

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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



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# Promises, promises...



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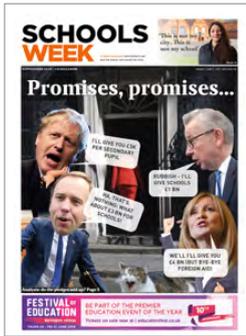
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## Editor's top picks



**'We don't off-roll – pupils just can't hack it'**

P12



**The inherent worth of our curriculum should be lauded**

P22

## Trust ran illegal school for six years



P13

## £200k for private school links (but you'll have to pay)

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

A new £200,000 fund to help state schools, private schools and universities create or expand partnerships has been announced, but recipients will have to stump up some of their own cash too.

Schools and universities can bid for up to £20,000 to build partnerships, but the Department for Education said any bid of over £5,000 will have to be match funded with their own money.

The DfE said the match funding requirement was to ensure “pupils continue to benefit beyond the existence of the fund”. The total fund itself is only £200,000, so it is unlikely many will receive the maximum amount.

Academies minister Lord Agnew is set to announce the fund at the Schools Together annual conference later today. It comes after the DfE published guidance in November to encourage more providers to work together.

The government considered forcing universities and private schools to work with state schools in 2016, but these plans were eventually shelved in favour of a more collaborative approach.

This year marked the first time the Independent Schools Council has had to publish details of partnerships between its members and state schools.

The report showed 1,142 independent schools are in partnerships, with the most common collaboration being sharing of sports facilities – including swimming pools and tennis courts



– and coaches or taking part in matches (1,031 schools).

Meanwhile at university level, the University of York was selected in January to run a £4.8 million languages “centre of excellence” to raise the quality of language teaching in schools. Cardiff University is also running a mentoring project to encourage pupils to take up languages at GCSE.

Specialist maths schools have been harder to get off the ground, though, after several leading universities declined the opportunity to open them.

Two are currently open – Exeter Mathematics School and King’s College London Mathematics School – while four more are in the pipeline.

Other collaborations between schools and universities have been less successful.

Last year the University of Chester Academies Trust gave up its seven academies and closed after serious financial difficulties, while the University of Bolton had close ties with the failed Greater Manchester UTC and the now-infamous Bright Tribe Trust. It sponsors Bolton UTC, which was told last year it had to join a strong multi-academy

trust after a financial investigation.

In May, Schools Week revealed the University of Wolverhampton Academy Trust top-sliced £376,000 from a school that was £1 million in the red last year, before it was transferred to another trust.

Agnew will ask education leaders at the conference to “use this opportunity to bring about a new wave of meaningful partnerships, and to encourage others to think about how similar collaborations could benefit their schools”.

Julie Robinson, chief executive of the ISC, said they were “delighted” that funding was being made available to “support the development of meaningful cross-sector school partnerships”.

Daniel Hurley, assistant policy director at Universities UK, said that further “space and investment” to share best practice and “meaningful evaluation” of what works “has the potential to benefit pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and the wider education sector.

More information on the fund is due to be published in the autumn, when schools will be invited to submit bids.

## Gove’s favourite state boarding school warned over safeguarding

A state boarding school once praised by Michael Gove as one of the best in the country has been warned it will be rebrokered to a new sponsor if it doesn’t turn around its fortunes.

Sexey’s School in Bruton, Somerset, was rated inadequate by Ofsted last month after inspectors warned of weak safeguarding arrangements and raised concerns about governance. The institution has also failed to meet a number of the national minimum

standards for boarding schools since 2016.

The school is one of 38 state boarding schools in England. State boarding schools don’t charge fees for tuition, but do charge for the residential aspect of their provision.

Now Sexey’s has been issued with a termination warning notice by Lisa Mannall, the regional schools commissioner for the south west region.

The school has until June 20 to make

representations to Mannall, after which she will decide whether to terminate its funding agreement and rebroker it to a new sponsor.

Sexey’s was among a group of schools singled out for praise by Gove in 2014 when he was education secretary.

Speaking at the London Academy of Excellence, Gove praised the “ethos of excellence” at the schools, which he said were “among the best secondary schools in the world”.

# Conservative leadership race

## I'll raise you a billion: the education bidding war begins

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**  
@FCDWHITTAKER

School funding has moved front and centre of the Conservative leadership campaign after leading candidates entered a bidding war to win over members concerned about the future of education.

However, it's likely that any confirmation of boosted budgets will be delayed.

Theresa May's government had been due to hold a spending review before the summer recess in July.

Liz Truss, the chief secretary to the

Treasury, told the House of Lords economic affairs committee on Tuesday it was "unlikely" the review would now happen before that date.

But she said revenue budgets from April 2020 would still have to be set, suggesting a review would have to go ahead this year under a new prime minister.

The Association of School and College Leaders has also written to all 11 leadership candidates with three priorities for schools: funding, teacher recruitment and retention, and taking pressure off staff and pupils.

Geoff Barton, the association's general

secretary, said: "The current level of funding is simply not sufficient to enable schools and colleges to provide the education to which our children and young people are entitled. This lack of investment is woefully short-sighted and is having a devastating impact on children's life chances."

So what are the Conservative leadership frontrunners promising on funding?

*Schools Week* investigates . . .



### Boris Johnson £5,000 for each secondary pupil

Writing in *The Telegraph*, the leadership frontrunner pledged to improve funding "so that thousands of schools get much more per pupil – and to protect that funding in real terms".

A *Schools Week* analysis of provisional national funding formula data for next year found just 33 of 150 local authorities are due to be funded at less than £5,000 per pupil.

To increase per-pupil funding to that amount for the roughly 773,000 secondary pupils in those areas would cost £49.9 million – the equivalent to 0.1 per cent of the £43.5 billion the government will spend on schools in 2019-20.

Our analysis was based on the actual secondary units of funding for schools that the government uses to calculate a local authority's school block allocation.

Johnson's campaign team did not respond to requests for further details.



### Michael Gove £1 billion for schools

The former education secretary's pledge is seemingly much more generous than Johnson's, but still falls well short of the amount needed to plug the funding gap left by recent cuts.

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, total school spending per pupil fell by 8 per cent in real terms between 2009-10 and 2017-18. A £1 billion rise, as promised by Gove, works out at about 2.3 per cent of the overall schools budget for next year.

If the money was divided equally between the country's 20,202 state primary and secondary schools, each would get £49,500.

*The Mail on Sunday* said Gove would restore the amount of spend per pupil to 2015 levels in real terms, but his campaign team provided no further details.



### Matthew Hancock £3 billion a year

According to *The Sun*, the health secretary wants a "spending spree" on schools over the next five years, with an extra £400 spent on each primary and secondary school pupil.

The paper said this would be allocated over and above the current "yearly average" spend of £4,800. (The Institute for Fiscal Studies says actual average spend per pupil is £6,200 in secondary schools and £4,700 in primary schools.)

But, either way, an £400 uplift for all 7.98 million pupils would amount to £3.2 billion extra in school funding.

The campaign team for the former skills minister did not respond to requests for comment.



### Esther McVey £4 billion for education

A total of £2 billion would go into the core schools budget, £1 billion into special educational needs and disabilities and £1 billion into further education.

The former work and pensions secretary said the cash would come from cutting foreign aid.

Despite criticism of the National Education Union-run School Cuts campaign by some of her Conservative colleagues, McVey appears to have based her pledge on figures compiled by the movement. She also repeated the website's claim that 91 per cent per cent of schools faced further cuts, a figure labelled as "misleading" by the UK Statistics Authority.

McVey added the "good work" by the government on education "is now at risk due to sustained and severe underfunding so it's time we started listening to the teaching unions and the teachers on the frontline".





# Conservative leadership race

## Odds-on for a selection fan in Downing Street

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**

**@FCDWHITTAKER**

The Conservative Party is poised to elect a leader sympathetic to expanding selection. It comes as another analysis this week shoots down the claim grammars boost social mobility.

The Education Datalab study found selective schools handed marginal gains for pupils who were likely to do well anyway - causing significant disadvantages for the pupils who miss out.

Frontrunners Boris Johnson and Michael Gove have both previously expressed support for grammar schools.

Johnson, the former mayor of London, once described the ban on new selective schools as "a real tragedy for this country", while Gove, then education secretary, told a Friends of Grammar Schools event in Parliament in 2010 that his foot was "hovering over the pedal" to

expand selection.

Theresa May's attempt to lift the ban on new selective institutions was kicked into the grass following her party's poor performance in the 2017 general election, after which the plans were seen as having no backing in parliament.

Dominic Raab, the arch-Brexiteer currently in fifth place with bookmakers to become the next prime minister, is by far the most pro-selection of the leadership contenders.

In 2014 he published the *Meritocrat's Manifesto*, which pushed for a wider reintroduction of grammars. Raab has also called for widespread marketisation of the education system, including allowing schools to be run for profit.

Sajid Javid, the home secretary, is also supportive of expanding selection, having argued in 2009 that more grammar schools would "undoubtedly help" social mobility.

Some contenders, however, are not in favour of expansion.

Andrea Leadsom, the former Commons leader

currently in fourth place, told *The Times* in 2016 that although she was a "big fan" of grammar schools, she believed wider selection could not be reintroduced, favouring greater streaming within schools instead.

Jeremy Hunt, the foreign secretary who is in third place with the bookies, Rory Stewart, the international development secretary, and Matthew Hancock, the health secretary, have said little publicly about selection.

Nor have contenders Esther McVey or Sam Gyimah, although they both attended the Friends of Grammar Schools event in 2010.

Meanwhile, new analysis by Education Datalab found outcomes for pupils who attend non-selective schools in selective areas "tend to be lower than for similar pupils living in non-grammar areas".

Pupils at non-selective schools in grammar areas were half as likely to achieve five A\* or A grades at GCSE or attend a top third university, it found.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## McVey's LGBT comments rile schools minister

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, has launched a thinly-veiled attack on Conservative leadership candidate Esther McVey after she backed parents who want to prevent their children from learning about LGBT relationships.

McVey said parents should get the "final say" on relationships education, putting her at-odds with her party's policy.

The former work and pensions secretary was responding to protests outside Anderton Park Primary School in Birmingham organised in opposition to the school's programme of teaching about LGBT relationships.

The protests started about nine weeks ago in the wake of the publication of the government's new rules about compulsory relationships teaching for all schools.

Writing in *The Times* this week, Gibb, who is gay, warned that politicians have a "responsibility to speak with sensitivity on such important matters and not to fan the flames of hate and prejudice.

"As the Conservative Party starts the

process of electing our new leader, I very much doubt that party members or the wider public (a much larger number) will be impressed by any candidate or their supporters siding with those who object to pupils being taught that same-sex relationships are normal and lawful."

McVey has also been more directly condemned by Justine Greening, the former education secretary, who came out as gay just days after the EU referendum in 2016.

"You can't pick & choose on human rights & equality," she tweeted her Conservative colleague.

