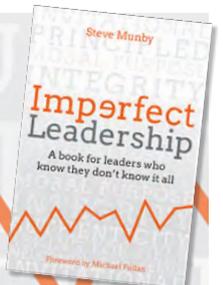


# SCHOOLS WEEK

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

Review:  
Steve Munby's  
'Imperfect Leadership'



P27

Why academy CEOs DON'T need teaching experience



P24

'They're students, not prisoners' - plans for first 'secure school' revealed



P22

DfE: first-class travel is journalists' fault!

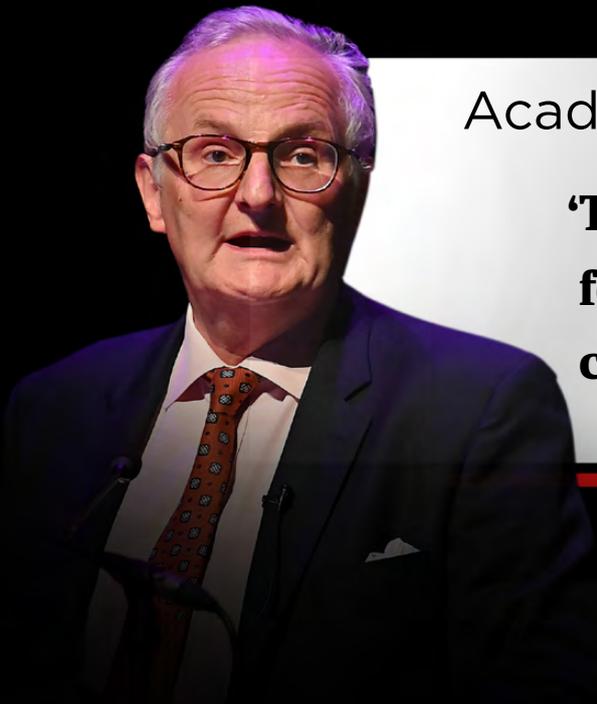


P4

SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK | @SCHOOLSWEEK

FRIDAY, JULY 5, 2019 | EDITION 183

## Agnew reveals his REAL cost-cutter intentions



Academies minister, April:

**'This programme is not about forcing schools to make changes against their will'**

Schools told this week:  
**Want capital cash? You must have a cost-cutter visit – and 'we expect' you'll do as instructed**



PAGES 5-6

ncfe.

## why choose ncfe?

We aim to offer our customers unrivalled support throughout their delivery. Find out why you should choose NCFE as your awarding organisation for next year.

[ncfe.org.uk/schools](https://ncfe.org.uk/schools)

# SCHOOLS WEEK

## Meet the news team



**John Dickens**  
EDITOR

@JOHNDICKENSSW  
JOHN.DICKENS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Laura McInerney**  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

@MISS\_MCINERNEY  
LAURA.MCINERNEY@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Freddie Whittaker**  
CHIEF REPORTER

@FCDWHITTAKER  
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Pippa Allen-Kinross**  
SENIOR REPORTER

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



**Kathryn Snowdon**  
SENIOR REPORTER

@KATHRYN\_SNOWDON  
KATHRYN.SNOWDON@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Nicky Phillips**  
HEAD DESIGNER

@GELVETICA  
NICKY.PHILLIPS@FEWEEK.CO.UK



**Shane Mann**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

@SHANERMANN  
SHANE.MANN@LSECT.COM

### THE TEAM

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

### SUBSCRIBE

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

[schoolsweek.co.uk](http://schoolsweek.co.uk)  
or call 020 8123 4778 to subscribe



BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
**SCHOOLS WEEK**  
AND FE WEEK

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



**SOUTHERN ACADEMY TRUST - INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) - PART TIME - £40,000**

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/1NH5](https://httpslink.com/1NH5)



**GRETTON**  
SCHOOL

**GRETTON SCHOOL - HEADTEACHER - £58,000-£65,000**

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/JC02](https://httpslink.com/JC02)

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



## ADVERTISE WITH US

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

**E: [advertising@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:advertising@schoolsweek.co.uk)**  
**T: 020 81234 778**

## SUBSCRIBE

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

**[schoolsweek.co.uk](http://schoolsweek.co.uk)**  
**or call 020 8123 4778 to subscribe**

### Disclaimer

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

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

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

Please address any complaints to the editor. Email [Error/Concern@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:Error/Concern@schoolsweek.co.uk) with Error/Concern in the subject line. Please include the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is.

SCHOOLS WEEK IS PROUD  
TO BE A MEMBER OF



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

## Editor's top picks



**Is SEND professional development bottom of the pile?**

P25



**New data rules leaves schools floundering**

P12

## Debunked: The latest Tory spending bonanza claims



P14

# Government 'must act' as SEND pupils rise

**KATHRYN SNOWDON**

@KATHRYN\_SNOWDON

The government must be more responsive to special educational needs and disabilities funding after the number of pupils with SEND rose for a third consecutive year, says a leading researcher.

New figures show there are 1.32 million pupils with SEND in England (14.9 per cent of the total pupil population), up from 1.28 million (14.6 per cent) last year.

The government said the increase was driven by a rise in the number of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan and an increase in those receiving SEND support.

In January, 271,200 pupils (3.1 per cent of the total pupil population) had an EHC plan, up from 2.9 per cent last year, and 1 million (11.9 per cent) are on SEND support.

The rise comes as council bosses say that pressure on their SEND budgets leaves them at risk of not being able to deliver core services. Parents are also taking councils to



court over planned cuts to the budgets.

Meanwhile, the country's most vulnerable pupils are missing out and waiting longer for the extra support they are entitled to – with schools left to pick up the pieces.

Natalie Perera, the head of research at the Education Policy Institute (EPI), said the government could not afford to "lag behind".

"There are strong signs from the sector that the current system is already failing to keep up with rapidly evolving pupil needs."

She said this would "certainly generate further concerns about the ability of

the funding system to deal with a more challenging pupil population".

As well as boosting funding, Perera said the government could "tackle the rigidity" in the current system by giving councils more flexibility to shift money to their high-needs blocks.

Speech, language and communication are the most common needs, affecting 22 per cent of all SEND pupils.

There has also been a slight rise in primary pupils diagnosed with social emotional and mental health (SEMH) and moderate learning difficulty.

Chris Rossiter, the chief executive of the Driver Youth Trust, said: "All the data indicates that we are seeing an increase of pupils having an identifiable SEN, particularly in primary. To meet this growing demand, the sector must be adequately equipped to effectively support them."

Meanwhile, the proportion of SEND pupils educated in private schools has gradually increased. A total of 7.1 per cent of all SEND pupils now attend independent schools, compared with 4 per cent in 2010.

**EXCLUSIVE**

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA\_AK

## Pesky press force DfE staff to travel first class

The Department for Education has defended spending more than £500,000 on train tickets that involved first-class travel, claiming it was at times required for staff to avoid unwarranted attention from journalists and the public.

Information released in response to a freedom of information request shows the department spent almost £150,000 on first-class tickets in the past three years, and another £390,000 on journeys that were partially in first class.

The department insisted it looked for the "cheapest option" and said first-class travel was sometimes needed because of "security concerns", including avoiding unwarranted attention from the press or public.

A spokesperson said employees also sometimes travelled with a minister who was in first class, or a train's standard class did not have suitable facilities for someone with disabilities.

Flight and train tickets were booked "well in



advance" to find the cheapest option and "in some instances first-class tickets are often cheaper".

In its response to the FoI request, the DfE said 80 per cent of the rail tickets were the lowest possible fare.

More than £52,000 was spent on first-class train tickets in 2018-19, up from just under £49,000 the year before and close to £48,000 in 2016-17.

However, the amount spent on journeys that were at least partially first class has fallen to £100,500, down from almost £162,000 last year and £128,000 the year before.

The FoI also revealed the DfE spent £750 on first-class flights this year, but nothing in the previous two years.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said it could be "preferable" to travel first class if staff had to complete work during the journey, but added: "It is obviously of paramount importance that travel costs are kept to a minimum, as I am sure the DfE is fully aware."

The department's spend on travel is also included in the register of ministerial gifts, hospitality, travel and meetings.

In 2017, the department spent more than £10,000 to send Nick Gibb, the schools minister, on a one-week trip to Australia and Singapore to "reinforce" relationships.

And last year it spent £9,000 to send Lord Agnew, the academies minister, and three advisers on a three-day trip to Argentina for the first G20 Education Ministerial Summit. Agnew flew business class.

# Academy finances



## Want repairs cash? You'll have to follow efficiency advice

**JOHN DICKENS**

**@JOHNDICKENSSW**

**EXCLUSIVE**

Schools applying for government funding to repair unsafe buildings will now have to agree to a visit from a cost-cutting consultant or not get the cash.

Ministers will also "expect" those schools to have started to implement the recommendations made by school resource management advisers (SRMA) within six months of their visit.

The move is a major shift from the original adviser scheme. It also contradicts previous claims from academies minister Lord Agnew, who said in April the scheme "is not about telling schools that they are doing things wrong or forcing them to make changes against their will."

Successful applicants for next year's £430 million condition improvement fund – to keep schools in "safe and good working order" – have been told they will only get the cash after agreeing to an SRMA visit.

In a letter sent to trusts, and seen by Schools Week, this was listed as an "additional element" of the funding. It doesn't appear to have been included in documents setting out requirements for applicants published last year.

Jonathan Simons, a former policy adviser at Number 10 and now director at policy and PR consultancy Public First, said: "If a school in financial difficulty comes begging for a bailout, then it's absolutely right that they should be required to take financial advice.

"But if a well-run school has a broken boiler or leaky roof – and needs additional capital support through no fault of their own – then they should be no more compelled to take advice on revenue than they should on the colour paint they should



use for the school walls."

The move to offer government funding with strings attached has also caused alarm, while seemingly going against the key principle of the academies movement – autonomy.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), added: "It changes the complexion of 'advice' if it later turns out to be compulsory, and that doesn't seem helpful for either SRMAs or schools, who will presumably have understood it to be a supportive process to inform decision-making."

The letter to trusts from the DfE states that "accepting our offer of SRMA support will trigger your next tranche of CIF funding".

"We will expect you to have started to implement the recommendations of the SRMA report six months from the date of visit."

When asked whether it will be mandatory

to implement the recommendations, the department said it "remains the responsibility of trusts to decide which recommendations to implement based on their individual circumstances".

The department said all it is "reasonably asking is that they implement those recommendations that can help them divert more resource to improving educational outcomes".

They stressed this wasn't a softening of the language or expectations from the letter sent to trusts.

They also said as SRMAs are independent it doesn't infringe on academy freedoms, adding the expansion allows more trusts (not just those in financial difficulty) to get expert advice from their peers. The scheme is funded by the department.

Stephen Morales, chief executive at the Institute of School Business Leadership, said: "In the spirit of sector-led self-

**Continued on next page**



# Academy finances



improvement, I see no reason why schools and their leadership teams wouldn't embrace this coordinated approach to a peer review of their resource management and financial planning."

