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service, and to complete registration with its update service.

**Tours available upon appointment – please call, and arrange a visit, prior to application: 01474 352488**

Early applications are welcomed. We reserve the right to hold interviews and appoint before the closing date, should exceptional candidates apply.

Copperfield Academy  
Dover Road East  
Northfleet, Gravesend  
Kent, DA11 0RB

# E-ACT

At E-ACT, it is our mission to provide all of our pupils with an education that encourages them to explore, discover, create and achieve. By developing inspiring curricula and nurturing a culture based on our values of thinking big, doing the right thing and showing team spirit, we exist to give young people access to the best possible educational opportunities.

## Our academies span the length and breadth of the country

We educate over 18,000 pupils across the length and breadth of England. The E-ACT team includes over 3,000 employees based across 29 academies, four regional teams and a national team. Our academies may span the country, but we all follow the same set of underlying principles. E-ACT academies can also collaborate and share ideas in ways that other schools may not be able to.

Our hopes and aspirations for every one of our pupils is the same. By encouraging them to think big and understand that anything is possible, by showing them the importance of team by working together to achieve, and by teaching them to carefully think through their decisions to do the right thing, we know that every one of our pupils can realise their potential with us.

## Are you an E-ACT leader?

We are always on the lookout for dynamic, motivated and inspirational leaders.

Please click anywhere on this advert to view our latest leadership vacancies.



**Rushcliffe School**

## Vice Principal

(L18-L22 with the possibility of higher for an exceptional candidate)

Following the appointment of both our Vice Principals to Principal posts (one at Rushcliffe and one elsewhere in the trust), we wish to appoint to our ambitious, forward thinking and highly successful Senior Leadership Team in September 2019. Vice Principals make an important contribution to strategic development of the school.

### There are two Vice Principal roles at Rushcliffe:

- **Standards:** responsibility for maximising the achievement of all pupils and ensuring that teaching is of the highest quality across the school
- **Pastoral:** responsibility for leadership of the school's pastoral systems and the wellbeing and personal development of pupils.

We welcome applications from candidates interested in either role. The exact responsibilities will be tailored to take into account the strengths and experience of the successful candidate.

For more details visit: <http://www.satrust.com/vacancies>



## Interested in becoming a Primary School teacher?



It's not too late to apply for September 2019

Come and meet us to find out more about primary and secondary training on: **Thursday 23rd May at 6.30pm, Durrington High School, The Boulevard, BN13 1JX**

Contact us for details about our local OFSTED outstanding masters level PGCE and apply through UCAS:



01903 705671

[info@southdownsscitt.co.uk](mailto:info@southdownsscitt.co.uk)

[thesouthdownsscitt.co.uk](http://thesouthdownsscitt.co.uk)

The South Downs SCITT

Southdownsscitt





**PRINCIPAL**  
**£59,265 to £68,667 per year**  
(for a September 2019 or January 2020 start)



The Inspire Learning Partnership is seeking to appoint a Principal at Kanes Hill Primary School. The Trust is looking for an exceptional candidate to develop this outstanding, inclusive school and champion its collaborative work with the Inspire Learning Partnership and the local community. This is an exciting opportunity for a senior leader who has the passion and expertise to lead Kanes Hill Primary School to reach its true potential.

Visits to the school are warmly welcomed and will take place on **Thursday 2nd May 2019 (1.00pm - 2.00pm)**, **Tuesday 7th May 2019 (10.00am - 11.00am)** and **Monday 13th May 2019 (12 noon - 1.00pm)**

Please contact the Executive Principal's PA at [principalrecruitment@ilpartnership.org](mailto:principalrecruitment@ilpartnership.org) if you wish to come along on one of these days.

**Closing Date:** Tuesday 14th May 2019 (noon)

**Interview Dates:** Monday 20th May 2019 from 3.30pm to meet staff and Trustees

Tuesday 21st and Wednesday 22nd May 2019

**How to apply:** Download an application pack from either the Inspire Learning Partnership website: [www.inspirelearningpartnership.org](http://www.inspirelearningpartnership.org) or Kanes Hill Primary School website: [www.kaneshillsch.net](http://www.kaneshillsch.net)

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This role requires an enhanced DBS check.

*Inspire Learning Partnership is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 9202445.*



**Headteacher, Rolph,**  
**Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex**

**Salary: L15 - L21 (£56,434 - £65,384 per annum)**  
**Start Date: September 2019**  
**Closing 13th May 2019 at noon**  
**Interviews: 21st May 2019**

Rolph C of E Primary School is a one-form entry primary school with strong links to the local Church of St Michael's, Thorpe-le-Soken. We are a caring school, built on Christian Values, where we aim for every child to show Love, Integrity, Fellowship and Endurance.

We are looking for an inspirational and committed leader with the vision, confidence and skills to lead our school forward into its next exciting stage of development. We embrace the future with optimism and with a passion to deliver the very best education for every child.

For more information and to apply, please visit:  
<http://www.vineschooltrust.co.uk/vacancies>.

Visits to the school are encouraged and welcomed. Please contact Elizabeth Williams on **01245 294496** to arrange a visit.



**UTTOXETER**  
LEARNING TRUST  
INSPIRED TEACHING  
INSPIRING CHILDREN

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

From September 2019 or by negotiation

Contract type: Full Time - with possible flexibility for the appropriate candidate

Salary: circa £85k dependent upon calibre of successful candidate

ULT is comprised of 8 academies (including a teaching school) with plans for expansion of up to 20 schools across the area over the next 5 years. The ULT includes First, Middle and High Schools, several of which are small, rural schools (including Church of England). The ULT forms a 3-18 all-through educational family, supporting each other to provide excellent teaching and learning, excellent progress and attainment, and a friendly, safe and caring educational environment.

You will have the experience, vision, ambition and skills to grow a high quality, financially sustainable MAT centred on providing a seamless educational journey for our young people.

Further details on the position and how to apply can be requested from [russellsheldon88@gmail.com](mailto:russellsheldon88@gmail.com)

Closing date: 30th May 2019.

Offers valid until May 31st 2019

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