"Children should understand a modern & diverse Britain they're growing up in. Matters for social mobility too - you can't be your best if you can't be yourself."

It comes after Andrea Leadsom, another leadership contender, said parents should decide when their children were "exposed" to lessons about LGBT issues.

### Who's backing who?

**Education ministers Nick Gibb and Anne Milton have both backed Michael Gove, a former education secretary, for the Tory party leadership, while the children's minister Nadhim Zahawi is backing the hardline Brexiteer Dominic Raab.**

**Universities minister Chris Skidmore has backed the home secretary Sajid Javid, while education secretary Damian Hinds is yet to back any candidate.**



Dominic Raab

Nadhim Zahawi

# 'Record' funding: that old chestnut?

KATHRYN SNOWDON

@KATHRYN\_SNOWDON

EXCLUSIVE

Senior government ministers, including the prime minister, keep peddling the "misleading" line that "more money than ever before" is going to schools, despite mounting condemnation from the statistics watchdog.

Theresa May, Damian Hinds, the education secretary, and Nick Gibb, the schools minister, are all repeat offenders, continuing to boast about the "record" levels of funding for schools.

The National Education Union (NEU) said the continuing ministerial claims were "shameful", while a headteacher at the helm of a school funding campaign said they "breach confidence and fuel discontent and frustration".

In October last year, the head of the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) warned of "significant concerns" about the Department for Education's use of statistics.

One of those related to the claim there is "more money going into schools than ever before". While the UKSA took aim at the spending figures being "exaggerated" in a graph that had a truncated axis, the claim has been widely discredited by others.

However, a *Schools Week* analysis of Hansard records show that Gibb continued to claim record levels of funding a further four times in the Commons, while May used it three times and Hinds twice. Seven other Conservative MPs have also used the claim at least seven times.

The DfE came under fire again on Thursday last week when the UKSA demanded it publish a comprehensive set of official school funding figures.

In response to our analysis, Dr Mary Bousted, the NEU's joint general secretary, said: "It is quite shameful that ministers are repeating a line that they know is misleading and does not address the actual woeful shortfall in school funding."

Meanwhile, frontrunners in the Conservative party's leadership campaign this week pledged billions of pounds in additional school funding.

Bousted said their promises showed that efforts to portray the school cuts campaign as "the work of scaremongering fantasists"



was unfounded. "It is a critical policy matter for anyone wishing to succeed in the current leadership contest."

In a debate on education funding on November 13 – one month after the UKSA wrote to the DfE – Hinds twice boasted about the government's record levels of funding. This was also echoed by Gibb in the same debate.

In three other debates in consecutive months between January and March this year, Gibb claimed "more money is going into our schools than ever before".

Hansard analysis also showed that last month in the Commons May claimed three times that "record funding" and "more money" had been given to schools.

Jules White, a headteacher who leads the Worth Less? school funding campaign, said: "Over several years the Worth Less? campaign has been using clear-cut facts to inform parents about the chronic underfunding and severe real term cuts that our schools are facing. By contrast, the DfE has been selective and evasive

regarding the reality of the situation and the huge problems that have been created."

A survey of more than 1,900 headteachers, commissioned by Worth Less?, found that 99.2 per cent of heads did not trust what the DfE had to say about school budgets.

In its latest letters sent to the DfE last week, the UKSA said there were still "concerns with the presentation of school funding figures", despite improvements to the "technical accuracy of statements".

The department was now "considering the potential for publishing regular official statistics on school funding" after the UKSA's concerns that a lack of "trustworthy data source" risked "undermining the perceived trustworthiness of those making the statements".

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "The UK Statistics Authority has not asked the department or its ministers to refrain from claiming 'there is more funding than ever before is going into schools'. To suggest they have would be misleading."

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# Exclusion clause 'a bit of a blip', says Kent head



## SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER

@SCHOOLSWEEK

EXCLUSIVE

A grammar school has deleted a controversial clause in its registration form that made parents agree their child could be kicked out if the headteacher thinks it "desirable".

The Skinners' School in Kent required the parents of prospective pupils to sign a registration form allowing governors to withdraw their child if they decided via "a report from the headmaster . . . that such withdrawal or transfer is desirable".

The finding, reported by the Kent Independent Education Advice blog earlier this week, raised concerns the school was using unlawful exclusions to move pupils on.

It is illegal for schools to exclude pupils for non-disciplinary reasons, such as additional needs or low academic attainment.

But Edward Wesson, the head of Skinners, said the clause was an "error on behalf of the school. It's a bit of a blip that needs eradicating".

The second page of the registration form includes five clauses that require parental agreement if their son is admitted to the school.

One said that pupils must "remain in attendance at the school at least until the end of the school year . . . in which he reaches the age of 16".

Wesson, who has been at the school for six years, said until the report on the Kent blog he had only checked the form's front page before sending it out.

He said the clauses have now been deleted. No parent had complained, but he said he would apologise for the mistake at a parents' evening

later this month.

Most of the forms for pupils starting this September have been returned.

Wesson also said the clause had never been used during his time at the school as it had never off-rolled pupils.

But a Department of Education spokesperson said it would "look into this further", adding any "unofficial exclusions are unlawful regardless of whether they are done with the agreement of parents or carers".

Skinners is not the first school to get into trouble over admission rules.

*Schools Week* reported in March 2015 that the state secondary school selected by David Cameron and Michael Gove for their daughters appeared to have breached admission laws by asking parents for money when offering them a place.

Parents at The Grey Coat Hospital, in Westminster, central London, were asked for £96 when joining year 7 of the school, or £120 for school funds in the sixth form.

The admissions watchdog also censured Camden School for Girls for including a letter about donations with its acceptance forms.

An Ofsted spokesperson said: "We expect schools to comply with the law, and follow relevant statutory guidance in relation to the admission and exclusion of pupils.

"Any agreement with parents does not change the duties and responsibilities placed on publicly funded schools."

The DfE said admission policies must be clear and fair, with parents able to raise objections with the schools adjudicator.

## Ofqual wants to keep BTECs

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

The exams regulator has added its voice to a move against government plans to scrap applied general qualifications, including BTECs.

Ofqual believes there is a "risk" that a barrier to student progress may be created if alternative choices to T-levels and A-levels are "unduly restricted" – particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

The Department for Education is consulting on the first stage of its post-16 review, including plans to withdraw public funding from qualifications that "overlap" with A-levels and the new T-levels, their technical equivalent, which it wants to "become the qualifications of choice".

In response to the DfE's consultation, Ofqual made the case for keeping applied generals, the most popular of which are BTECs offered by Pearson.

The regulator said the need for "some flexibility in the size of qualifications on offer is important", adding this was particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs or carers who might need to study part-time.

"If T-level study is not suited to a learner, if they are not ready to specialise in an occupation, or they are unable to access the qualification for any other reason, then there is a risk that a barrier to progress may be created if their alternative choices are unduly restricted.

"This may particularly (but not only) affect disadvantaged learner groups. The continuing opportunity to progress for these students will be a crucial factor in considering which qualification routes should receive funding alongside T-levels."

Ofqual said its reviews had found a "limited amount of content overlap could at times be justified if a qualification served a distinct progression purpose that could not be satisfied by another existing qualification".

Unions and headteachers have previously warned against stopping funding for BTECs.

But the government has said many of the qualifications under review were of "poor quality" and left young people and employers "confused".

# Women left off technology panel

**KATHRYN SNOWDON**  
@KATHRYN\_SNOWDON

Women make up just a quarter of a new government panel set up to improve the accessibility and inclusion of technology in schools.

Just seven of the 28 members on the Department for Education's edtech leadership group are women, which campaigners say is "jarring" and a "real oversight".

And of the 11 panel members listed as coming from the industry, the number of women – three – is equal to the number of men named Chris.

Natalie Nezhati, a director at edtech specialist agency, EdTech Mark, told *Schools Week*: "The lack of diversity looks dated and out of touch. It's like the old joke about measuring diversity by the 'woman to Dave ratio' in Silicon Valley, and that's problematic.

"This underrepresentation of women is a real oversight... Women should be promoted and championed at all leadership levels. Our government should be leading the way for women, especially within a group focused on inclusion issues."

Lord Chris Holmes, the Paralympic swimmer who chairs the panel, told *Schools Week* while he had "no hand in selecting" the panel, he admitted "work needs to be done there".

Holmes, co-chair of the all-party parliamentary group for assistive technology, added: "It's incredibly important to not only engage in the most diverse range of stakeholders, but to be really representative of diversity."

*The Guardian* reported last year that just over one in ten board members of Britain's largest tech firms were women.

However the edtech panel's education representatives are also uneven. Four of the 16 chosen from the education sector are women.

Schools workforce figures show three-quarters of teachers are women.

Sam Smethers, the chief executive of the gender equality charity the Fawcett Society, said the lack of representation was



Sam Smethers



INVESTIGATES

"disappointing" and "jarring".

Other panels have few women members, too. The government's 18-strong character education expert panel, established last month to help schools develop "resilience" among pupils, has just six women.

An expert panel to help draw up a new music curriculum was made up of nine men and five women.

The other two recently announced expert panels are on initial teacher training (four women and three men) and on education apps (five women to three men).

Smethers said the government "must try harder. By not having sufficient women round

the table, there is also a risk that the group's work doesn't cover issues that will impact on girls at school and women in the teaching professions."

Caroline Keep, a teacher and director of Spark Penketh Makerspace, an innovation space, added: "The wealth of knowledge is brilliant, but the diversity of the panel is slightly concerning. I don't want to be encouraging young women to be getting into this industry and then they're not able to get into those leadership positions."

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, announced earlier this year that the government would spend £10 million supporting the use of education technology in schools.

Alongside the new panel, there's a new £4.6 million edtech innovation fund for companies to "make a real difference to the lives of students and teachers".

The DfE will invest £3.5 million, alongside £1.1 million from the innovation foundation Nesta.

A DfE spokesperson said: "Candidates were chosen based on experience, knowledge and influence. We wanted to ensure the panel was made up of representatives from both the technology industry and the education sector, as well as a mix of panelists from schools, colleges and universities."

## PANEL MEMBERS

Name	Organisation
Chair: Baron Chris Holmes	Co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Assistive Technology
<b>Industry representatives</b>	
Nic Newman	Emerge
Chris Rothwell	Microsoft
Chris McFall	Apple
Dean Stokes	Google
Caroline Wright	British Educational Suppliers' Association (BESA)
Ty Goddard	The Education Foundation
Paul Feldman	JISC
Joysy John	NESTA
Chris Hayman	Amazon Web Service
Michael Forshaw	Innovate My School
Rose Luckin	UCL (EDUCATE)
<b>School representatives</b>	
Dominic Norrish	United Learning Trust
Hamid Patel	Star Academies
Lauren Thorpe	Ark
Cat Scutt	The Chartered College of Teaching
Matthew Purves	Ofsted
Peter Twining	Open University
David Corke	Association of Colleges
Duncan Baldwin	Association of School and College Leaders
Professor Becky Francis	UCL (Institute of Education)
Stephen Fraser	Education Endowment Foundation
Matt Hood	Ambition Institute
James Bowen	National Association of Head Teachers
Ian Phillips	Independent Schools Council
Scott Baker	London Academy of Excellence
Debra Gray	Grimsby College
Mark Lehain	Parents and Teachers for Excellence

# New tech aims to beat the ‘WhatsApp problem’

**PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS**  
**@PIPPA\_AK**

A free app aims to lessen teacher workload by helping to stamp out the “playground politics” of parent chat groups – while making schools money in the process.