A second letter sent to successful CIF trusts, entitled "SRMA briefing for trusts", states that visits will last two to three days.

Advisers will produce a report which follows a standard template and includes "key efficiency metrics" – including considering how trusts use an integrated approach to its curriculum and financial planning (ICFP).

In the event the trust can't agree the recommendations, the ESFA case lead will "discuss the issues with the trust's senior leadership to understand the position and reach an agreed way forward".

Trusts with at least five academies get

**"It changes the complexion of 'advice' if it later turns out to be compulsory"**

capital funding through a different route, meaning they won't have mandatory visits.

But the department said "a number" of large trusts have already had visits, with talks ongoing with others.

Agnew parachuted the SRMAs into schools under a trial scheme last year to help them to balance budgets.

At a conference in November he reportedly claimed that the advisers found £35 million of "essentially misdirected resources" at 72 schools and trusts, which amounted to a "colossal sum of money".

He has since extended the trial with £2.3 million extra funding to provide at least 160 advisers.

The government refused to release the reports from the trial, but Schools Week has seen around 20 after trusts released them directly under the Freedom of Information Act.

We reported in March how one school was told to replace experienced teachers with support staff on term-time contracts, while another was urged to limit lunch portions.

Academies Minister Lord Agnew said the scheme "is not a cost-cutting exercise. As I've said before, that's a process I'd challenge anyone to disagree with. Strong financial management is fundamental to a well-run school."

## Advice becomes a requirement for financial notices, too

Cash-strapped trusts are being told to follow cost-cutting advice – or face their funding being axed.

A financial notice to improve issued to the South Dartmoor Academy Trust on Friday said leaders must produce a recovery plan to "put the trust back on a sustainable footing".

The notice also stipulated the recovery plan should include recommendations for "efficiency savings" made by the schools resource management adviser (SRMA).

At least eight other financial notices to improve issued to schools this year include requirements for academies to implement the advice of the SRMAs.

Micon Metcalfe, an accredited SRMA and Institute of School Business

Leadership fellow, said: "At the end of the day, the ESFA is the regulator of academies I don't think there's anything wrong in the regulator or major funder setting conditions. And for them to expect assurance that everything is being done to run the school within the funding that's been given to it.

"I'm not saying that schools aren't finding it very difficult to set balanced budgets, I think they absolutely are, but it's the funding that's been given so you have to find a way through it."

Devon Live reported the seven-school trust is consulting on making 70 redundancies. Annual accounts show one of its schools, South Dartmoor Community College, had a near £1 million deficit.

Metcalfe added: "Trusts have to produce a balanced budget or ultimately they will become insolvent. So, what happens if trusts become insolvent and the DfE is endlessly having to put cash payments in?

"No one is saying it's easy for schools to make economies. But the nature of an academy is that the trustees are accountable for schools' financial health."

The FNTI also told the trust to ensure non-teaching staff earning £60,000 or above don't get pay rising without prior approval from the department.

A spokesperson for Dartmoor said they have a "robust and sustainable financial plan and are already making good progress against this".





# Mentally Healthy Schools

A free website for primary schools, offering school staff information, advice and practical resources to support their pupils' mental health and wellbeing.



**1 in 10**

primary school children has an identifiable mental health condition. That's around three children in every class.

Find over **800** quality-assured resources on mental health and wellbeing, as well as advice on implementing a whole-school approach.



**MENTALLY  
HEALTHY  
SCHOOLS**

[MentallyHealthySchools.org.uk](https://MentallyHealthySchools.org.uk)

# 'Vital' rural schools fight to survive

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

EXCLUSIVE

Rural schools are fighting for their lives as new figures show they made up 40 per cent of school closures in the past decade, up from 20 per cent in the decade before.

Since January 1 2000, 654 schools have closed without being replaced, 183 of them in rural areas, according to data from the Department for Education.

Schools Week analysis shows 20 per cent (85 in 424) of the schools that closed between January 1, 2000 and August 31, 2010, were rural. But since September 2010, 98 of the 230 schools that closed were rural – or 42 per cent.

Barbara Taylor, the secretary of the National Association of Small Schools and chair of governors at a school with 49 pupils in south Oxfordshire, said small schools were having to “really, really fight” for survival in a time of ever-tightening budgets.

“You’ve got to get the councillors, MP, everyone involved. It is increasingly difficult to win.

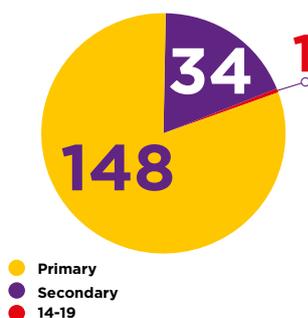
“Small schools are vital in a community. They keep a community alive. Without them rural communities will just become places for older people.”

Last year, the Church of England revealed that it was considering closing some of its smallest schools. It oversees 70 per cent of the country’s “very small” schools with fewer than 110 pupils, but has struggled with tight budgets, building maintenance and teacher supply.

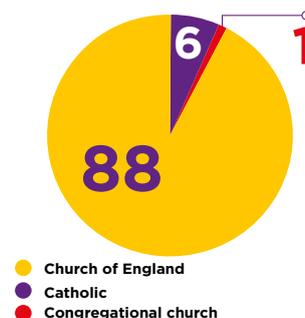
Almost half the rural schools that closed without replacement since January 2000 were Church of England schools (88), while six were Catholic.

Nineteen schools closed in Northumberland, the highest number in the country, followed by North Yorkshire with 16 and Suffolk with 13.

RURAL SCHOOL CLOSURES BY SCHOOL PHASE



RURAL SCHOOL CLOSURES BY RELIGIOUS CHARACTER



Stephen Tierney, the chair of the Headteacher’s Roundtable, said a “political decision” was needed to support small rural schools. They should be given more funding – even if it meant schools in urban areas had lower levels of funding as a result – to provide the “entitlement to education for all children”.

Under the national funding formula, rural schools are eligible for “sparsity” funding of up to £25,000 for primaries and £65,000 for secondaries.

But Carl Les, the leader of North Yorkshire County Council and spokesperson for education and children’s services at the County Councils Network (CCN), warned the money was “insufficient” to cover the “unique funding challenges”.

According to CCN, more than 20,000 pupils in rural England have lost free school transport since 2014 as councils struggled to cope with costs. Rural areas paid an average of £93 a child for transport in 2017, compared with £10 in cities and towns.

Suffolk County Council voted last year to remove free transport for any pupils not attending their nearest school.

Jack Abbott, a Suffolk councillor and the opposition Labour party’s spokesperson for education, said the cuts had “injected further turbulence into the system” and warned the ageing population made it appear “inevitable” the “decline” of rural schools would continue.

“The fabric of rural communities is changing and, sadly, their small schools,

already starved of the necessary funding and resources, are unlikely to survive the transition.”

Last summer, the public accounts committee warned rural schools were “unattractive” to multi-academy trusts because they were “financially vulnerable or geographically isolated”.

Since 2010, 1,379 rural primary schools registered an interest in becoming an academy, but just 984 went on to apply for academisation.

The Truro and Penwith Academy Trust runs 28 academies in rural Cornwall. Jenny Blunden, its chief executive, said academy trusts could be a “lifeline for rural schools” and insisted other trusts “shouldn’t shy away from them”.

She said the trust shared staff and workloads across the schools and focused on joint procurement to keep costs down.

“To be completely isolated and standalone would be really challenging right now,” she said.

“It’s really important for the social fabric of Cornwall to keep small schools alive and well, and it’s in the best interest of the children in those schools that they’re not being bussed or taxied a long way every day.”

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said it recognised the “important role that rural schools play in their communities, as well as the specific challenges they face”.

Any school closures must be “in the best interests of overall education provision in the area”.

# Academies watch

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

## ESFA suppressed report that cleared trust

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

EXCLUSIVE

Ministers refused to release the findings of an independent investigation that cleared a collapsed academy trust from allegations of wrongdoing – and revealed the government had been aware of its actions all along.

Last August the St Neots Learning Partnership was issued with a financial notice to improve that highlighted “concerns” about ten-year “grant advances” paid to two private companies.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) said this was in breach of academy funding rules.

The trust was ordered to investigate the payments. A month later, the ESFA confirmed that the investigation had been completed, but that there were “no plans to publish” the findings.

However, St Neots has made the findings of the independent investigation known in its

final audited accounts. It said that not only did the investigation clear it of wrongdoing, but that the ESFA had been aware of its intent before it acted.

A statement in the accounts from Karl Wainwright, St Neot’s chair of trustees and acting accounting officer, read: “The report concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook had been breached and that the ESFA were aware that the trust was considering entering into these subcontracted arrangements and did not raise any areas for concern at the time.”

In August, Wainwright told the local paper *The Hunts Post*: “As far as we were concerned these were not loans, but contractual arrangements to bring extra services to the school.

“We believe what we did at the time was correct.”

St Neots operated two secondary schools in Cambridgeshire. Both were rebrokered to the Astrea Academy Trust in September, and the

partnership closed last month.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education (DfE) refused to confirm or comment on the findings of the investigation, but said the financial notice to improve had been issued “due to concerns about governance and financial management”.

The DfE has allegedly approved controversial actions in academies before.

Michael Dwan, the founder of Bright Tribe, has faced criticism for his use of related party transactions at the trust, but he insisted last year the DfE had agreed to a business case that involved using his own employed teams and money to “fund and resource” the trust until it was self-sufficient.

The DfE was also alerted to concerns over potential irregular payments at the failed Wakefield City Academies Trust before it was handed £500,000 as a “top performing” sponsor.

St Neot’s former leaders did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA\_AK

## Dwan’s trusts may have to repay £1.8m

Two academy trusts founded by the multi-millionaire Michael Dwan (pictured) may have to repay £1.8 million in government funding they received for building work that was allegedly not carried out.

Newly published accounts for Bright Tribe and its sister-trust Adventure Learning (ALAT), seen by *Schools Week* and due to be published shortly on Companies House’s website, reveal the government is looking to take action for “potential improper use of historic grants”.

They also highlight a “lack of clarity” over how Bright Tribe spent its £1 million northern hub funding, which the government may now claw back.

Accounts said there was a “blurring of lines” in the use of funding by the trusts and two linked private firms, with a lack of evidence that payments to a Dwan firm were “at cost”.

There was also “insufficient evidence” to support the rationale behind staff severance pay-offs and serious concerns over “unsafe” school buildings.

Last year Bright Tribe paid out £299,000



The Bolton News

in staff severance payments. ALAT paid out £30,000.

Government-appointed trustees now running the two chains have put aside £1.5 million at Bright Tribe and £330,000 at ALAT following “a number of external investigations into capital spend in previous years”.

An investigation by the BBC’s *Panorama* in September alleged Bright Tribe had received hundreds of thousands of pounds in grants to carry out improvement works at its school that were never completed.