Classlist is designed to boost parental engagement in schools, but comes with strict guidelines to limit negativity in its forums and a “social contract” to financially benefit its schools.

At the National Association of Head Teachers conference in May school leaders raised concerns over “continued online abuse” from parents, while a survey of teachers in February by the insurance firm Ecclesiastical found more than a third of those contacted by parents on social media had received criticism or abuse.

The messaging service WhatsApp has also been used by protesters angry with LGBT and sex education at schools in Manchester, including reportedly sharing homophobic messages about teachers.

*The Financial Times* reported last month the knock-on effect in classrooms, with teachers spending time correcting “fake news” spread through such groups.

Susan Burton, the co-founder and chief executive of Classlist, said “one misinformed rumour can mean weeks of high-grade stress as poisonous online complaints swirl unseen in the digital ether”.

She created the app three years ago with Clare Wright when her family moved to Oxford and her attempts to get to know other parents were made difficult by her children’s new school saying data protection regulations



Susan Burton and Clare Wright

stopped it sharing details.

The new platform allows parents to send and receive private messages, join sub-groups within the site – like volunteering or after-school clubs – and arrange events.

While a school’s parent-teacher association usually helps with set-up, moderation is largely down to parents.

But Burton said strict moderation and a code of conduct has made the app an “alternative to the WhatsApp problem”, insisting it is “not a forum for bullying teachers or negative talk.

“If there are genuine concerns, we tell parents to contact the school. We can flag concerns and often staff will respond to it.”

Teachers have also said it lightens their admin load, with parents using the app to ask questions about homework or missing uniform that would normally go through the school office.

Classlist includes event management systems (the app takes a 0.5 per cent commission on any ticket sales), maps to coordinate lift sharing, payment systems for fundraising and collecting money. It also has an eBay-style marketplace that encourages parents to add a donation to their school with every sale.

Crowned start-up of the year at the Bett Awards last year,

Classlist is used by 2,500 schools in the UK and is expanding internationally. Funded largely through advertising, it is free for schools and parents.

It can also be a money-maker: if schools suggest an advertiser, 25 per cent of the revenue comes back to them.

Burton said about £20,000 was returned in the past year, about £800 for each school.

Bob Harrison, a school governor and former education adviser for Toshiba, said there was a place for a “safe, positive environment”, but warned there could be “ethical issues” around paid advertising if unsuitable companies – such as betting firms – wanted to place adverts. Many schools already used similar apps.

“Schools are desperate for funds, and heads and governors are always seeking additional sources of funding, but extreme care has to be taken whenever you start to involve advertising and school children and learning.”

The government has a new focus on using technology to reduce teacher workload, a key part of Damian Hinds’s edtech strategy launched in April.

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\*Ends 7th July 2019

# 'We don't off-roll – pupils just can't hack it'

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

INVESTIGATES

Ofsted ruled that a school with “exceptional levels of pupil movement” should remain “outstanding”, accepting the headteacher’s claim that youngsters left because they couldn’t hack the high standards.

Inspection notes from the watchdog’s December visit to Magna Academy in Poole, seen by Schools Week, reveal dozens of pupils leave each year.

The Aspirations Academies Trust, which runs the school, told inspectors that such movement was “exactly what is expected during the first seven years of turning a school around from special measures”.

Richard Tutt, the school’s headteacher, also told inspectors the movement was down to pupils not being able to hack its “high-expectations approach to learning”. Pupils instead shifted to schools with “more comfortable standards”.

The short inspection late last year was triggered by concerns over the high pupil turnover and converted to a full inspection.

Inspection notes, obtained under freedom of information laws, show Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) council told Ofsted local heads reported their concerns over pupil movement to the regional schools commissioner.

Inspectors expressed a need to “triangulate” the reasons for pupils leaving, but the notes only show a list of where the pupils ended up.

They concluded there was “no hidden agenda” and “no sense of any inappropriate movement”.

Ofsted has vowed to crackdown on off-rolling. But the findings have furthered concerns the watchdog can’t adequately root out off-rolling without more investigation, such as speaking to the parents of pupils who have moved.

Adam Boddison, the chief executive of the National Association for Special Educational Needs (Nasen), wants an “independent review”.

“No school should be able to be graded as ‘outstanding’ unless it can also demonstrate it is inclusive,” he said.

The high rating was “promoting a way of thinking in schools that is counter to the philosophy of education itself”.

The inspection notes also show the school’s special educational needs co-ordinator was not qualified, leaders could not describe their SEND provision and there was no analysis of the impact of repeated sanctions for poor behaviour.

Evidence form – schools					
Inspection N <sup>o</sup>	Inspector's OIN	Date	Time	Evidence form N <sup>o</sup>	
10056413		12/12/18	10:30 to 10:45	5103D	
Inspection activity (please tick one box only)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Observing in lessons	<input type="checkbox"/> Work analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other		
FOCUS (Inspection trail or main purpose of the activity)					
Pupil work data					
Year group (s)	Grouping (see footer)	MC-SU-SA-ST-O	Gender B-G-MIX	Subject codes	Present /NOR

Evaluation

Movement in 2017-18 was high. Some of this data backs up school leaders arguments re. The movement to LEAF studio school. Nonetheless, proportion is high – need to triangulate with

**An extract from the inspection notes**

Magna’s predecessor, Ashdown Technology College, was put in special measures in February 2012.

However, it was reinspected and found to be “good” in July 2013 before joining Aspirations that September. It was first rated “outstanding” in June 2015.

Dave Whitaker, executive principal at Springwell Learning Community, which provides AP education in Barnsley, said: “How can it be that you have potential off-rolling and high exclusions, yet it’s been ‘outstanding’ for years and is still ‘outstanding?’”

“It’s a scandal. Schools have to be held to account for inclusion.”

Ofsted insisted it received a “satisfactory explanation” on pupil movement, but did not provide further details.

Inspectors recorded that permanent exclusions, fixed-term exclusions and repeat fixed-term exclusions had all been higher than the national average.

In 2017-18, 66 pupils left – 18 of whom had special needs – while 30 joined. A further 24 had left by the time of the inspection in mid-December, with 25 joining.

Magna is known for its strict approach for discipline, and enforces a “silent transition” between lessons.

Although inspectors noted there was no low-level disruption, they highlighted the lack of strategic information on pupils who were often

taken out of class and put into the behaviour unit, and on how the school was “supporting” the pupils.

BCP council said the local perception of the school was “children’s needs not being met [sic]”, and concerns had been raised by the local child mental health service about “inflexibility”.

One inspector said leaders “were not able to tell me the number of SEND pupils across the school or their needs” and were “not able to describe the profile of SEND access across the school as they currently don’t have that strategic viewpoint”.

The final Ofsted report, published in January, said the standard of discipline was “very high”, but added that “some parents feel the approach is inflexible and some have removed their children. This has resulted in higher-than-average pupil movement.”

Pupils with SEND made “rapid academic progress”, but inspectors warned that a small number did not get the support they needed.

An Aspirations spokesperson said Magna’s SENCO would be qualified within the next year. The school had been supported by two SENCOs from another school this year.

The trust said the report “reflects the work and commitment from all the staff... We will continue to focus our efforts to ensure that this level of provision is maintained and improved wherever possible.”

A spokesperson for Ofsted said: “This is an outstanding school with outstanding leadership and management.”

News

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# Trust's PRU was illegal - for 6 years

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

EXCLUSIVE

An academy trust had to register a pupil referral unit as a school after Ofsted found it had been operating illegally as a subsidiary company for six years.

The government is now facing growing calls for tougher monitoring of alternative provision and provide more clarity around registration.

The Rodillian Academy Trust had run the Southway PRU, in Leeds, as a subsidiary company since 2013. Before that it had been run by a group of schools in the city under the government's school exclusions pilot that allowed headteachers to take more control over excluded pupils.

But Rodillian's most recent accounts revealed the Department for Education undertook a "review" of Southway, with the trust required to submit an application to register it.

A pre-registration inspection in February praised provision at the school, which has 120 pupils and charges between £19,750 and £24,000 a year. It became an independent school in March.

Andy Goulty, the chief executive of Rodillian, said the trust agreed that the PRU "fit the description" of an illegal school and staff worked "as quickly as we could" to register it.

"But I don't think Southway is a typical illegal school. It was set up as a national pathfinder, it found itself in limbo, we've sorted it out and actually the model, which is incredibly successful at stopping schools permanently excluding and off-rolling, is something we are incredibly proud of. I know people in the city are as well."

Ofsted is cracking down on illegal schools. In April, the watchdog revealed its illegal schools team had investigated 521 settings since it was set up three years ago, with almost a third (28 per cent) classed as alternative provision.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, warned of possible "confusion" over the registration of AP and said he would welcome "further clarification".

Kiran Gill, the chief executive and founder of The Difference, an AP teacher training programme, went further – urging the government to end the use of unregistered AP.

Last month, a Schools Week investigation revealed that council spending on private AP rocketed by almost £7 million in the past three years.

Gill added: "Excluded children and those in AP are the most vulnerable. For adequate safeguarding, the government must know where those children are."

Last year, the Education Policy Institute rated Rodillian as the top performing trust at key stage 4 nationally.

It is under a financial notice to improve. A previous government investigation found it broke rules by allowing Goulty to claim almost £8,000 for hotel accommodation.

EXCLUSIVE

KATHRYN SNOWDON | @KATHRYN\_SNOWDON

## Cuts jeopardise leading alternative provision

The only "outstanding" pupil referral unit in North Yorkshire could close by Christmas, leading to fears students won't have anywhere to go as other alternative provision settings are stretched to capacity.

The Grove Academy in Harrogate is one of five alternative provision providers in North Yorkshire. It has 19 pupils on roll.

Delta Academies Trust, which took it over in 2013, said North Yorkshire County Council has slashed its funding by about 65 per cent.

The council is instead moving to a "more inclusive mainstream school culture", designed to reduce the numbers of children and young people excluded from school.

But the council admitted it was under strain, projecting financial pressures of £5.5 million. It called for additional help from the government.

Alex Boyce, who works at The Grove, said he believed the school would close at Christmas unless there was a "dramatic change".

"After endless meetings, and multiple delays, we still don't have clarity on what the council's plan is for the existing pupils in the PRU or

excluded pupils in the future. We're having to piece things together.