Both sets of accounts say there is “insufficient evidence in the completed

evidence for some of the capital grants and government loans”.

The concerns over material irregularity, impropriety or funding non-compliance have been flagged to the Education Skills and Funding Agency.

A spokesperson for Dwan’s office said it held a “full copy of all documentation relating to all work carried out”, which was provided to the government in 2015-16.

“If the trusts have any gaps in their record-keeping Mr Dwan’s office would be happy to supply information to them for the relevant period. He has not been contacted to date.”

The BBC reported last year that Michael Dwan’s companies had been paid £8 million for services by both trusts.

But accountants said there was “insufficient evidence that money paid from the trusts to North Consulting Limited was “at cost”.

North Consulting includes Dwan and his brother Andrew among its directors. Last year, Bright Tribe spent £127,000 with the company, and £339,000 the year before.

**BBC**

# Teach



BBC Teach is the BBC's dedicated website for teachers, offering free classroom resources to schools throughout the UK.

Take a look at  
[bbc.com/teach](https://bbc.com/teach)

# Stats: Languages

## What the data says on language trends

The British Council has published its Language Trends 2019 report this week. Here's your trusty *Schools Week* round-up.

### 1 Au revoir French, Hola Spanish

There has been a 19 per cent reduction in the number of language GCSE entries over the last five years. French and German were worst-hit, with entries to both dropping by over 30 per cent since 2014.

However, there has been a six per cent increase in entries in languages, which account for around a tenth of all language entries. The growth was led by Arabic, Chinese, modern Hebrew, Portuguese, Italian and Polish.

At A-level, entries in French and German have also been falling – but provisional figures for this year show French “rallying” with a four per cent increase, and Spanish up 10 per cent.

### 2 Fewer primaries teach languages from an early age

The report found just a third of primary schools taught a language at key stage 1, the lowest proportion since the first language trends survey in 2015 (when 44 per cent reported doing so).

Around four in five schools said they allocated a set time per week for language learning. But a third of schools said that, in practice, pupils don't always receive this allotted time.

Schools with lower attainment at key stage 2 are statistically less likely to set aside specific time for language learning each week.

### 3 Pupils more likely to miss out on languages in sponsored academies

A third of schools had groups of year 9 pupils who were not studying a language. The report said this is the result of schools allowing pupils to choose their GCSE options in year 8.

However, that figure is actually a slight decrease from 2018, when 34.5 per cent of schools had pupils whose “language education has already effectively been terminated”.

Schools with year 9 pupils who don't study a language at all are more likely to have a high free school meals rate, be in the north of England and be a sponsored academy.

### 4 International links are waning, and Brexit is causing problems

The number of primary schools involved in international projects has “dropped significantly”, the report found.

One of the respondents said this was a result of less funding and such work not being “celebrated” in Ofsted inspections or outcomes.

Nearly half of state schools also said the implications of Brexit are a major challenge to providing high-quality language teaching.

These schools were more likely to be local authority-maintained and in coastal areas.

Respondents to the survey reported Brexit has “cast a pall over languages” and were concerned about its impact on the future recruitment of language teachers and student and parent attitudes.

### 5 Schools are still miles off the DfE's 90 per cent EBacc target

More than a quarter of surveyed schools had 75 per cent of more year 10 pupils studying a language GCSE. That rises in London – to more than half of schools.

However, in a fifth of the surveyed secondaries less than a quarter of year 10s took a language. It suggests the government is way off meeting its target of having 90 per cent of pupils study the EBacc subjects (which include a language) by 2025.

It also looks like outcomes for pupils are plateauing, too.

The report states that since languages were introduced as statutory at key stage 2 in September 2014, it's expected schools would report year-on-year improvements in language learning outcomes.

But just over a third of primary schools (37 per cent) said their outcomes for year 6 cohorts were improving, while 44 per cent believe they are the same.

### 6 'Widespread concern' over language exams

Nearly three-quarters of state schools were concerned about the “nature and content” of MFL exams.

The way exams are marked and graded was also listed as a concern by 59 per cent of state school respondents. While this won't come as a surprise, it's another reminder schools have big issues with the reformed MFL GCSEs.

Despite the “widespread concern”, exams regulator Ofqual has previously said there's no “compelling case” to relax grade boundaries in MFL after an investigation into whether they were marked too harshly.



# Data shows schools still struggling with GDPR

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

The information watchdog dealt with hundreds of unnecessary referrals relating to schools in the year after tough new data protection rules were introduced.

Of 1,385 school cases handled by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in the first year of the general data protection regulations (GDPR), just 208 (15 per cent) resulted in orders to take action.

It follows reports last year of a surge in the number of data security incidents reported by the education sector in the wake of the changes.

The rules, which came into effect in May, require schools to be clearer about the data they hold and respond more quickly to requests for copies of personal data. They must also appoint a data protection officer to supervise the way data is handled.

The introduction of the GDPR was marred by accusations that the Department for Education failed to prepare schools for change. Data obtained by *Schools Week* under the freedom of information act suggests they are still struggling to interpret their role.

Almost half the ICO's GDPR school cases were self-reported, while the rest came from third parties. Of the 665 self-referrals from schools, about 80 per cent required no action.

"It does reflect a misunderstanding of what the GDPR actually means for schools," said Mark Orchison, the managing director of 9ine Consulting, who believes the number of reports to the ICO will increase.

"It may be that the schools that are self-reporting just don't understand what they're doing," he said, as he called for more schools to "upskill" their staff.

"If you don't know whether it's a breach, you're likely to report it because you don't want to get told off. But until you upskill the profession to understand the difference between a breach and a near-miss, you're going to continue to see a high level of reporting of potential breaches."

However, he said it was better to be safe than sorry. "It means schools are actively trying to protect the data they have."

Of the schools cases handled by the ICO in



the first year of the GDPR, 38 per cent related to disclosures of data, 29 per cent to subject access requests and 24 per cent to data security.

The handling of subject access requests was the biggest reason for complaints by third parties, followed by disclosure and then security. Whereas disclosure was the biggest reason for school self-referrals, followed by security.

The prevalence of complaints relating to subject access requests (SAR) – which give anyone the right to request all the information an organisation holds on them

– has prompted warnings that they could be used for the wrong reasons.

"The high number . . . demonstrates that people are seeking to use this as a way to get schools to act in the interest of the individual, whether or not a SAR is the right mechanism to use," Orchison said.

Some institutions were the subject of multiple referrals. For example, the ICO dealt with five cases relating to the Aspire Academy Trust in Cornwall. Only one referral resulted in the trust being told to take action.

Aspire said all five cases related to a complaint from one member of staff and that there had been no data security breaches.

"As a trust, we have taken the new regulations extremely seriously," said a spokesperson.

"We reviewed policies, updated systems and initiated regular training sessions well before the regulations came into force.

Overall, 82 per cent of cases handled by the watchdog in the first year of the GDPR from all sectors required no action.

Elizabeth Denham, the information commissioner, said in a blog that although the data showed organisations were "taking the requirements of the GDPR seriously", she accepted that it "remains a challenge for organisations and data protection officers to assess and report breaches within the statutory timescales".

## What schools were investigated for...

SUSPECTED BREACH	SCHOOL SELF-REFERRALS	COMPLAINTS
DISCLOSURE OF DATA	370	152
SUBJECT ACCESS	0	397
SECURITY	289	49
OTHER	6	122
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>720</b>

## What schools were told to do...

CASE OUTCOME	SCHOOL SELF-REFERRALS	COMPLAINTS
NO ACTION	534	207
ACTION REQUIRED	130	78
REFERRED BACK TO SCHOOL*	0	228
ADVICE GIVEN (NO BREACH)	0	184
NOT RELEVANT	1	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>720</b>

\* Includes complaints that should have gone to the school in the first place

# sparx

## Maths. Reimagined.

For secondary schools, Sparx Maths is a complete solution that supports teachers in planning, delivering and reviewing both lessons and homework. Benefits for school leaders, teachers and students range from personalised learning for every student to incredible real time insights into class and student progress for teachers.

### For teachers



**Reduces workload**



**Provides powerful insights**



**Creates time to teach**



**Supports wellbeing**

### For students



**Personalises learning**



**Improves outcomes**



**Motivates students**



**Boosts confidence and mental wellbeing**



**#Ed5M**

For more information or to book a demo please visit

[sparx.co.uk](https://sparx.co.uk)

News

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

# Johnson raises funding pledge to £4.6bn after ridicule for earlier promise



**JOHN DICKENS**  
**@JOHNDICKENSSW**

Boris Johnson has upped his funding promise for schools, vowing to reverse the real-term cuts by pumping in £4.6 billion per year extra by 2022 if he becomes prime minister.

The announcement for more schools cash comes after Johnson was ridiculed for his previous school funding promise – to raise the per-pupil funding floor in secondary schools to £5,000.

Schools Week revealed earlier this month that the pledge actually worked out at just £49 million extra (the equivalent to a 0.1 per cent increase in current school spending).

Meanwhile, leadership contender Jeremy Hunt has vowed to make “our new social mission to be the education system”. While he has pledged that schools “need some more resources”, he has not released any further details of spending pledges.

Both contenders have suggested the extra cash could come from the £27 billion fiscal headroom reportedly set aside by chancellor Philip Hammond to ease austerity.

Johnson also said extra funding will come from leaving the EU and “sensible tax cuts that will stimulate growth”.

But Mike Kane, Labour’s shadow schools minister, speaking in parliament on Monday, said: “Whether they fulfil their promise – I suspect that they will not – the pledge is an implicit criticism of their government’s neglect of education.”

Johnson’s £4.6 billion figure comes from an analysis by think-tank Onward that stated it would cost £3.5 billion to return per-pupil spending to 2015 levels and another £1.1 billion to maintain it with the rise in pupils by 2022-23.

Analysis by the Institute of Fiscal Studies suggested the figure is actually £4.9 billion.

Johnson pledged the extra £4.6 billion will be in place by 2022-23.



However, speaking to Sky News, he said: “What’s been happening in the UK over the last few years is that too many schools have been falling behind in their per capita provision.

“So what I want to do, day one, is level up and make sure that everybody, primary schools and secondary schools, get the funding they need.”

Johnson has pledged to up the minimum per-pupil funding floor for primary school pupils by £500 to £4,000. This would cost £306 million and is included in the £4.6 billion total.

Currently 64 of 150 local authorities have per-pupil primary school funding levels below £4,000 per pupil.

Schools Week revealed earlier this month Johnson’s announcement to up the secondary per-pupil funding floor to £5,000 – the first headline pledge of his campaign – would cost just £49 million extra.

Angela Rayner, Labour’s shadow education secretary, said: “After sitting at the Cabinet table agreeing cuts to schools in successive Tory budgets, Boris Johnson has finally admitted that austerity has failed our children.”

Plans to use the “fiscal headroom” have also been shot down by Hammond. He said this would only be available to spend on public services if the UK leaves the EU with a deal on October 31.

Johnson has also pledged to help support parents to set up SEND free schools.

## Majority of school nursery cash applicants rejected

**JOHN DICKENS**  
**@JOHNDICKENSSW** **EXCLUSIVE**

Ministers have kept hold of one-quarter of the promised £30 million for schools to boost their nursery provision – after rejecting more than half of the applicants.

Under its school nurseries capital fund, the Department for Education pledged £30 million to create “high-quality school-based” nursery places to boost social mobility. The commitment was included in the 2017 Conservative Party manifesto.

The government announced on Tuesday that 66 schools have won funding – but just £22 million has been allocated. The DfE said the remaining £8 million would go back into its capital funding pot for “other priorities”.

Figures released later on Tuesday showed there were 143 applicants for cash – meaning the majority (77) had been turned down.

The £22 million will help schools boost nursery places in areas with high numbers of families who get free school meals, the DfE said. New places will be created through new-builds and expansions of schools already rated “good” or “outstanding”.

The area with the most approved projects is the North-West, with 17. The East Midlands has just three approved.

The announcement is part of a new campaign by education secretary Damian Hinds to “encourage parents to kickstart their children’s learning at home”.

Under the Hungry Little Minds campaign, the government has committed to provide parents with “ideas on how to use everyday opportunities, like going to the shops and playing make-believe games, as part of a relentless society-wide effort to improve the early literacy and language skills in the years before children start school”.

Hinds wants to tackle the “profound issue” of one in four children leaving their first year of school without the “skills in literacy, language and communication they need”.

As revealed by *Schools Week*, ministers will also quality-mark education apps to inform parents which tech is most effective for aiding their child’s learning.

However, the panel to oversee this process includes no serving teachers. A pilot to procure two apps free of charge for disadvantaged families in 12 council areas is due to be rolled out “in due course”.

## London and the north west fail to get computing hubs

KATHRYN SNOWDON

@KATHRYN\_SNOWDON

London and the northwest of England have been neglected in the roll-out of the first 23 computing hubs.

The National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) revealed this week the schools and colleges chosen to improve computer science education in England.

North Yorkshire, Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire and Tyne and Wear all have two hubs, with others scattered around the country in areas such as Devon, Berkshire, Cambridgeshire and Leicestershire.

The only regions without any hubs are the northwest and London.

Addressing the scarcity of hubs located in these areas, an NCCE spokesperson said recruitment is under way so that the next cohort of hubs will ensure that there is a "full national footprint".

Tuesday's announcement comes after warnings in May of a "steep decline" in computing education, with pupils taking 144,000 fewer computing or ICT qualifications last summer, compared with 2017.

Last year the government hit its original target to train 400 computing master teachers – three years late and costing £1 million more than had been expected.

The hubs are designed to offer support to primary and secondary computing teachers in the area, including teaching, resources and continuing professional development (CPD) activities.

The hubs will cover practical and theoretical aspects of teaching computing and will include links with industry professionals and university academics.

The NCCE, established in November, is backed by £84 million government funding and £1 million from Google to develop training for secondary school computing teachers.

Professor Simon Peyton Jones, NCCE chair, said: "Our partnership with teachers is vital to our mission. A single inspired, equipped, valued and supported teacher will influence tens of hundreds of children every day, and thousands over their career."

It has been well documented that the government's school computing revolution has led to girls and poorer pupils being further excluded from achieving vital technology qualifications.

A study in 2016 revealed that girls made up just 16 per cent of GCSE computing pupils in the previous year. At A-level, girls comprised just 8.5 per cent.

## Headteacher standards could apply to trust CEOs



FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

A review of the government's headteacher standards will look at whether the guidance should also apply to multi-academy trust chief executives, says its new chair.

Malcolm Trobe (pictured), the former acting general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, was appointed this week to lead a 12-member panel convened by the government to update official guidance for heads on how they should conduct themselves in the job.

The non-statutory standards, last updated in 2015, are being reviewed amid concerns they are not widely used and following a rapid expansion of the academies system.

"One of the questions that the group will be considering is that now we've got CEOs of very large trusts, will headteacher standards apply to them?" Trobe told *Schools Week*.

Unlike the teacher standards, which leaders must follow, the headteacher standards are meant to be seen as best practice, to shape heads' work and professional development, inform the appraisal of leaders, support recruitment and appointment and provide a framework for those aspiring to headship.

Despite his concerns that the standards were "not in common use", Trobe told *Schools Week* it was not in the remit of his review to decide whether they should become statutory.

"As far as I'm aware from the terms of reference the group has, at this stage there is no intention to make the standards statutory."

Having statutory headteacher standards would, he said, conflict with the government's decision in 2011 to make the National Professional Qualification for Headship non-compulsory.

"We have moved away from NPQH being a

statutory requirement for headship, so it would seem there would be a lack of congruence if we were having statutory standards."

The last review in 2015, led by Ian Bauckham, was the first in 11 years. It is not known when the new guidance, due to be ready by next September, will be reviewed again.

"We don't know where the system will be in five years' time," Trobe said. "We will try to future-proof it as best we can, but we're also conscious about making generalised statements that in essence are just statements of motherhood and apple pie."

"They have to be written as the relevant headteachers exist."

### THE PANEL

**Malcolm Trobe (chair)** – director of the national professional qualification for executive leadership, ASCL; interim executive director, Foundation for Leadership in Education

**Leora Cruddas (vice-chair)** – CEO, Confederation of School Trusts

**Mufti Hamid Patel, CBE** – CEO, Star Academies

**Lesley Powell, CBE** – executive headteacher, Academy at Shotton Hall; CEO, North East Learning Trust

**Carolyn Roberts** – headteacher, Thomas Tallis School, Greenwich

**Sarah Wilson** – headteacher, Joseph Norton Academy, Huddersfield

**Lauren Costello** – national director for primary and SEND, Academies Enterprise Trust

**Geoff Barton** – general secretary, ASCL

**Paul Whiteman** – general secretary, NAHT

**Tom Rees** – executive director of school leadership, Ambition Institute; education director of Northampton Primary Academy Trust

**Emma Knights** – CEO, National Governance Association

**Stuart Lock** – executive principal of Advantage Schools

News

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

Let parents run failing schools to boost free schools policy

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA\_AK

Allowing parents to take over "untouchable" schools would make them feel involved in the academy sponsorship process and provide government with a new stream of sponsors, a new report has claimed.

The Free Schools: The Next 10 Years report, published on Tuesday by the New Schools Network charity, also slammed the government for "severely limiting" the potential of the Conservative Party's flagship policy.

The charity has set out its wishlist for ministers to reinvigorate the policy (see box out).

One of the proposals is for government to introduce a new arm of the free schools process, allowing applicants – including parents and community groups – to submit proposals to take over "untouchable" schools.

Luke Tryl, director at NSN, said this would help to both "turn around failing schools and re-empower communities with a stake in their children's educations".

According to the NSN, 92 schools, with an estimated 35,000 pupils, are currently "in limbo" after receiving an "inadequate" Ofsted grade but failing to secure sponsorship.

Ten have a sponsor but no proposed opening date, including four that have been approved for more than five years.

The NSN said 31 of these schools are "untouchable" – meaning they've remained unsponsored for at least 12 months.

Tryl, a former advisor to Nicky Morgan while she was education secretary, added: "That tens of thousands of pupils have been left to languish in schools deemed in need of new leadership, and that 13,000 have been stuck in such schools for more than a year, is a scandal."

NSN said parents should receive "financial incentives" to do so, with applicants tested on their "vision for the school, the curriculum offer, plans to improve leadership, previous educational experience, financial evidence and community engagement".

This would also "unlock the sponsorship process" to



Luke Tryl



parents who currently feel "shut out" of the choices made by regional schools commissioners with "little community feedback built in", the report stated.

But Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said "parachuting in NSN-approved groups to take over schools would be a recipe for disaster".

She added it was "beyond parody" that the NSN should be "riding to the rescue of the free schools project...They need look no further than their Christmas card list for the causes of the problems they seek to solve."

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, added that we should instead be looking at why many schools are without a sponsor, and said the DfE should stop "stigmatising" schools through Ofsted and using sponsorship as a "default position" for school improvement.

Previous Schools Week investigations into

**The Tryl masterplan to reinvigorate the free schools policy**

1. Open 100 new free schools each year
2. A free school in every local authority
3. Bring back innovation
4. Compel councils to set aside land
5. Let parents run "untouchable" schools
6. Encourage small free schools to expand
7. New AP wave for pupils at risk of gang exploitation

"untouchable" schools have found that sponsors are willing to take over such schools. It tends to be complicated land or building issues – such as unravelling the complex private finance initiative contracts – that actually hold up takeovers.

But NSN said its proposals, which also include encouraging established and high-performing free schools to expand, would open up a much-needed new source of academy sponsors for the government.

The report stated many free schools are being "compelled to join larger MATs, ceding control of their curriculum, leadership and staff development offers, all the things that make them so successful in the first place".

The government was warned against establishing "monopolies" of mega-MATS in May after Schools Week revealed almost 200 trusts have been given approval to merge.

Michael Pain, chief executive of Forum Strategy, warned the "bar for expansion must be set very high" and without exception, and that any groups taking on sponsorship must be able to demonstrate robust governance, ability to secure improvement and a strong model to allow for growth.

Free schools were the flagship education policy of the coalition government. There are currently 442 free schools, with a further 261 in the pipeline.

But the NSN has accused the DfE of "severely limiting the potential of the programme" by turning its back on the original community-focused and innovation-led model for free schools. They warned the movement has become "a bureaucratic mechanism for delivering school places, which is sometimes failing to do even that."

Just 22 new schools were approved in the 13th wave of the programme, announced last month.

Lord Agnew, academies minister, said free schools have had a "revolutionary effect" on education. "It is because of this progress and the



Mary Bousted

incredible impact free schools have had on countless families' lives that we will not let this programme stall."

# Damning Ofsted for academy where 1 in 3 staff were absent

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



Ofsted has censured an academy trust after inspectors arrived at one of its schools to find more than a third of staff missing.

The watchdog said the TBAP multi-academy trust had an "inaccurate" view of the effectiveness of TBAP Aspire AP Academy in Harlow, Essex, where inspectors found ineffective safeguarding, poor attendance and disruptive behaviour during a visit in May. The school has been put in special measures.

The report also backs up previous warnings from whistleblowers about staff shortages. More than a third of the school's staff, including its headteacher, were absent during the inspection.

In March, TBAP Aspire featured as part of a BBC *Panorama* investigation into alleged mismanagement of academy chains.

During the programme, Deb Garfield, the academy's head, said the trust had not paid

some bills, which had resulted in visits to the school by organisations demanding money.

The programme also revealed problems with staff shortages, safeguarding issues and damaged and inadequate facilities.

Ofsted's report said: "Several staff who spoke with inspectors said that, because of this turbulence and the impact it is having on pupils' behaviour, they do not always feel safe in school."