"The only thing we know for certain is that the cuts are real and they are having a devastating effect. Parents and students do not know what the future is and staff are already looking at employment elsewhere. And when you lose the staff, you lose the school."

The council said that any decision about the future of the school was a matter for Delta.

But Delta said "given the magnitude" of reductions in funding, "it is difficult to see how the provision in its current form could continue".

At a council meeting earlier this year, several headteachers warned that the proposed changes to the high-needs budget would leave some children with nowhere to go, resulting in higher levels of exclusion.

Boyce added: "Cutting an outstanding PRU to the point of closure simply makes no sense when there are so few alternative providers in place."

The other AP providers in North Yorkshire

are rated "good". Two have already exceeded capacity, according to government statistics.

The council said it would "continue to meet the needs of permanently excluded children and young people in all parts of the county".

A Schools Week investigation found councils were sending nearly double the number of vulnerable pupils to private AP settings – some of which were not inspected by Ofsted or registered with the government.

North Yorkshire County Council spent £30,380 on private AP between in 2018-19, compared with £5,700 the previous year.



# News

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## EEF: Use report cards to boost behaviour

**KATHRYN SNOWDON**  
**@KATHRYN\_SNOWDON**

Teachers should adopt personalised approaches like issuing daily report cards to improve disruptive behaviour, new guidance states.

An Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) report found that universal systems are unlikely to work for all students and for those who need more intensive support with their behaviour.

The guidance, published today, also points to a lack of evidence on the impact of zero tolerance behaviour policies – sometimes described as “no excuses” – which aim to create a strict and clear whole-school approach to discipline.

Under such policies, pupils will typically automatically receive detentions for a range of misbehaviours such as being late, forgetting homework or swearing. Other more serious conduct, such as bringing a weapon to school, may result in exclusion, without exception.

However, Tom Bennett, the government’s behaviour tsar, warned that too many commentators “fixate on so-called zero tolerance systems – which are in fact almost vanishingly rare in reality, as almost every school permits exceptions to their rules”.

“It’s unsurprising then that there is little data to suggest the effectiveness of these systems either way. What counts more is the consistency of school systems, and how reliably they are executed.

“Exceptions are a necessary part of any institutional bureaucracy, but they must be exceptional, logical and consistent.”

The guidance encourages teachers to develop good relationships with pupils, so they understand them and their motivations for misbehaving.

It also advised that teachers greet each pupils personally at the door of the classroom, because evidence suggests this can have a positive impact on behaviour.

Offering free, universal breakfast clubs

before school is also recommended, as such events have been found to prepare pupils for learning.

The report also recommended issuing daily report cards to improve disruptive behaviour.

Nick Hodge, a professor of inclusive practice at Sheffield Hallam University, warned that while this approach might work in some cases, a daily report card is unlikely to help a child if their behaviour results from distress or a situation that makes them feel unsafe.

In this instance, the situation, rather than the child, needs to be addressed, Hodge said, adding that he supported the recommendation of building stronger relationships between staff and pupils and was encouraged by the whole school approach being advocated.

Meanwhile, Bennett said that although “knowing your pupils” can be very useful, he warned: “At other times, teachers need to think of the needs of the class over the individual student.”

Six recommendations were suggested for improving pupil behaviour and advocating a personalised approach.

Sir Kevan Collins, chief executive of the EEF, said: “Despite most pupils in most lessons behaving well, misbehaviour is an issue that has challenged schools for generations. It can have a lasting impact on pupils’ learning and teacher wellbeing.

“Today’s report shows how consistent approaches to behaviour can lead to strong relationships between teachers and students and form the foundations for learning.”

### THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Know and understand pupils and their influences
- Teach learning behaviours alongside managing misbehaviour
- Use classroom management strategies to support good behaviour
- Use simple approaches as part of your regular routine
- Use targeted approaches to meet the needs of individuals in your school
- Consistency is key

## Pupil database is safe with us, says OfS

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

**EXCLUSIVE**

The universities regulator says it has “no plans” to share sensitive named pupil data with private companies as parliament prepares to give it access to the details of millions of children and adults.

Secondary legislation will allow data from the national pupil database (NPD) to be passed to the Office for Students (OfS).

The data-sharing deal, similar to one held by the OfS’s predecessor Hefce, will help the regulator in its duties to widen access to universities and hold institutions to account.

Under another law, called the Higher Education Research Act (HERA), the OfS can share data on university students with private partners. Data privacy campaigners fear the new secondary legislation will allow it also to share sensitive school pupil data.

The national pupil database includes data from the school census collected about every pupil since 2002. The Department for Education often shares extracts with third parties, but they are usually anonymised and there are strict safeguards to govern how it is used.

Jen Persson, from the campaign group Defend Digital Me, said: “It should be unthinkable that such sensitive, personal confidential data could be passed on to third parties without a child or family’s knowledge, and yet that is the power this regulation creates.”

But an OfS spokesperson said it expected the same “strict controls” on onward sharing to be in place as was the case with its predecessor.

And while the law would allow the OfS to share data with “certain named bodies”, it “does not compel us to share data”.

“We have no plans to share NPD data under this section of HERA and before doing so would need approval from the DfE and be subject to a detailed privacy impact assessment.”

A Department for Education spokesperson said: “Like all uses of individual data, requests for OfS are approved through our data-sharing approval panel and they are not allowed to pass on information without permission.”

# Ex-minister's academy trust folds after financial woes

**PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS**

**@PIPPA\_AK**

A troubled academy trust founded by a Conservative peer will close in September, with its two remaining schools transferred to a new sponsor.

Floreat Education Academies Trust, founded by Lord James O'Shaughnessy, a former aide to David Cameron, will give up its two primary schools to GLF Schools at the end of the summer.

O'Shaughnessy set up Floreat in 2014 with a pledge to focus on the "classical ideal of education", but it has faced financial troubles following proposals for new schools falling through.

In October, *Schools Week* revealed the government gave it £340,000 for two free school projects in London – Floreat Colindale and Floreat Southall – but neither opened.

The trust's most recent accounts said "very low pupil numbers" had forced it to scrap plans for a new Floreat Silver Meadow school in Berkshire, and revealed the trust was seeking unpaid volunteers to work as finance assistant, office administrator and personal assistant to the chief executive.

The government is increasingly discussing mergers between smaller academy trusts.

*Schools Week* revealed last week at least 190 trusts were given approval to merge in the 18 months from August 31, 2017.

Floreat has told staff its schools will retain their names, uniform and curriculum. A spokesperson for the 32-school GLF confirmed this, adding "rebranding is not our current focus".

Janet Hilary, the chief executive of Floreat, said GLF "understand and respect Floreat's educational approach", adding it would continue to deliver its "unique 'character plus knowledge'" curriculum.

The trust currently runs Floreat Wandsworth primary in south London and Floreat Montague Park primary in Wokingham, Surrey. A third school, Floreat Brentford primary in west London, closed last August after problems with temporary buildings and "critically low" funding levels.

Jon Chaloner, the chief executive of GLF, said: "We look forward to working with both schools and to ensuring their children and staff grow, learn and flourish with us."

Floreat's sponsor, the Floreat Education Charity, will remain open and has pledged to continue supporting the schools "as they grow to full capacity".

Accounts for up to the end of

August in 2017 show the charity posted an overall surplus of nearly £300,000. During that year, the charity received £379,934, and spent just £83,139 – nearly all of which went to the academy trust.

However, more recent accounts for the academy trust show the sponsor did not hand over any money in the following year, despite the well-publicised money woes.

Meanwhile, O'Shaughnessy has rejoined Mayforth Consultancy, a company he founded to provide strategy and research to help "entrepreneurial educators".

But the government's Advisory Committee on Business Appointments said O'Shaughnessy, who resigned as health minister in December, could not draw on any privileged information he gained as a minister, or lobby the government of behalf of his clients, until December next year.

He stood down as managing director of Floreat in 2016 but remained a director and senior adviser.

*The Times* reported in 2016 that two firms linked to O'Shaughnessy received payments from Floreat totalling more than £125,000. Most of that went to Mayforth Consulting. Floreat has said the money was a fair sum and met regulations.



Lord James O'Shaughnessy

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## WCAT's last cash 'should go back to its schools'

Money handed back to the government by an academy trust that collapsed two years ago must be returned to the schools it abandoned, says a Labour MP.

The Wakefield City Academies Trust (WCAT) has confirmed it gave an undisclosed sum to the Department for Education after ending its latest accounting period with a cash balance of more than £1 million.

But the Department for Education refused to say whether any of the money would go back to WCAT's 21 schools.

The trust was accused of "asset-stripping" following reports it transferred hundreds of thousands of pounds from its schools' budgets in the months before it announced closure.

WCAT announced in September 2017 that it would walk away from its schools after admitting it did not have the capacity to improve them.

Now Mary Creagh, the MP for Wakefield, has said she is "doing everything I can" to ensure leftover cash goes to "the schools who were so badly affected by the trust's collapse".

Newly published accounts for the six months to February 28 show WCAT will close with a cash balance of £1,151,000, some of which has already been repaid to the government.

The trust wouldn't say how much had gone back to the DfE, but accounts show it owed £579,000 to "other creditors". Once money owed was taken into account, WCAT was left

with just £144,000 in assets.

A source at one trust that took on WCAT schools told *Schools Week* they understood any remaining funding was supposed to be spread between the 21 schools.

A DfE spokesperson said it worked with the new sponsors of all of WCAT's schools "to ensure they received the right support and resources they needed to improve the outcomes for pupils as quickly as possible, which included the necessary pupil funding.

"The financial position of the trust will only be clear once the closure process is completed and so any balances at the moment are not the final amount."

## News

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## Trust chief takes legal action against former employer

**PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS**

**@PIPPA\_AK**

A leading headteacher is pursuing legal action after he claims he was “forced to resign” as chief executive of a trust amid a financial investigation.

Tom Quinn left the Holy Family Catholic Multi-Academy Trust in April during what Schools Week understands to be an internal investigation surrounding a black hole in the trust’s budget. It is understood it could involve hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Quinn, now chief executive of the Frank Field Education Trust, has broken his silence on the dismissal, claiming his former trust made his position “untenable”.

“With the support of my professional association, I am pursuing legal action against my former employer and cannot therefore comment further,” he said.

He led the Holy Family’s St John Plessington Catholic College in Bebington, Wirral, for 14 years and is a member of the secondary headteacher reference group, leading heads who advise and influence the Department for Education’s policy development. He is also a national leader of education.

In a statement released this week, Quinn said he was “deeply saddened” to leave St John Plessington, but was “forced to resign when my position became untenable due to the actions of the newly appointed Holy Family Catholic Multi-Academy Trust board”.

He said he was looking forward to his new role at the Frank Field trust where he hoped to

help to develop a new “model of education”, after “what has been a devastating time for me personally”.