*Schools Week* revealed in February how TBAP, the school's parent trust, had unknowingly racked up a £2.4 million deficit because of a "systematic" failure in its financial systems.

Ofsted is highly critical of TBAP. It said

the trust's board "does not monitor the school's work closely enough" and therefore has an "inaccurate" view of the school's effectiveness.

"School leaders and the academy trust have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to improve the school.

"Currently, some staff do not have full confidence in the trust to make improvements. Relations between staff and the trust have deteriorated. Not enough has been done to restore relations and resolve this issue."

A spokesperson for TBAP said: "We deeply regret the impact of shortcomings on the school's community and we are determined to make significant improvements.

"A leadership team from the trust is in place to support and expedite positive change at Aspire. Ofsted notes this as a strength, saying 'Recent, interim arrangements made by the trust to bolster the school's leadership are beginning to have a positive impact'. The team is also working hard to address the issue of long-term staff absence."

EXCLUSIVE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

# Parents call for ban on private special schools

Hundreds of parents in Merseyside want private companies banned from running special schools after a healthcare firm announced plans to close a school just weeks before the end of term.

Parents of pupils at Crossley Manor school in Rainhill were told by Elysium Healthcare on June 17 that the independent school would close this month. The short notice leaves many pupils without places for September.

Almost 600 people have signed a petition calling on the Department for Education to ban the involvement of private firms in running schools for pupils with complex needs.

Many councils rely on private special schools, which have dwindled in recent years despite a growing pupil population. DfE figures show there were 58 non-maintained special schools as of January 2019, down from 75 in 2010.

Crossley Manor has 12 pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.

According to government records it has a capacity of 68, but it hasn't come close to reaching that target since it opened in September 2017.

Elysium, which runs three other schools and operates Crossley Manor, a residential care home, on the same site, blames poor recruitment for the closure. Parents say the company failed to adequately advertise the provision.

"Unfortunately, we were unable to attract sufficient pupils," a spokesperson said.

"We are now focused on supporting local authorities, families and students to find the best alternative placement before the new term commences in September."

Donna Lunt, a parent of an 11-year-old child with autism and epilepsy, said the school had left it too late for many families to find

alternative school places.

"There's nothing for any of the kids. We're all just scrabbling around.

"The school I got offered the other day is in Bootle, and that's miles away. I wouldn't like him to be that far away because of his medical needs.

"I'm willing to keep him at home for as long as it takes because I don't want to put him somewhere for it to fail again. This [school was] working for all these kids. It's such a shame."

St Helens Council said it was "working with the school – as well as the families of those affected – to find suitable alternative educational settings to meet the needs of pupils".

Elysium, which specialises in healthcare for people with mental ill health, learning disabilities and neurological conditions, made a pre-tax profit of £9.4 million in 2017.

# News

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

## Attendance of excluded pupils in AP may be measured

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**  
@FCDWHITTAKER

The government is likely to consider holding schools accountable for the "soft progression" of excluded pupils as well as their academic progress, says a senior adviser to ministers.

Edward Timpson, who chaired the government's recent landmark review of exclusions, told MPs this week he would be "surprised" if a consultation on a new accountability system for excluded pupils did not consider how measures such as attendance could be used alongside progress when holding schools to account.

*Schools Week* understands Damian Hinds, the education secretary, is particularly interested in looking at the attendance of vulnerable pupils, given the links between persistent absence and involvement in violent crime.

But attendance data is not currently collected for everyone in AP, a major hurdle

if schools are to be held to account for the attendance of excluded pupils. There are also fears that such a system could incentivise schools to choose AP based on its attendance record, not the outcomes it achieves for pupils.

The government said in response to the Timpson review in May that it would finally hold schools to account for the outcomes of pupils they excluded. The finer details would be fleshed out following a consultation.

Giving evidence to the parliamentary education committee on Tuesday, Timpson said he was interested in how the government would seek to understand "what progression school has managed to engender during a period that they have been outside of mainstream", adding that "attendance would be an obvious one".

However, it is not clear how an accountability system designed to take attendance into

account would work.

One source said there was a danger of schools "dumping kids in loose-discipline chilled-out PRUs" where pupils were more likely to "enjoy it and turn up", rather than focusing on their educational development.

Natalie Perera, the executive director and head of research at the Education Policy Institute, said that while the measure "might mean that schools give greater consideration to excluding children", it could also "create incentives for them to exclude pupils where they know that local provision is working fantastically hard to keep excluded pupils in education".

A "more practical barrier" is that the AP census did not record data for all children in AP, she said "For those in non-school AP for a period (but not long term) we don't know about this in all cases and they don't collect attendance data from non-school APs."



Natalie Perera

ncfe. | cache

Learner of the Year  
**Congratulations Mark!**

Find out more about the winners of the Aspiration Awards 2019



**"The skills and knowledge I have developed during my NCFE qualification have been invaluable in all aspects of my life, especially to the beginning of my new career and continue to serve me well to this day. In the future, I know that I will be able to use these transferable skills in order to further develop myself and help me to progress in my career."**

**Mark,**  
Uniformed Services learner and now Prison Officer.

**ncfe.**

# why choose ncfе?

**1.**

## we support achievement.



Our new combined Level 1/2 Technical Awards benefit from an average of nearly 85% achievement\* across NCFE V Certs.

**2.**

## we support teachers.



Our resources, training and events ensure a smooth delivery of our qualifications.

**3.**

## we support progress 8.



Our V Cert Technical Awards count as part of Progress 8 so you meet the needs of all learners without sacrificing performance points.

**4.**

## we support pshe.

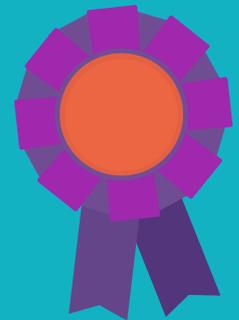


Our PSHE offer includes teacher CPD and qualifications in Relationships, Sex and Health Education.

**5.**

## we support learners.

Our Aspiration Awards are about honouring learners who've used V Certs to help them progress and engage with education.



**visit** [ncfe.org.uk/schools](https://www.ncfe.org.uk/schools)

**call** 0191 240 8833

**email** [qualificationadvisoryteam@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:qualificationadvisoryteam@ncfe.org.uk)

\*Based on external assessment achievement data as of spring 2019 for schools only.

# EDITORIAL

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

## Agnew shows his true colours over cost-cutter scheme

Lord Agnew has been vocal in his criticism of our reporting over his school resource management adviser schemes.

One of his main arguments to claim our reporting was over-hyped was that recommendations made by the advisers, mostly school business leaders, were optional.

Writing for us, he said: "It should be noted that they are only recommendations - as it is absolutely for schools to decide which of the recommendations to implement, based on their specific circumstances.

"This programme is not about telling schools that they are doing things wrong or forcing them to make changes against their will."

Pretty clear cut, right?

That made the news this week that the department is now making adviser visits mandatory for any trusts that are in the unfortunate position of needing urgent funding to repair leaking rooves, or crumbling windows, was slightly surprising.

But the assertion that the department "will expect" schools to implement the recommendations shoots to bits the credibility of Agnew's earlier argument.

It also goes against the spirit of the

programme as it's been sold to the sector - another pair of eyes to look over your finances for trusts that need it.

Attaching visits as a condition to capital funding will pull in trusts that don't need financial help.

The department says this is a good thing. But how does this all fit into the promise of autonomy for academies?

Schools were told they could rid themselves from the shackles of burdensome local authority oversight by joining the academy gang.

But now they're in, is the government pushing down harder on them than councils ever did?

There's also concerns this is all about Agnew using the scheme to force schools into following the staffing and curriculum models that he believes are the most efficient.

The department claims the SRMA scheme works, but it has consistently refused to publish any of their reports, and we're still waiting on any analysis.

While there's a blackout on evidence, it becomes ever more important that ministers keep their word. And whether he likes it or not, we'll continue to scrutinise his actions.

SCHOOLS WEEK



Get in touch.

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



10<sup>TH</sup>  
anniversary

# FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION

Wellington college

10TH FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION  
WELLINGTON COLLEGE

20 - 21 June 2019 | [educationfest.co.uk](http://educationfest.co.uk)

#educationfest

# THANK YOU

We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who was part of the  
**BIGGEST** ever Festival of Education.

Across two days over 450 speakers presented to over 4,200 festival  
attendees. The countdown to the 11th Festival of Education has begun.

## SAVE THE DATE!

18-19 JUNE, 2020

TICKETS NOW ON SALE! [educationfest.co.uk](http://educationfest.co.uk)

11<sup>TH</sup>

EST. 2010



BROUGHT TO  
YOU BY

**LSECT**  
LEARNING & SKILLS  
EVENTS, CONSULTANCY & TRAINING



WELLINGTON  
COLLEGE

HEADLINE  
PARTNER



Pearson

FESTIVAL  
PARTNERS



COGNITA  
An inspiring world of education

SCHOOLS  
WEEK

SUPPORTING  
PARTNERS



# Feature

KATHRYN SNOWDON | @KATHRYN\_SNOWDON



“Young people will be called students, not prisoners, or inmates”

## Secure schools: no quick fixes and no magic cures

Oasis Restore is set to open in late 2020, and will be England’s first secure school. Rev Steve Chalke talks Kathryn Snowdon through the challenges ahead

Rev Steve Chalke, founder and leader of the Oasis Charitable Trust, which has just been awarded the contract to run England’s first secure school, knows the magnitude of the job that lies ahead.

Rehabilitation, not punishment, is going to be at the forefront of Oasis Restore, a school for young offenders to be built on the site of the Medway Secure Training Centre in Kent.

“The challenge is huge and I realise that we have been given a massive responsibility. I realise that the reputation of the Ministry of Justice and the reputation of the whole of Oasis depends on this,” Chalke says candidly.

“We understand that some people will feel that we are unworthy to do this, but the bar is pretty low at the moment. It is pretty low and we are failing young people across this country.”

When I meet Chalke at Oasis’ office near Waterloo Station, it has been less than a week since he discovered that the trust had

“The bar is set pretty low – we are failing young people across this country”

secured the contract. Oasis hasn’t even had its first meeting with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) yet.

The secure school, due to open in late 2020, will have 64 children between the ages of 12 and 17. Chalke says that the £5m the MoJ has committed to the project will go towards building work.

Young people, says Chalke, are currently locked in their cells from 7.30pm, but he is hoping to create a community in the four new housing units, with students spending less time in solitude.

Language clearly matters to him. Young people at the centre will be called students, not prisoners, or inmates. They will live



in houses, not wings. Their time at the school will not be considered a sentence, and leaving the school is not a release, but re-establishing yourself in the community, Chalke says.

However long young people are at the school, Oasis wants pupils to feel cared for and listened to and intends to “set up a pathway with them that walks with them beyond the gate again”.

The young people attending the school could be at the site for anything from a few days to several years. This presents unique challenges to how the curriculum will be tailored to meet the needs of pupils, some of whom will be reoffenders and others who will be entering the system for the first time.