A spokesperson for the diocese of Shrewsbury, which founded the Wirral-based Holy Family trust, previously said Quinn left “with the mutual consent of trustee directors” on April 18.

However, rather than sign the final legal agreements on April 25, Quinn said he “wished to resign with immediate effect”.

After Quinn released his statement, a spokesperson for the diocese added: “Investigations are continuing so the diocese of Shrewsbury is not prepared to comment at the present time.”

In April the veteran MP Frank Field told Schools Week he was “overjoyed” that Quinn would become the full-time chief executive of his trust after a time as interim CEO. He described him as “one of the best headmasters in the country”.

When questioned about the Holy Family’s ongoing investigation, Field said: “As things unfold, we must try and understand why people have tried to bring down one of our great headmasters. The most important thing for me is to bind myself with Tom. I have never ever doubted his qualities, his brilliance in teaching, his honesty.

“At stages in the future people will have to account for their actions. I’m willing to answer for mine.”

The Holy Family’s operations manager and St John Plessington’s chair of trustees left the trust on the same day as Quinn.

## Gibb favourite to run training for hub leaders

**SCHOOLSWEEK REPORTER**  
**@SCHOOLSWEEK**

A company run by a phonics expert championed by Nick Gibb will lead a new training centre to develop literacy specialists.

Ruth Miskin Training will run the centre to provide training for up to 34 English hub leaders and 180 literacy specialists.

The firm is run by Ruth Miskin, who was appointed a CBE in the New Year’s Honours and whose work on phonics has been praised by Gibb, the schools minister.

The government said the appointment was made after competitive tendering. Funding comes from the £26.3 million announced for English hubs last year by Justine Greening, then education secretary.

Two more English hubs were announced recently: Horsendale School in Nottingham will open the Flying High English Hub, and Heather Avenue Infant School in Norfolk will open the Wensum Trust English Hub.

The Department for Education said literacy specialists would be given training in age-appropriate phonics, early language development, and how to promote a love of reading.

They will also receive specific training in the phonics programme that their partner school uses and in a new language and storytelling programme.

The centre will be run with I CAN, the National Literacy Trust, Sounds Write, Jolly Phonics, Sounds Discovery, Phonics International and Floppy Phonics.

Miskin has also received government funding under the teaching and leadership fund and the opportunity areas scheme.

The work of the English hubs and the training centre will be overseen by an English Hubs Council that includes leading phonics and reading experts and headteachers. Members of the council are yet to be announced.

**Ruth Miskin Training**



While you were away...

# Teacher recruitment: 'no national shortage'

The government's migration advisory committee (MAC) has urged against expanding the list of subjects for which schools can freely recruit teachers from outside Europe.

The MAC said on Thursday last week that the profession's vacancy rate was "around average", so no further subjects should be added to the so-called "shortage occupation list".

The committee, which advises ministers on migration issues, has recommended secondary maths, physics, general science, computer science and Mandarin teachers from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) continue to receive special immigration rights.

However, schools are still in the dark about how recruitment from within the EEA will work after the UK leaves the European Union (EU).

Teachers from Europe currently make up 2.6 per cent of primary school teachers and 3 per cent of secondary teachers in the UK, but the MAC ruled last year that unless a UK immigration policy was included in any agreement with the EU, there should be no preferential treatment for EU citizens after Brexit.

The shortage occupation list sets out which professions are entitled to exemptions, making it easier for them to come and work in the UK. It was last changed two years ago to add Mandarin, general and computer science teachers, while chemistry teachers were removed.

The MAC concluded that "while there are clear problems with the occupation, which may lead to shortages in the future", the evidence received "does not undeniably demonstrate the presence of a national shortage".

# New RSCs appointed

A former primary school head and a former Downing Street adviser have been appointed as interim regional schools commissioners.

Dame Kate Dethridge (pictured) will replace Martin Post in northwest London and south central England in August, and Katherine Cowell will replace Janet Renou in the north of England next month.

Post and Renou are standing down at the end of their five-year contracts.

The two new RSCs, who both already work within the commissioners' network, will assume responsibility for overseeing academies in their regions "until a formal recruitment process begins to fill the roles permanently in the autumn", the DfE said.

Dethridge was a primary school head and national leader of education before becoming Post's deputy in 2016.

Cowell, a deputy RSC in the north, is a former education adviser to Tony Blair and



Gordon Brown.

Meanwhile, the department has also revealed a £2 million scheme to pilot new teaching school hubs in nine areas.

The hubs, which will each aim to reach 300 failing schools, will be run by "high-performing schools" and launch this autumn, ahead of a proposed national roll-out in 2020-21. The funding works out at just over £220,000 per hub, with applications now open.

The school-led improvement shake-up comes after the government recognised larger collaborations of teaching school alliances and multi-academy trusts were already forming and covering wider areas.

## DFE IN CEO PAY GAFFE

The government has been forced to update a list of academy trusts named and shamed for failing to justify executive pay after a chain was included by mistake.

The Department for Education last month published a list of 31 academy trusts who had received a second warning for being "non-compliant" with its order to justify CEO pay.

The North East Learning Trust, an eight-school chain that paid its executive principal Lesley Powell £160,000 in 2017-18, was one of those named and shamed online on May 10.

But the department removed the trust's

name when it updated the list during the holidays. After being contacted by *Schools Week*, the DfE admitted the blunder, - saying the trust never should have been on the list in the first place.

*Schools Week* has revealed that another listed chain, The Laurus Trust, had sent a detailed response to the DfE that included its reasons for paying its chief executive more than £152,000.



It is also understood that another trust on the original list has asked to be removed as it said it provided annual updates to the department on the pay of its top staff.

# EDITORIAL

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SCHOOLS WEEK



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## Funding is on the agenda - but beware of the headlines

It's heartening to see school funding at the top of the political agenda, even if it did take the Conservative party leadership campaign to do it.

After years of the party's MPs telling school leaders the government is handing over record levels of funding, the campaign to be the country's next prime minister has kickstarted a school funding bidding war.

But beware: once you get past the national newspaper headlines, not all the pledges are as attractive as they seem (see our analysis on page 5).

The odds currently point to either a Johnson or Gove premiership, but neither frontrunner has pledged anywhere near enough to reverse the 8 per cent real-terms cut to school budgets between 2009-10 and 2017-18, let alone to safeguard schools against future cost pressures.

Matthew Hancock's figures are also a bit sketchy. He plans to spend £3 billion giving every school an extra £400 per pupil - but appears not to have budgeted for all the pupils in the system.

Esther McVey plans to spend £4 billion on education - with £2 billion of this for schools, £1 billion on high needs and £1 billion on further

education, but school leaders will be worried about her comments on LGBT education.

Teachers and leaders - including a fair few Conservative supporters - have been warning of a school funding crisis for years.

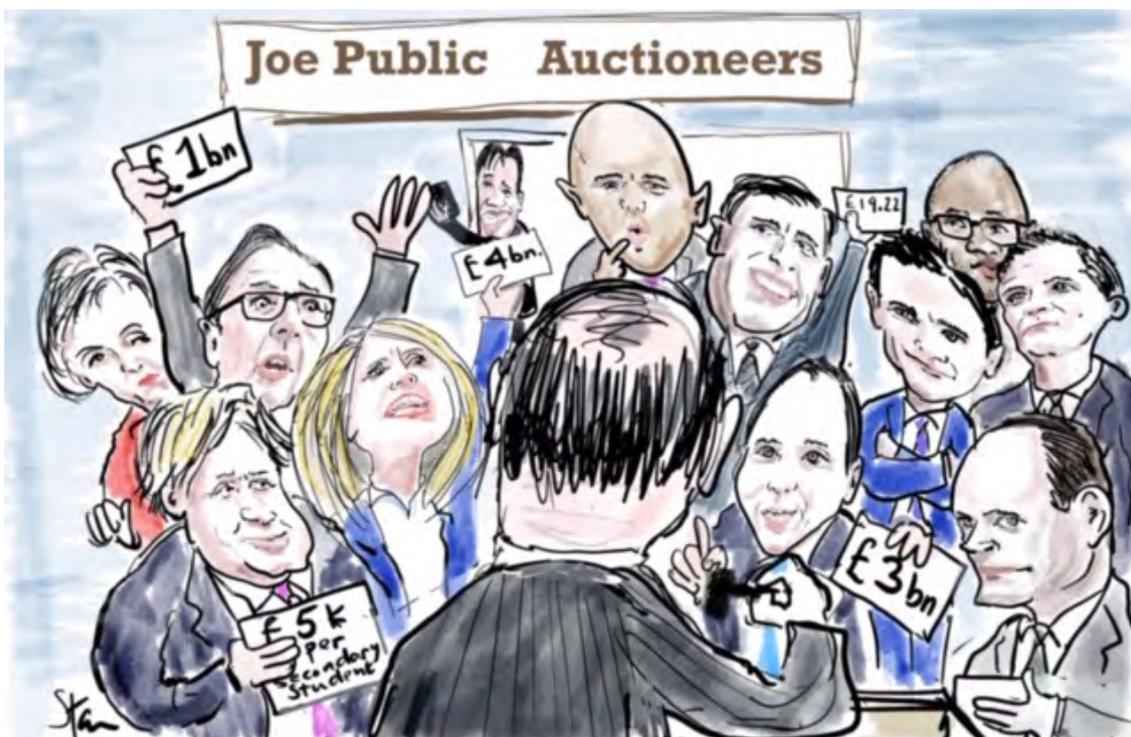
In the pages of this newspaper, we have carried stories of leaking roofs, schools turning to Amazon wishlists, staff redundancies and a crisis in high needs funding, to name but a few examples.

Schools were already expecting a funding boost in this year's spending review, with post-16 and high needs funding said to be high priority.

So while extra funding now looks increasingly likely, it's concerning to hear the spending review will almost certainly be delayed by the leadership contest.

Schools are also waiting to hear whether increased pension contributions will continue to be funded by the government, which hinges on the review too.

It's about time school funding was put to the top of the agenda. But these promises need to be fully thought, through and properly costed, and quick



# Profile

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER



## “We talk about being gay about 0.5 per cent of the time”

**Sarah Hewitt-Clarkson, headteacher, Anderton Park primary school, Birmingham**

Sarah Hewitt-Clarkson's desk in Anderton Park primary is strewn with cards from well-wishers across the world. A bunch of flowers in rainbow colours sent by a supporter in Australia are in a vase next to her as she tells me how exhausted she is.

It has been nine weeks since protests against

her inner Birmingham school's equalities education started. Protesters, most of them Muslim, moved on to Anderton Park after Parkfield in nearby Alum Rock dropped its “no outsiders” LGBT education programme.

The crowd outside her school gates may be gone for now – the High Court granted an interim injunction last Friday – but the sense that they could return again at any moment hangs over this vibrant, calm school like a dark cloud.

Those involved say children are being

“sexualised” and that the school's teaching about LGBT rights conflicts with their religion.

But Hewitt-Clarkson is adamant that the protests do not represent her city or most of her parent body.

“When I see those pictures of 200 to 300 people on one afternoon standing outside my school, I look at that like I'm an observer from a foreign land. That's not my city. That's not my school,” she says.

Born in the city, Hewitt-Clarkson first left her

## Profile: Sarah Hewitt-Clarkson

beloved Birmingham when she went to study philosophy at Swansea University.

She chose the Welsh city because she “wanted to go to the beach”, and loved her time there.

Returning to Birmingham to do her PGCE, Hewitt-Clarkson worked in schools in Dudley for about 13 years before becoming deputy head at Anderton Park 12 years ago. She became its head in 2012.

She can't remember exactly why she became a teacher. Her father, “another Brummie”, was a head in Dudley and she “never really thought I wanted to be anything else”.

“Without being clichéd, education is massively important, and if there's anything this current situation teaches you, it's thank God for schools and teachers,” she says.

“This isn't an extension of home. It's not a place of worship. It's different. And many things will be similar and some things will be different, and that's the way it should be.”

Anderton Park's approach to equalities education, which weaves teaching about equal rights and the challenging of stereotypes into the wider curriculum and has the 2010 Equality Act at its core, is nothing new.

Hewitt-Clarkson and her team updated their approach in the wake of the Trojan Horse scandal that rocked Birmingham's schools half a decade ago, but it was only after the government announced plans to update relationships and sex education in England's schools earlier this year that Anderton Park's approach came under fire.

For Hewitt-Clarkson, there are “numerous” similarities between the protests and the Trojan Horse affair.

“It's only ever a handful of people. It's never everybody. But it's coercive, controlling behaviour by mainly men, making demands,” she says.

“Back in Trojan Horse times, they were saying things like ‘she's fixed the SATs results’ or ‘she spent money where she shouldn't spend money’. Now it's ‘she's a vile Islamophobe’ and ‘she's a paedophile’”

The suggestion that Hewitt-Clarkson and her dedicated team are somehow “sexualising” pupils at the school is popular among the protest's leaders. But unlike many other primary schools, Anderton Park doesn't actually teach sex education.

“We have never taught sex here,” Hewitt-Clarkson says. “Some primary schools do, but we don't, and we never will.”



Protesters outside Anderton Park Primary School

### “Equality literally oozes out of this school's walls”

Anderton Park doesn't deliver specific lessons on LGBT rights either. Instead, the idea of families with “two mummies or two daddies” is normalised through the books that children read and the discussions they have with teachers.

“When you read all these news reports or listen to these protesters, you'd think we talk about being gay the whole time,” Hewitt-Clarkson says. “It's probably 0.5 per cent of the time, but because it's here there and everywhere, it's just normal.”

“It's not a lesson. It's not a special week. It's tiny, but it's the most valuable thing we can talk about.”

The protests may be on a hiatus, but Hewitt-Clarkson is still preoccupied. She tells me she's “exhausted” and “a bit vacant” when she gets home every day.

“One of my children is doing her GCSEs, and I don't see her in the morning because I leave

really early, and I get back at 7pm. That's not very good for a mum whose child is doing GCSEs. I'm dealing with the protests and trying to do my job at the same time.”

Has she considered giving up? “Not once.”

“There is so much hate and anger and misery in the world that is caused by inequality that I'm really glad there is a public sector equality duty placed on me and my staff to make sure that's part of our school life and part of these kids' education.”

“And since I've been here, but also before that, this school is built on that. It literally oozes out of the walls.”

A catalyst for the protests was the publication earlier this year of the government's new relationships and sex education curriculum. From September next year, all schools will have to teach about relationships and health, and all secondaries will have to teach sex education.

Hewitt-Clarkson said some parents “started freaking out” about the words “compulsory” and “sex”, and that “genuine fears and genuine confusion were fuelled unforgivably by people who are homophobic”.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance on the matter, which dictates what schools must cover, is unequivocal that all schools must teach that marriage can be between members of the opposite or same sex,

# Profile: Sarah Hewitt-Clarkson



and that some families look different to others.

Hewitt-Clarkson is fully supportive of the content in the guidance itself.

But she is damning about an insistence in a “frequently asked questions” document and in statements by ministers that although 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.

She believes this contradiction amounts to discrimination and has fuelled homophobia because a single protected characteristic is singled out for exemption.

“I’m amazed that nobody from the LGBT community has taken the DfE to court for discrimination. Because I can’t see what else it is,” she said.

“We have people holding banners saying ‘Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve’. And that fire is still being given oxygen because the bottom line is ‘I’ll leave it up to headteachers’. That’s wrong.”

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, has recently called for an end to the protests, but

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## “Like Trojan Horse, nobody actually knows what to do”

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Hewitt-Clarkson says his response was too little, too late.

“It’s one of these situations, a bit like Trojan Horse, where actually nobody knows what to do,” she adds. “I genuinely do think that.

“Having said that, the government of a country that has a law about equality, a public sector equality duty, should know exactly what to do.”

It is this public sector equality duty – a legal requirement on school staff to advance equality between those with a protected characteristic and those without – that drives Hewitt-Clarkson’s commitment to her equalities programme.

She believes that holding all schools to account over their commitment to the duty would make protests like the one outside her school pointless.

“This is where the DfE needs to come in and say every school is expected to tell pupils that some people have two mummies. Full stop. The guidance needs to go further. Parents should not be under the illusion that a school down the road does not teach this ‘immoral nonsense’. That’s completely untrue, and schools should not be shying away from that either.”

Next Monday Hewitt-Clarkson will return to the High Court in London to find out if the interim injunction granted against the protesters last week will become permanent.

But she says a change in approach by the government is needed – to prevent the same thing from happening at other schools across the country.

“They wrote their policy from Whitehall. They should’ve written it sitting in this office. They should do that with all policies, because Damian Hinds doesn’t have to listen to somebody screaming down a megaphone.”

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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If the only reason to study a subject is a passing grade, it's no wonder that many pupils do not want to play the game, says Ben Newmark

Politicians and other key decision-makers have become overly preoccupied in recent years with viewing education through the lens of what happens because of it, rather than as a valuable end in itself. These end-games include sending poorer pupils on to university or making society happier, better and more productive. Well-intentioned as this has all been, we have been too quick to accept these aims – what I call instrumentalist justifications – without challenge.

What we have not faced is the competitive nature of examinations and indeed life in general, which makes instrumentalist justifications a zero-sum game; for some children to do well, others have to do worse, and those most likely to win the education game are those with existing advantage, be it greater affluence, greater bridging cultural capital or greater intelligence.

This overemphasis on certain measurable success criteria, be it better exam results or a higher percentage of children going on to university, creates a context that implies that if a pupil isn't going to pass a course there is no point in them studying it. But not everybody can pass, which has created an elitist view of many subjects with those unlikely to succeed struggling to see why they have to bother at all. Casting anything below a grade 4 at GCSE as tantamount to a fail is a further discouragement.

This undermines much of what



BEN  
NEWMARK

Vice-principal,  
The Nuneaton Academy

## The inherent worth of our curriculum should be lauded

we try to do in schools, particularly those operating in areas of disadvantage. If the only reason to

content should be proudly emphasised. If we feel unable to do that, then we should be seriously

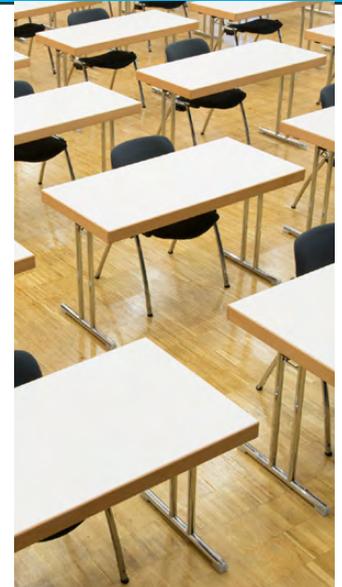
“ We do not teach because by doing so we can eradicate the differences between rich and poor

study a subject is a passing grade, then we create a game that many pupils quite logically do not want to play, especially if they believe the subjects they study are not relevant to them. In the very recent past this may well have led to the detriment of education as a whole, with school accountability measures incentivising schools to play the system by focusing on qualifications that had little value to pupils and served only to inflate a school's performance.

It does not have to be this way. The value of what we teach is not found in the things that may or may not happen as a result of it. Instead the inherent worth of our curriculum

questioning whether or not we should be teaching it in our schools.

Justifying education in this way may feel unfamiliar, but it is far from new. For hundreds of years people believed an important reason for education was that what was taught had a great value in its own right. All that was taught was seen as a precious jewel to be passed down. This perhaps has been most famously expressed by the poet and inspector of schools Matthew Arnold, who wrote in 1869 that the purpose of education should be for young people to know “the best that has been thought and said in the world”. The same sentiment was expressed by his



socialist contemporary Robert Tressell in *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, in which he argued that: “What we call civilisation – the accumulation of knowledge which has come to us from our forefathers – is the fruit of thousands of years of human thought and toil... it is by right the common heritage of all.”

As I told the CurriculumEd conference last weekend: we do not teach because by doing so we can eradicate the differences between rich and poor, or to educate society, or for that matter to create a better one. We do not educate our children so that they have skills that will make them more productive workers. Our responsibility, as Tressell said, is more profound.

If we are to accept that the reason we educate our children is in the inherent worth of what we teach, then what we teach and how well we teach it assumes immeasurable significance. This is no cop-out. There is, after all, so much to learn and so little time.

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**Pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds have the lowest school attainment of all ethnic groups, says Patricia Stapleton. School leaders can help to change that**

June is Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history month, which celebrates the culture and heritage of GRT communities and is therefore a timely moment to highlight the needs of children from these communities within education.

About 58,000 people identified themselves as Gypsy or Irish Traveller in the 2011 census, just 0.1 per cent of the population of England and Wales. This is widely considered to be an undercount as many GRT refuse to tick the ethnicity box to avoid discrimination.

A tick-box for "Roma" was not included in 2011, although the Office for National Statistics has recommended that it be added for the 2021 census.

Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised under the Equality Act 2010 as distinct ethnic minorities and are widely considered by the government and charities to be vulnerable marginalised groups who suffer from very poor outcomes. Although Gypsies, Irish Travellers and migrant Roma are distinct and separate ethnic groups, pupils from all these communities have historically had low engagement in formal education. School experiences are often characterised by discrimination and racist bullying, and these young people leave early with few formal qualifications.

While investment by previous governments has raised attainment to some extent, the educational



PATRICIA STAPLETON

Policy manager, the Traveller Movement

## Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children need your support

outcomes for these pupils remain shockingly low.

The government's race disparity audit, published in 2017, found that pupils from GRT backgrounds had

Tailored support services and a greater commitment to inclusion and diversity from school leaders and local authorities are needed to improve the educational experience

“ School experiences are often characterised by discrimination

the lowest attainment of all ethnic groups throughout their school years. At age five, about a quarter achieve a good level of development in phonics, reading and maths compared with other groups, according to the government's figures.