“The only day that matters when you arrive is the day you leave. And everything has to be in preparation for that date so

## Feature: Rev Steve Chalke

that you can leave with a sense of health, well-being and significance and so that you can resettlement in the community and be stable there."

Pupils will travel to the school from all parts of the country. The government plans to open a second secure school in the north of England, but no date or specific location has yet been released, and Chalke is cautious about revealing whether Oasis is ready to take on another secure school so soon after winning this contract.

The Oasis charity founded and is now the sponsor of the Oasis Community Learning academy trust.

The government says that three-quarters of Oasis' academies operate in the UK's most deprived areas, with most rated by Ofsted as failing at the time they were taken over. Chalke tells me that just this week, the trust celebrated its 40th school to have come out of special measures - a record he's proud of.

But of the 52 Oasis academies across England, 19 per cent are still classified as failing. Eight have been told by the schools inspectorate that they require improvement and two are deemed "inadequate".

Although Chalke admits that the trust has two or three "persistently troubled schools", he insists he works closely with the DfE and Ofsted to address these concerns. "Before they (the schools) came to us, they were in trouble for 50 years," he says.

"Turning round a school is sometimes a quick fix, it really, truly is. And sometimes it's a really long, hard, hard job. It depends

### "Currently, young people are locked in their cells from 7.30pm"

what's wrong with the engine. So if we have an uninformed public that simply wants a magic cure for everything, well Oasis are the wrong people to ask. You can also get quick cures by just pumping kids through exams... but you're not actually changing the environment and the ethos and the atmosphere of the school. It takes a long time."

And time is what Chalke has invested. The 63-year-old, who founded the Oasis charity in 1985, speaks passionately about the trust's community, housing and educational projects.

Among its schools, the trust runs foodbanks, community farms, choirs, football teams and even a debt advice centre and a library. And it is this community ethos that Chalke hopes to bring to the secure school.

Last year Medway Training Centre was graded "requires improvement" by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.

G4S held the contract to run Medway

between 1998 and 2016 until a BBC Panorama investigation exposed mistreatment at the centre. A serious case review said that staff with no experience of working with children were recruited, and restraint techniques were heavily criticised.

Talking about Oasis' ethos, Chalke says: "[If we fail] it's not going to be good for us, but it's going to set back the cause of the therapeutic approach - a trauma-informed approach to working with young people by a decade or two.

"All the hawks are going to say, 'told you so, punish them, lock that door'. So we know that we owe it to each young person and we owe it to the Ministry of Justice who trusted us, and everybody else to make this work."

Services offered to young people will include mentoring and providing pupils with an Oasis "passport" which will detail their journey at the school and help prepare them for when they leave. Chalke also intends to set up a national network of mentors who will provide ongoing support.

Plans for secure schools have been in the pipeline following scathing criticism of existing young offender services in a 2016 review by behaviour expert Charlie Taylor.

In his report, Taylor warned that children in existing public sector youth offender institutions received an average of only 15 hours of education a week, with an ambition of 30 hours prevented by "staff shortages and rising levels of violence". Children in custody are often unable to finish courses or sit the exams they have been working towards for years, he warned.

Edward Argar, justice minister, said that secure schools are "critical to our vision for youth custody - placing education, healthcare and purposeful activity at the heart of rehabilitation".

When asked what a successful secure school looks like to him, Chalke says: "The same thing as a successful school. Young people who become fulfilled through an inner journey to a sense of self-worth, self-love and self-respect who, five or ten years after leaving, are still thriving.

"One of the things we want to set up is an alumni. We want young people to be proud that they were part of this and for them to come back and mentor."



Medway Training Centre

# Opinion

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



## MICHAEL PAIN

Chief executive, Forum Strategy

### Should CEOs of academy trusts have a teaching background?

**A successful head doesn't always make the transition to a CEO role. We need to cast our net wider to recruit chiefs with passion, experience but also humility, says Michael Pain**

The emergence of the academy trust chief executive officer (CEO) role in recent years has only served to magnify the fact that the success of any organisation fundamentally depends on the quality of its leadership. As more trusts emerge and more of the first generation of trust CEOs contemplate their next steps, the pool from which prospective successors are drawn seems to be slowly widening. As someone who coaches and trains chief executives, I'm often asked: "Should CEOs of academy trusts have a teaching background?"

There is no doubt that some of our very best headteachers have gone on to succeed as CEOs. They have made a seamless transition into the role and their trusts have secured improvements across numerous schools – including ones that previously failed generations of young people.

On the other hand, a successful career as a head isn't necessarily a predictor of success as CEO. Some other exceptional head teachers have foundered when they stepped up to lead larger and more complex

organisations, seeing their trusts and careers freefall as a result.

What this tells me, is that succeeding at the CEO role has more to do with leadership qualities than with professional background.

The transitional support apparent in the NHS, where initiatives are under way to support clinicians to take on CEO roles usually

improvement leaders will want to step up to become CEOs, we simply can't restrict our talent pool to those with a teaching background.

We are starting to see more people without teaching experience taking on the CEO role, such as those with civil service experience, or from the not-for-profit sector. Our own CEO programme has seen an increase in applications from people who have worked in senior roles in academy trusts, such as operations and human resources directors. More widely, we know from our work with successful chief executives in the health and charities sectors that recruiting leaders from other sectors can work very well.

In my book, *Being The CEO*, I talk about the central importance of humble leadership: the need for leaders to "know what they don't

of school improvements in order to succeed at scale. They also know that securing high-quality education depends on a host of other elements, such as strategies for attracting and retaining talented employees, securing robust governance and financial sustainability, and building cross-sector partnerships that add value to children's and young people's learning.

Those that have struggled often neglected these key parts of the job because they failed to "let go" and sufficiently distribute day-to-day educational leadership to others.

Meanwhile, anecdotally, I am told it is becoming more challenging to recruit to school improvement leadership roles; there is not a new generation of National Leaders of Education or their equivalent waiting in the wings. Whether future academy trust CEOs come from within education or beyond it, there needs to be much more investment and thought in developing the next tier of trust leadership.

For CEOs without a teaching background, it is important that they are held to account by a board of trustees that includes substantial educational experience. It's also key that they engage in regular external peer review, and ensure their organisation has a strong emphasis on accountability to its communities, as well as to government. With those things in place, the CEO who brings the passion for improving pupils' lives and the humility and experience to build the right team of experts can no longer be overlooked based simply on their background.

**“ Recruiting leaders from other sectors can work very well**

occupied by non-medical staff, has certainly been missing within education in the past decade. Our CEO programme and guidance has sought to plug this glaring gap. But with more experienced professionals heading towards retirement, and no guarantees that our best school

know", to listen carefully to their end-users, and to understand the need to build and lead a team of experts given the scale of the job at hand.

Successful CEOs, be they former heads or otherwise, accept the need to delegate day-to-day leadership



# Opinion

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

**Special educational need CPD must be prioritised, says Karen Wespieser.**

The OECD's latest data on teacher working conditions and learning environments includes a figure that sticks out like a sore thumb: just 6 per cent of teachers in England report "a high level of need for professional development in teaching students with special needs". This is the lowest proportion of teachers of any participating OECD country.

Does it mean our teachers are great at special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision?

Probably not. The OECD figure contradicts all the other data that has been collected on this topic. Research from the Department for Education (DfE) consistently shows that "teaching pupils with SEND" and "assessing pupils with SEND" are among the areas that newly qualified teachers each year feel least confident about. A DfE snap poll of teachers last year revealed that 25 per cent say there is no appropriate training in place for teachers in supporting this pupil cohort.

To see if some sort of SEND revolution has taken place that only the OECD has identified, TeacherTapp this week asked its nationally representative sample of teachers to rate their confidence in teaching learners with an identified special educational need.

These results are less surprising. Sixty-five per cent reported feeling confident and in the past year 62 per cent have participated in continuing professional development (CPD) that included improving support of learners with an identified SEND.

As ever with statistics, the devil is



KAREN WESPIESER

Director of operations,  
Driver Youth Trust

## Professional development on SEND is bottom of the pile

in the detail. While teachers overall seem confident, some more so than others, with teachers in primary schools far more confident than teachers in secondaries. This may be because in recent years the latter have had a relatively stable

Unsurprisingly, new teachers (less than five years' experience) are least confident, although they are most likely to have had CPD. The question therefore becomes, is the CPD provision good enough?

One hypothesis about the OECD

**“ We can't keep expecting more while putting in less**

proportion of pupils with SEND (between 12.3 and 12.4 per cent) in contrast to primary schools, which have experienced year on year increases since 2016. Unfortunately, secondary teachers are also less likely to have participated in any SEND-related professional development.

data is that teachers in England did not respond that they wanted more CPD because the quality is too often too low. Research by University College London suggests that 79 per cent of special educational need CPD is delivered within school by the special educational needs coordinator



(SENCO), but too many indicators point to this being inadequate and to SENCOs not having the time or the training to take this on.

An evaluation in 2017 by the University of Plymouth into the impact and effectiveness of the SENCO qualification reveals that four in ten teachers believe their SENCO does not model effective practice of teaching pupils with special educational needs to colleagues. Meanwhile, a survey of the workload of SENCOs, commissioned by the National Education Union and the National Association for Special Educational Needs (Nasen), found that 74 per cent of SENCOs say they do not have enough time to ensure that pupils on SEN support are able to access the provision that they need. If the SENCO workforce does not have enough time to support their pupils, it seems likely that it will be a challenge to find additional time to support their colleagues.

In a system where CPD is often an afterthought, SEND professional development is bottom of the pile. The new initial teacher training review group says SEND is not part of its terms of reference. The Early Career Framework currently puts the responsibility for SEND back on the SENCO, but we know that they don't have the time.

Something will have to give because we can't keep expecting more while putting in less. Special educational need CPD must be prioritised. We need a systematic approach to SEND from initial teacher training through to professional development. Only then will we begin to see great SEND provision across the country.

# Opinion

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



PHIL REYNOLDS

Senior manager,  
Kreston Reeves accountants

## New handbook promotes the art of good governance

**More than ever, trusts need to ensure that their governance arrangements are as robust as possible, says Phil Reynolds, as he talks us through the 2019 academies handbook**

Many people have been demanding the government take action on those who may have flouted the rules – and the latest academies financial handbook is a clear sign that steps are being taken to address this.

The 2019 handbook, which will come into force on September 1, has some significant changes as the Education and Skills Funding Agency and academies minister, Lord Agnew in particular, clamp down on poor governance arrangements.

**Focus switches to internal scrutiny**  
The biggest change comes in the form of internal scrutiny, which most academy trusts commonly refer to as the “internal audit process”. This process is key and can assist trustees in ensuring their trust complies with financial and other controls.

The main driver behind it is the trust’s risk register, and trustees will want to check that the controls they have in place are effective and efficient. Ensuring that you maintain and review your risk register is key,

and trusts should look to have this as a standing agenda item to – at the very least – discuss.