At the end of key stage 4, only 10 per cent of Gypsy and Roma children and just over a fifth (21 per cent) of Irish Travellers achieve GCSEs.

Travellers of Irish heritage and Gypsy/Roma pupils had the highest rates of permanent exclusions, at 0.45 per cent and 0.36 per cent respectively in 2016-17.

of children from these groups.

Budget cuts from 2010 greatly reduced the work of the national Traveller Education Support Services (TESS), which provided much-needed support to GRT families, so in 2015 the Traveller Movement established an advocacy project.

The project helped families with everything from school exclusions to support at independent review panels and mediation, to referral for legal advice on education health and care plans. Alongside discrimination-related issues, exclusion featured heavily for GRT pupils while for parents there were

considerable challenges relating to digital exclusion or finding the money for school uniforms.

The findings from our three-year project are outlined in our recently published *A Good Practice guide for improving outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in education*.

The guide, aimed at schools, teachers, and activists who work with GRT parents, provides many useful recommendations on how to create a positive and welcoming school environment.

It highlights what good schools do to support GRT children and to ensure that they reach their potential. This includes providing an environment of safety, trust and respect, a commitment to inclusion, and allowing families some flexibility around attendance. Crucially, the schools have high expectations of their pupils and work in partnership with families, pupils and local communities.

Other measures include talking and exchanging ideas with fellow school leaders with a commitment to race equality. And why not download our free Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history month resources to celebrate the heritage of some pupils in your midst, whilst educating their peers in a bid to eliminate discrimination?

Ultimately, small charities such as the Traveller Movement can only help a few hundred people; real change requires time, flexibility, investment and a commitment to inclusion. It is up to school leaders to make this change.

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**The government's latest boost for new maths and physics teachers may not solve much, apart from attracting staff to good schools in the pilot areas, says Mark Boylan**

The government's latest approach to sorting out the shortage of maths and physics staff is to offer new teachers of these subjects a £4,000 boost paid in two instalments, on top of generous existing training bursaries.

A two-year trial starts this autumn for teachers in the first five years of their careers and working in the northeast, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the government's social mobility "opportunity areas". The result could be maths teachers receiving £39,000 early in their careers. But is this the best way to tackle the shortage long term?

Initiatives to retain maths and science teachers have been going on for years, with teams from Sheffield Hallam evaluating various schemes. Successive governments deserve praise for their efforts, but some of their ideas may not have been the best use of money. Unfortunately, this may also be true of the latest initiative.

Why? First, the money will be paid to a teacher in an area regardless of whether there are difficulties with recruitment in their school. There are plenty of schools in the areas selected for the trial that do not have a problem in attracting well-qualified applicants or in retaining them, while the scheme could have a negative impact on schools with recruitment issues that are just outside the chosen areas.

The announcement, for example, is good news for schools in Sheffield



MARK BOYLAN

Professor of education, Sheffield Hallam University

## It's time to take a long view on the recruitment crisis

or Derby who are included, but not for schools and teachers in Chesterfield or Worksop. It could mean well-qualified teachers in schools on the edge of the preferred regions may leave struggling schools to go to attractive schools in the

still wouldn't fix the main problem of how to successfully increase the number of maths and physics teachers needed – a problem that is only going to get worse as pupil numbers rise.

However, it is positive that

**“ Incentives should switch to retention bursaries**

chosen areas. That doesn't solve the problem, it just moves it around.

One alternative would be to forget about regions and areas and use the money to pay early career teachers in schools with the greatest challenges, wherever they are in the country. But this type of scheme

the Department for Education (DfE) is finally shifting its focus from recruitment to retention. The current bursary incentivises graduates who are marking time or don't get the job they want at the end of their degree to try teaching, but it doesn't encourage them to stay.



So, what might be better ways of improving the supply of maths and physics teachers? First are measures that can improve retention of all teachers: a reduction in workload, removing league table pressures, better pay.

Second, incentives should switch from bursaries in training to retention bursaries that are paid after time in the classroom, not just in some areas but for all teachers.

Third, it is right that the government wants to do something to support the recruitment challenges of schools serving disadvantaged communities, but this must be addressed separately to subject specialism as this can cause divisions in the very schools where staff most need to pull together.

How about a golden hello for any teacher joining a school that has high levels of children receiving free school meals or other similar indicators, regardless of the subject they teach?

Ultimately, what we need is a Royal Commission or public inquiry into teacher supply that would set out a 20 or 30-year vision that all political parties sign up to. It would include a plan for a teaching profession that has the same status as it does in successful education systems in Europe or Asia; countries where being a teacher is a first choice for many maths and physics graduates. Rather than more attempts at quick fixes with short-term funding, it's time for a long-term solution.

## Reviews

## BOOK REVIEW



## The Wellbeing Toolkit

By Andrew Cowley

Published by Bloomsbury Education

Reviewed by Natasha Devon MBE, writer and campaigner

I really wanted to love *The Wellbeing Toolkit*. Its foreword is by one of my heroines, the magnificent Jill Berry, and I recognise Andrew Cowley as a (much-needed) voice of support for wellbeing strategies in education on social media.

Indeed, the book does have a lot right with it. The section in which Cowley emphasises the importance of differentiating staff wellbeing from self-care, for example. The former involves ensuring staff can manage their workload and providing a harmonious working environment; the latter is access to activities such as mindfulness sessions and yoga, and is too often offered to staff in place of genuine wellbeing. This observation had me punching the air in agreement.

There is some brilliant, clear guidance on supporting staff who are attacked or have their privacy invaded on social media. Cowley also shares the results of anonymous surveys conducted through social media that give a clear indication of some of the common pitfalls, mistakes and challenges arising in teacher wellbeing.

But a reluctance to properly acknowledge the causes of increasing teacher workload and contradictions within its pages let it down.

In chapter one we're told decisively, and rightly, that wellbeing shouldn't be a tokenistic gesture, but instead involve real, structural change. Yet a few pages later the reader is asked to look to the example of a "proactive" wellbeing leader whose strategies include meditation sessions and giving

all staff lemons to make lemon water. Cowley repeatedly emphasises the importance of not overworking people and anticipating the need for staff cover, yet also advises senior leadership teams to "celebrate" those staff members who "give 110 per cent and stay beyond their contracted times".

The chapter entitled "Births, Marriages & Deaths" might just as well be called "Try Not to be an Arsehole". The reader is asked, for example, to "show empathy" to colleagues who are going through IVF, a typically specific scenario with a very vaguely articulated solution.

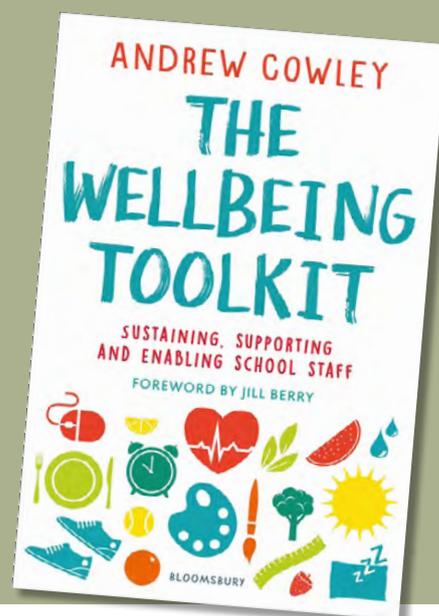
And this speaks to the central tension at the heart of this book: who is it for? I don't think even the author knows. Those school leaders already predisposed to value wellbeing will have their views confirmed, but are offered little in terms of tangible strategies; those who have never thought about wellbeing are essentially presented with a long list of where they're going wrong. In this sense, calling it a "toolkit" is slightly misleading.

The mere fact of highlighting current issues and challenges may, of course, potentially have value. It can, for example, help to challenge the world view of the sort of person for whom it genuinely might never have occurred that not every member of school staff enjoys team-building days and nights with colleagues in the pub. Perhaps this kind of blithe ignorance is more common than I think; perhaps, as someone who mostly deals with pastoral teams in schools, my understanding of

the prevailing attitudes towards wellbeing is unjustly generous.

There are, however, a lot of significant challenges listed that are directly and unarguably created by policy. The ones that spring to mind are cuts to school funding, burnout as a result of having to juggle larger class sizes amongst a dwindling teaching team and a subsequent nationwide crisis in teacher retention. These are the sort of problems that the senior leadership team can mediate to an extent, but can never hope to solve, no matter how savvy they are at stretching budgets. Cowley begins his book by declaring that wellbeing is "not a political issue". I couldn't disagree more.

As a call to arms or discussion-starter on wellbeing in the workplace this book is a useful addition to any staffroom, but practical strategies for implementation of its worthy ideologies are disappointingly thinly spread.



# Research

Every month Evidence Based Education trawl through their greatest research hits to offer practical implementation tips for using evidence in practice

## Can networks close the research-practice gap in the classroom?

**Jessica Mason Blakey, head of assessment, Evidence Based Education**

**N**etworks are powerful. Look at Barack Obama's election based on community networks through the "snowflake model" to see the potential of an informed, enthused, and mobilised community. While networks are already central to disseminating good practice among medical professionals, in education there appears to be a disconnect between best practice and actual practice, known as the research-practice gap.

Teachers' networks can be informal chats over coffee or formal conferences. Either way there is a desire to find ways to improve practice and, ideally, these should be based on sound theory. As Professor Rob Coe, director of research and development at Evidence Based Education (EBE) outlined in his *Manifesto for Evidence-Based Education*, "education may not be an exact science, but it is too important to allow it to be determined by unfounded opinion".

So how does research help us to understand more about teacher and leader networks? How can we use that understanding to help both groups find the information and techniques that are robust and well-evidenced?

In 2018 and 2019, The Michigan School Program Information Project in the UK (MiSPI UK) set out to understand how heads of teaching and learning use their social networks to engage with research, who they engaged with, and the extent of the research-practice gap. Conducted with EBE and Shotton Hall Research School, the study results from the northeast of England reveal echo chambers and information stagnation, as well as highly productive networks of well-connected professionals.

An online survey found these senior staff on average turned



to one or two "information brokers" (internal and external colleagues) for information on school programmes and practices. These could be colleagues in the same school, someone in another school or an organisation that pushes out research, such as the Education Endowment Foundation.

Some respondents said they relied on their own knowledge and judgment because they thought themselves the best authority on the subject. Small though the research sample was, it raises concerns about the accessibility and use of high-quality information sources to inform big decisions made by school leaders.

A limited network might seem problematic, but it is sensible to recognise that in-school colleagues are likely to be the first stop for new information, given the reality of busy working lives. The lead researchers on MiSPI UK highlighted some small steps that teachers and leaders can take to help to close the theory-practice gap.

### **Don't discount research because it's not identical to your context**

Teachers should weigh up how far the research applies: ask questions about how it might work under different circumstances; consider what characteristics in the study will make it successful, and what tweaks might make it work.

### **Connect with interested colleagues**

Connect with a variety of sources within and beyond your school. And look to organisations whose role is to promote research to build a bigger picture. Take time for constructive challenge to make it easier to differentiate between useful and less useful research and perspective.

### **Innovate, implement, iterate**

Good implementation outcomes are often linked to a committed and varied group of colleagues trying things out. Experiment.

### **Research network utopia**

Pursue a two-pronged network model: a tight-knit community of practice within the school and strong links to people out in the rest of the world, whether that's through other schools or through a research-focused organisation.

A researcher within every teacher's extended network would be significant in closing the gap. Networks can help to overcome pedagogical challenges as well as addressing research gaps in a range of areas. Whatever the network, it doesn't need a logo or a motto; rather, it needs members who are informed, sceptical, willing to share practice and critically engage with research to find solutions to real problems of practice.



# Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is  
Debra Kidd author and former teacher

@DEBRAKIDD

## A few things to think about for schools holding interviews

Jill Berry @jillberry102

Jill Berry is always a calm and positive influence on Twitter and her advice on leadership is well regarded by many. Here she writes a thoughtful response to someone who unsuccessfully applied for three deputy headships and failed to receive any feedback. She unpicks the interview process and reflects on her own experiences and struggles as she went through some bruising encounters herself. She argues that while interviews need to be probing, they should never be brutal and her comment that even unsuccessful candidates should go forward as ambassadors for the school is a pertinent one. People remember being treated well and fairly – it's a lesson we could apply to all areas of school life.

## Why teach?

Ben Newmark @bennewmark

While our teaching philosophies differ and I don't agree with everything in this post, Ben Newmark's transcript of a talk he gave

## TOP BLOGS of the week



to the CurriculumEd conference recently includes some pertinent observations. He reflects on the myth of meritocracy that drew him into teaching and rightly points out that more and more young people are recognising the problems with the "social mobility" narrative and finding alternative solutions. Newmark asks a question that I raised five years ago in a talk to the RSA: if there simply aren't enough "good" or well paid jobs for everyone in the future, what is the purpose of education? While I might disagree with some of Newmark's conclusions, I doubt anyone could argue with this beautiful sentiment: our curriculum should whisper to our children, "You belong. You did not come from nowhere. All this came before you, and one day you too might add to it."

## How SEN friendly schools can benefit everyone

Cassie Young @ModernCassie

In a week in which parents, teachers and children took to the streets to highlight the crisis in SEND funding, Cassie Young's blog comes as a refreshing, helpful and uplifting example of what can be done, even with tight budgets, to ensure that

children are fully included in school. Full of practical advice, her blog illustrates how small alterations can make a huge difference for some of our most vulnerable pupils. She outlines how it is possible to make reasonable adjustments for children while maintaining a safe and orderly environment for learning. From the use of visual cues or social stories to break down the complexity of social interaction for children with ASD, she offers practical ideas for helping children to cope better with school. This blogger is one to watch.

## Important curriculum memo

The Primary Head @theprimaryhead

No one can have failed to notice the huge upsurge in blogs, books, conferences and tweets about curriculum since Ofsted used the "C" word. In this funny and irreverent post, The Primary Head picks up on the haste with which we tend to jump on the latest Ofsted bandwagon, even as we complain about the influence that it holds. The blogger uses humour to gently point out that many people have been working on, tweaking and developing their curriculum for many years – my first curriculum design post was back in 2004 – and that perhaps schools shouldn't panic and assume they should be doing something new.

Beneath the laughter, his anger at the unintended and damaging consequences of the quest for approval from the watchdog comes through. And it acts as a warning too, because if every time Ofsted mentions a new priority we swing all our attention and resources in that direction, we'll be forever spinning in the winds of the whims of others. The post reminds us that we should seek by all means to improve our practice, but with the needs of our children and communities in mind and not our fears of what Ofsted wants or thinks.

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +



**It's not fair that getting an EHC plan could depend on your postcode**

**Dr Jennifer Hawkins**

Surely a child's entitlement/rights should be the same wherever they live and laid down by law, tested and evidenced by Ofsted. The fine detail of how it is delivered should be decided by local government. The law is inadequate if it doesn't provide local education authorities, schools and parents with a sensible framework against which to evidence their need for funds.

**Mark Watson**

When you get what you want you're happy with local choice; when you don't you shake your fist at the postcode lottery. If you don't want such a lottery, then the solution is to get Westminster to set the rules on when an EHC plan can be issued, and those rules will be set in stone and apply in the same way to inner-city London and Manchester as they do to Grimsby, Norfolk and Cornwall. No flexibility or discretion for any local authority. Doesn't sound like a good idea to me . . .

**Agnew: Governors don't get plaudits they deserve**

**Martin Matthews**

Hmm – just a quick reminder. There used to be a governor/trustee category in the National Teaching Awards until 2010 when the Department for Education stopped its sponsorship.

**DfE named and shamed trust for failing to justify CEO pay by mistake**

**Ross McGill**

Where is the accountability on these civil servants who publish such blunders?

**GCSE entries: Engineering and design technology flop as EBacc subjects soar**

**Nick**

After 15 years as a DT teacher I am honestly thinking what is the point of this subject. My large school used to run six GCSE courses: system and control, resistant materials, product design, textiles, food and nutrition, and graphic products. Just two

**REPLY OF THE WEEK** **Jerry Baker, comment**

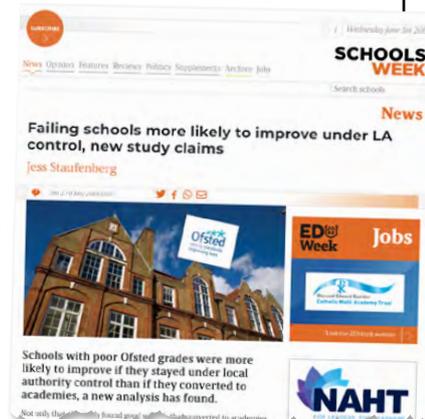
**Failing schools more likely to improve under LA control, new study claims**

It is no surprise that we have two opposing sets of opinion. But what is disappointing is that at the heart of each, a structure (LA-maintained or academy) is seen as the driver for change.

There is no concrete evidence that puts daylight between either structure for effectiveness. The real

issue is school improvement – and an improvement model that supports all areas of a school with expert challenge and advice in its implementation is key.

Immediate access to this support is essential. Giving schools the power to choose where they obtain this support and not putting them into drawn-out brokering processes would accelerate improvement. I would suggest it is time to stop "playing" with structures and to focus on what is actually the driver for long-term sustainable improvement. An independent review of the data would be very welcome too.



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

remain, an engineering OCR course and food. We have dumped the disastrous AQA design and technology GCSE (only suitable for high-level students) and the A-level in product design. It is a complete shambles and I worry for the future skills of this country.

**New maths and physics teachers will get £2k annual 'incentive' payment**

**Steve Albon, comment**

Quick. £2,000. A life-changing amount. Must apply. Oh, hang on. The government is offering to buy one reasonably large round of drinks a week for you . . . but only if you teach the right subject. Completely and utterly useless to the point of insult.

**Rayner: Labour will put climate change 'at the core' of the curriculum**

**Tom Bukard, comment**

It's rather odd how those who bang on about liberating schools from tests seem the most insistent on having their own enthusiasms made mandatory.

# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

## SATURDAY

Headteachers often come up with choice words to describe Ofsted, but we've never heard the watchdog likened to a police anti-corruption unit.

Sean Harford, Ofsted's tweeter-in-chief, told the CurriculumEd conference last week that Ofsted is actually like AC-12, the unit featured on the hit BBC series *Line of Duty*, because it reports "without fear or favour", and is "hated wherever we go".

As the wisest police interviewees often say, no comment.

## SUNDAY

Spare a thought for Damian Hinds's children who look set to spend their summer holidays picking up litter.

The education secretary has said bored kids should spend the holidays picking up plastic from beaches and parks rather than sitting "hunched" over their smartphones.

We jest of course. Hinds's children are still pretty young, so will almost certainly not be sent out to do community service. But it won't be long before they get their marching orders!

## MONDAY

As Nick Gibb continues to hype his chosen leadership candidate, Michael Gove, with supportive tweets and retweets about his "vision and energy", it's worth remembering the journey he



went on not so long ago during the last leadership contest.

*Week in Westminster* veterans will remember how Gibb backed the shortlived Boris Johnson-Michael Gove joint ticket, before backing Gove after his former boss knifed BoJo in the back.

About a week later, once Gove was eliminated, Gibb announced that "the choice is clear" and backed Theresa May. Third time lucky.

We wonder if Gove will be his final choice this time.

## TUESDAY

Liz Truss, the chief secretary to the Treasury, was careful not to tread on too many leadership hopefuls' toes when she gave evidence to a Lords committee this week.

However, when pushed for her view on spending commitments made by the various runners and riders, she said the candidates would "need to show how the . . . spending proposals they're putting forward add up".

Truss is backing Johnson, who this week made a funding pledge that won't even apply to the most schools. Team Boris might have benefited from having Liz look over it beforehand.

## WEDNESDAY

In the spirit of transparency, Ofqual released the agenda for its board meeting in March this week, offering the public a rare glimpse into the inner workings of the exams regulator.

Or rather, it would have done, had most of the business items not been redacted.

SEVEN of the entries read: "This section has been redacted, as its publication would be prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs." BOO!



The de Ferrers Trust

# PRINCIPAL

The de Ferrers Academy

Starting salary £98,700 (pay award pending), range L36 - L41

Required from January 2020 (earlier start possible)

**We are looking for an experienced Principal to lead the next chapter of The de Ferrers Academy's journey. You will commit to the vision of the Trust:**

*To ensure that all the children and young people in our care have the opportunity to fulfil their potential through achieving highly, regardless of their ability or background.*

You will expect children to aspire and achieve. As a creative and tenacious leader, you will build consistent levels of excellence and deliver great results across the whole school.

You will be proud to lead The de Ferrers Academy and inspire that pride in your colleagues and pupils. It has a wonderful tradition and is a unique setting, providing quality education for 2200 students

across three campuses, including a new, modern Sixth Form campus in Burton-upon-Trent.

You will be an established secondary leader, with a strong track record as a headteacher. You will have the skill and vision to realise the huge potential of education. You take overall responsibility for the performance of the academy. To do this well you will need to learn quickly, develop strong structures and provide clear strategic direction to the talented staff team. In turn, you will be supported by the Chief Executive and Director of Education.

**Full information regarding the role can be accessed via the Trust's vacancy website** <https://www.deferrerstrust.com/page/?title=Careers&pid=91>.

*The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and this position is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure check under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.*

**Closing date: 14th June 2019 at 9am.**

**Interview dates: 26th and 27th June 2019.**

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## 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  
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Kent, DA11 0RB**

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