The handbook is clear that the internal audit process must have clear appropriate reporting lines. All too often the process is steered by the finance team of the trust – not the finance and audit committee. The

**“ A clerk should be neither a trustee nor the accounting officer**

committee should select the scope of work with the provider, and then allow the finance team to arrange the visits. The findings of the visits should then be reported directly to the committee.

Membership of that committee is also key. No employees should sit as members, and the chair of trustees should not act as chair of the committee. Where trusts have a committee performing a dual function, such as finance and audit, then the employees should not be present when audit matters are discussed.

The present moment is a good time for trusts to review their current committee memberships and remit and to check they are compliant for



2019-20. The accuracy of pupil number returns and funding claims should be checked too, the latter of which has been the subject of recent media reports. Trusts need to have a process in place to mitigate

these risks, as well as other risk areas such as health and safety, and consider what reporting is needed for these.

A short annual summary for each academic year (the first being 2019-20) must also now be submitted to a trust’s committee and the ESFA, by December 31. The summary must outline the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations and conclusions to help the committee assess year-on-year progress.

This, of course, means more work for the trusts, trustees and internal auditors. But if you plan the process properly, it shouldn’t be too much of a chore. The key is to hold a scoping meeting to plan ahead of each academic year.

**More transparency for trusts**

Trusts subject to a financial notice to improve must publish the notice on their website within 14 days, and retain this until the notice is lifted. This may seem bureaucratic (since notices are also put up on the ESFA website) but it promotes the transparency the sector is driving towards.

The 2019 handbook also clarifies the powers the secretary of state has, which will act as a reminder of the implications of this, should intervention be needed.

**More emphasis on the role of the clerk**

Finally, a key point is that trusts should have a clerk in place who is neither a trustee nor the accounting officer. The role of the clerk is vital in ensuring the board acts appropriately and they can, at times, challenge the board, or encourage them to refer to legislation before making a decision.

The recently released clerking competency framework highlights what trusts should expect from their clerk.

# Reviews

## BOOK REVIEW



### Imperfect Leadership

**Author:** Steve Munby

**Publisher:** Crown House Publishing

**Reviewed by:** Duncan Spalding, executive headteacher, Aylsham Learning Federation, Norfolk

The prevailing narrative about school leadership in England has often been centred on talk of transformational leaders, superheads, and in extreme cases, of leadership cloning. Steve Munby's book begins from the perspective that no leader is perfect, and nor should they strive to be. At *Imperfect Leadership's* heart is the strong conviction that leadership should be exercised with authenticity, integrity and moral purpose. This is an incredibly important and timely book and one that should be read by anyone involved in leading education.

This reflective leadership memoir charts Munby's leadership journey from a somewhat inauspicious start as a classroom teacher in Birmingham in 1980, to educational advisor, director of education and lifelong learning in Knowsley, chief executive of the National College of School Leadership (NCSL), then of an international education trust, right up to the present day as a self-employed consultant, speaker and visiting professor.

The book begins with Munby's appointment as chief executive at NCSL and explores in detail the educational and political landscape since 2005. Munby chose this time period because he gave a keynote speech on educational leadership every year from 2005 to 2017 and these form the centrepiece of each chapter.

Munby's fascinating reflections are drawn from working at the heart of the national education landscape, shaping school leadership development programmes for England, whilst

enjoying the independence that running an arms-length body such as the NCSL afforded

*Imperfect Leadership* is multi-layered. Each chapter reflects on Munby's professional journey and explores crucial themes in educational leadership and offers a revealing insight into how his leadership thinking has changed or remained consistent over time. It is interesting, for example, to see how his views on the need for Ofsted to hold schools to account remain constant while his perspective on the shape and high-stakes nature of that accountability has shifted significantly.

Each chapter is a new year, with the transcript of a carefully crafted keynote speech made at the time as the theme. The speech is foregrounded by the thematic concerns of each chapter and often illuminated further by entries from Munby's personal diaries. It is clear that his speeches are important sources of reflection to him, and a reminder to all educational leaders of what our core mission should be.

Written with warmth, wit, humility and optimism, the speeches are always a mix of interesting stories, deep reflections on leadership, and exhortations to do the right thing by our students and colleagues. For those who lived through these years as a school leader I think they will be particularly resonant; for those new to leadership they should provide a valuable source of

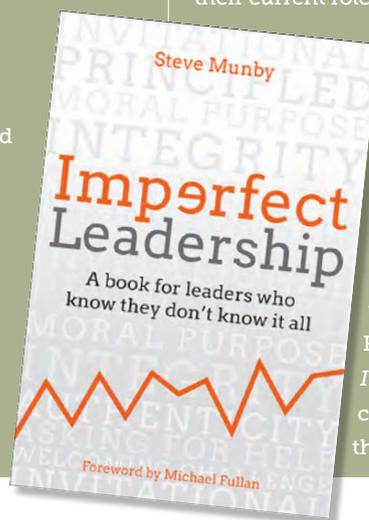
reflection on the kind of leader one aspires to be. The speeches are of their time but still profoundly relevant.

Munby constantly explores his thinking and tries to refine his understanding of different facets of leadership – sometimes resulting in a dizzying profusion of different words acting as a prefix to the word leadership. His chapter on ethical leadership resonates particularly; it asks searching questions about the sustainability of the current accountability culture and the pressure it places on leaders in terms of recruitment, retention and ethical behaviour.

Munby is at his best when he explores the relationship between power and love in leadership in all its imperfect complexity, drawing upon the words of Martin Luther King. Keeping power and love in balance helps us to lead wisely with clarity, compassion, challenge and care, and Munby makes a compelling case for strong mentors to help us to find the wisdom to strike the right balance.

The book finishes with four questions for leaders to ask themselves when they leave their current role. In relation to Munby's

own leadership I would venture that the answer to all four would be a resounding "yes", despite all of the imperfections he reveals. I would hope for a similar affirmative clean sweep when my time comes to move on. Reading and reflecting on *Imperfect Leadership* is certainly a helpful step in the right direction.



# Research

Every month Stuart Kime trawls through his greatest research hits to offer practical implementation tips for using evidence in practice

## What happened when teachers stopped marking?

**Stuart Kime, director,  
Evidence Based Education**

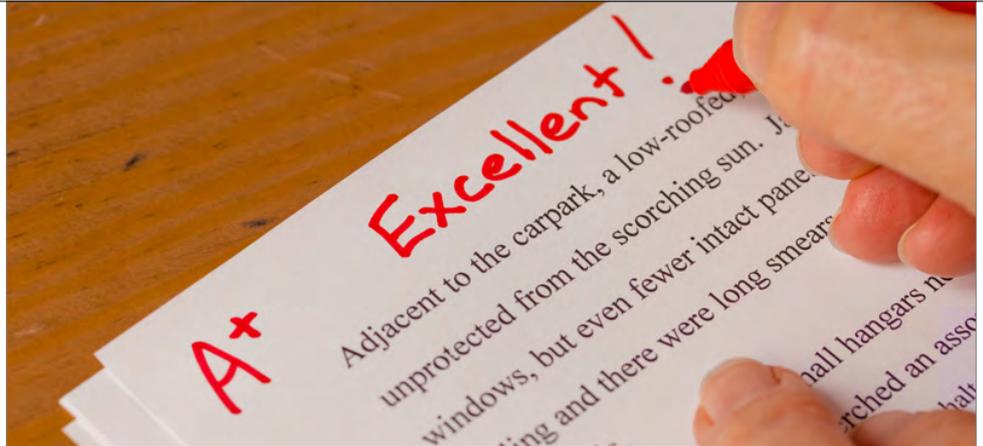
As part of the Department for Education (DfE) Workload Challenge, I was commissioned by Tarporley High School and Sixth Form college in Cheshire to study the effects of teachers not marking school work.

Two reports published in 2016 (the DfE's *Reducing Teacher Workload: Marking Policy Review Group Report* and the Education Endowment Fund's *Evidence on Marking: A Marked Improvement?*) helped to create an environment that allowed schools to question more freely the purposes and uses of written marking. This was supported by myth-busting statements by Ofsted that year that "inspectors should not report on marking practice, or make judgments on it, other than whether it follows the school's assessment policy." So Tarporley's Ffion Eaton and Jason Lowe decided to do something bold and find out what would happen if teachers set aside the red pens.

### What did we do?

Between March 7, 2017 and May 26, 2017 we conducted a small randomised controlled trial, the "Re-Balancing Feedback" trial, which involved 30 teachers' Year 10 and Year 12 classes studying English and English Literature at GCSE and A-level in three secondary schools in Cheshire: Queen's Park High School; Tarporley High School and Helsby High School.

The trial was designed to ascertain the impact of an intervention designed to reduce marking on teacher workload and student attainment. Teachers in the intervention group read everything students wrote but stopped marking books and then used a series of planned class-based feedback strategies called "Front-End Feedback", "Register Feedback" and "Strategic Sampling". The control group teachers continued to do marking as usual.



### What did we learn?

Listening to teachers who stopped marking was a fascinating experience for me. Comments like, "I sit down and do a couple more hours planning or do a couple more hours research [which] makes it more pleasurable" were predictable; less so were the ones that pointed towards a sense of guilt, which was quite a common refrain. One teacher said that "there is that sense of anxiety I am short-changing them." Interestingly, some reported that they were using the reclaimed hours to do more marking of their Year 11 and Year 13 students' books.

The feelings of students whose work was no longer being marked were very clear. One told me that she preferred her work "to be marked, acknowledged and know that I am on the right track doing it;" others highlighted their belief that marking was very much a core part of a teacher's job. Students also voiced annoyance at having to think more about their work under the new feedback system; we found the use of visualisers in class to give live feedback on students' work seemed to motivate greater attention to detail.

The impact on student attainment outcomes was unsurprising. While there are limitations to the findings of such a small trial, the results indicated that there was no detectable impact of the new "rebalancing feedback" approach

on blind-marked, moderated past-paper exam questions: outcomes on average for the intervention and control group students were broadly similar. Teacher workload, however, was a different story, with most teachers reporting reductions in overall workload.

### What happened after the trial?

The students in the trial have successfully taken their GCSEs and A-levels respectively, and Tarporley High School has rolled out a new whole-school Feedback Policy, which is:

- . No expectation for written comments or codes
- . No expectation to do acknowledgement marking i.e. "ticking pages"
- . No expectation to evidence verbal feedback through stamps/codes
- . The expectation that most lessons will include some form of feedback

I'm sure that, as with anything apparently "simple", the implementation of the policy has been challenging. But the thing I like most about the policy statements is the use of the word "expectation". "No expectation of written comments" gives, I hope, an individual teacher the responsibility to make a justified decision that is both efficient and effective for them and their students.

*Reference: Kime, S. (2018). Reducing Teacher Workload: The "Re-balancing Feedback" Trial. DfE. London.*



# Reviews



Hannah Wilson is headteacher and founding member of WomenEd

@THEHOPEFULHT

## Behind the Headlines –

### Teacher Well Being

**Bec Tulloch @Bectully**

Bec Tulloch shares a raw and personal account of taking a chunk of time off from work due to illness. Tulloch explores the dilemma she faces between being at school and being at home because she is unwell. She navigates the guilt as a mother and as a professional of trying to juggle too many balls and forgetting about herself and her own wellbeing in the process. Hard reading in places, it will no doubt resonate with many. Taking time off to recuperate has aided her clarity about herself, her motivations and her intentions and she now checks herself for becoming a slave to the profession and a martyr to the cause.

### 100% Attendance Awards

**Helen Weston @2tubies**

Helen Weston shares her unease at the rise of arbitrary attendance awards. She expresses dismay at the unjust penalisation of her child in attending medical and health appointments during the school day. Focusing on the values of kindness, empathy and compassion, she invites school and senior leaders to reconsider

## TOP BLOGS of the week

their policies and rewards systems. She goes on to suggest that attendance policies are discriminatory. She also describes how health professionals contacted her to report a “worrying increase in children being upset and anxious about attending their regular outpatient clinics” because this means them missing out on their school attendance reward. She unpicks Ofsted’s focus on attendance statistics and challenges school leaders to reconsider their stance.

### A Woman’s Choice

**The Safe Space @TheSafeSpaceUK\_**

The Safe Space blog, launched by Emma Catt and Amy Forrester, is a stand against unsolicited communications online. It seeks to create a safe and supportive environment for women to come forward for peer “support, advice and listening”. This blog is a follow-up to one Catt wrote earlier this year in which she described the impact on her emotional well-being of online abuse by a former twitter friend. ‘A Woman’s Choice’ challenges victim-blaming and reminds us that not everyone is blessed with support networks to tackle

such behaviours. That is why The Safe Space has been created, by women, for women.

### White Saviour Complex

**Pran Patel @MrPranPatel**

Pran Patel’s blogs, always thought-provoking, often push readers out of their comfort zones, and this blog does not disappoint. In the first of a three-part blog series about the white saviour trope, Patel deconstructs the representation of poverty and disadvantage in the media, especially the imagery circulated to depict those living in hardship. He challenges us to consider the power struggle between the western world and the East, between black and white people, and between rich and poor: “This disconnect, where black people can’t possibly support white people, can only be explained through the power structures that we have all come to accept and adopt as the norm,” says Patel. He acknowledges that some of his points will make some readers uncomfortable.

### Tackling Hate – A Letter I Never Thought I’d Write

**Andy Byers @Framheadteachers**

Andy Byer’s latest blog is a call to arms, to tackle unsavoury comments and anti-social behaviour in our community. He has published an emotionally intelligent letter that he sent to parents last week following a number of incidents “where a student has not felt happy or respected.” He urged parents to discuss the letter’s contents with their child and to take collective responsibility for making their school a kinder, safer place. He goes on to challenge the toxic behaviours of the global political players, such as US president Donald Trump: “It is an inescapable fact,” writes Byers, “that students are exposed to some abhorrent and unpleasant views ... [they] espouse many of the things that we are teaching students to be wrong”.

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +



### Hundreds of prospective teachers failed QTS skills test after marking "error"

**Caroline Barton**

My son has just received an email advising him of the "error", three years after he apparently failed the literacy test. Three years? Really? And has been offered a paltry £100 by way of compensation. For totally derailing his life. Astoundingly incompetent.

### Knife crime: why a slogan on a T-shirt is not enough

**Roger Titcombe**

At last some sense and genuine hope on this distressing subject. The key here is "student council" and the acceptance by this school that although schools are not the cause of out-of-control knife crime, they can and must be part of the solution. This school is pointing the way.

### Ofsted's worrying reliability findings won't comfort heads

**Terry Pearson**

When Ofsted set out to test the reliability of inspectors' overall judgments during short inspections in March 2017, they set a target of 80% agreement between inspectors. Only HMI took part in the test and an agreement of 92% was achieved. Consequently, Ofsted proclaimed profusely that this showed inspectors' judgments were reliable.

Here we are again more than two years later with Ofsted continuing to use a flawed testing methodology only this time getting results that are much worse. Ofsted really must stop making claims about inspectors' judgments being reliable until it has developed a suitable methodology for testing the reliability of them.

### Private schools need phasing out – and here's how it can be done

**Chris Lipscomb**

Education for all should be appropriately funded but by us not taking up a place in the state sector for our daughter, we are

### REPLY OF THE WEEK

**Rachel Knott**

## Hundreds of prospective teachers failed QTS skills test after marking "error"

This whole thing is an absolute disgrace. I was told I had failed the test when in fact I had passed it. Four-and-a-half years later I get an email telling me that actually I had passed it and they think £100 is going to cover what I had to go through. Well it doesn't cover the cost of anything. I had university places that I had to give up because of this, and then had to travel to even more universities to find a new degree as I couldn't wait two years to take them again.



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

effectively paying twice. The politics of envy and a misguided view of equality that does not exist anyway misses a key point.

Those who pay for their children's education care deeply about their children's education and behaviour and invest a lot of their own time as well as money to make sure that they become useful members of society.

**Peter John**

This article and the meeting are very prescient. I went to a state school but have spent much of my working life surrounded by the privately educated. Most are very confident in their abilities, even if at times it is misplaced. It is a sad truth that wealth and/or privilege has led them to lead lives very different from most of society; insulated and free to climb the ladder, coast, or take risks, all safe in the knowledge that negative consequences will not touch them. Every attempt to open up opportunity to the majority is attacked as a challenge to their own primacy. Private schools sadly reinforce old, discredited notions of class.

**Janet Rose**

Mr Verkaik shows utter contempt for military families and military personnel when he blithely states that fee subsidies for military families should be scrapped. It is clear that he is totally without understanding of military life or military families. The subsidy is there to give military children stability and a decent education by boarding at a good school. That way, when the family moves around, the children stay safe, secure and happy at the same school, following the same curriculum and with the same friends. Yes, the children go to independent schools, but the fees are subsidised – not free.

# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

## MONDAY

Week in Westminster informers who have run into the DfE's ministerial team during recent summer receptions have remarked that they seem more than a little demob happy.

And why shouldn't they be. Most will be moved or sacked in a couple of weeks when the Boris Johnson train of chaos rolls into town. All the problems in education will cease to be theirs.

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, is seemingly so cheered by the idea of a reshuffle that he's planning a trip down memory lane.

Pressed by fellow MP Kevan Jones during a debate on Monday about school funding in Durham, Gibb warmly accepted an invitation to the city he once called home.

"I am very happy to come to Durham. I went to university there and would be happy to make a nostalgic trip back," he said, wistfully.

Safe journey, Nick!

## TUESDAY

Despite having one foot out the door, Damian Hinds is keeping busy as he approaches what will probably be his last weeks as education secretary.

This week he announced his big solution to childhood illiteracy and communication problems (drum roll please) . . . he plans to give families "ideas" to support children's learning at home.

We look forward to hearing who will

serve on the expert group (has anyone seen Ian Bauckham recently?).

Meanwhile, New Schools Network director Luke Tryl was singing the praises of the free schools programme

as he welcomed guests to the charity's swanky summer soiree in the grounds of Westminster Abbey.

During a short speech marred by technical issues, Tryl boasted that free schools were "the highest-performing group of schools at key stage 1, GCSE and A-level. They are 50 per cent more likely to be rated outstanding by Ofsted and they are transforming young people's life chances."

That's all technically true if, like the NSN, you exclude the results of those pesky UTCs and studio schools from the data.

Tryl also couldn't resist a pop at Tristram Hunt, the former shadow education secretary, who once faced his old boss Nicky Morgan across the despatch box, but now runs a museum.

"Back in 2010, there were those who dismissed the free schools programme as unworkable. Free schools were 'freaky schools', one politician said. Another dismissed them as a vanity project for yummy mummies, although I suspect he gets rather more of them through the door at the V&A now."

## THURSDAY

Checking that the words you shunt together into a Twitter hashtag don't spell



out something rude is pretty high up there in the social media playbook.

Ever since Susan Boyle's marketing team got in a spot of bother over its promotion of her #susanalumparty, it's been considered best practice to be hyper-vigilant when it comes to hashtags.

Not so at the first ethical leadership in education forum run by the National Governance Association and University of Birmingham, where organisers chose #EthicsExchange (without the caps, see pic) to promote the day's proceedings.

Meanwhile, Nick Gibb insisted education must continue its "internationalist approach" after Brexit when he addressed his counterparts at the G7 education ministers' meeting this week, just one day after a damning report showed the policy is having a disastrous effect on language teaching.

The British Council's language trends 2019 report found that nearly half of state schools feel the implications of Brexit are a major challenge to providing high-quality language teaching.

Over to you, Gibbo...



# INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) – PART TIME

SALARY: £40,000



Southern Academy Trust are seeking to appoint an interim CEO with a proven track record in school improvement and inspirational leadership. The ideal candidate will have the ability to operate strategically, delivering on the Trust's vision and its Christian ethos. Ensuring the highest standards of teaching and learning for all students will be core to this post. The successful candidate must be able to develop strong strategies and be able to lead highly capable teams to realise the Trust's core objectives. The interim CEO will serve as the Trust's Accounting Officer.

Southern Academy Trust currently comprises 3 primary schools, a secondary school and has the benefit of an international boarding house. The Trust is an innovative and forward-thinking organisation, which offers employees a nurturing environment and excellent CPD.

The successful candidate must embody the Southern Academy Trust spirit, bringing everyone together, working collaboratively and nurturing a high-performance culture with all key strategic stakeholders. A commitment to building partnerships, both internally and externally, combined with the vision and tenacity to make our plans a reality are the essence of what we

are looking for. If you would like to become part of our Trust and have the leadership skills to strengthen what we do, please do apply.

For further information, a confidential conversation with the Chair of Trustees or to arrange a visit please contact **Kirsty Williams** on **01747 857694**. Please apply via link:

<https://jobs.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/teaching-shaftesbury-school-and-sports-college-interim-chief-executive-officer-southern-academy-trust/29865.job>

*This trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to have an enhanced DBS check in line with the government's safer recruitment guidelines.*

*We are committed to closing our gender pay gap. We therefore welcome applications for job shares for all positions we advertise.*

# HEADTEACHER

SALARY: £58,000-£65,000 | START DATE: JANUARY 2020 [OR EARLIER]

Gretton School is an independent specialist school for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions. We welcome students from 5—19 years old, as weekly boarders or day students.

The school is growing and developing, it's integrated therapeutic team are working tirelessly alongside the management team and the teaching and support staff to further develop our fantastic practise and outcomes.

We require an exceptional educational practitioner with the ability and ambition to lead and continue to develop the team and the service we provide. The role will require you to work closely with the Principal and Governing board, who are proactive and very supportive. We would require that the headteacher support, guide and take responsibility for the continued development of the teaching staff.

You would be required to work with the SLT to ensure all educational standards are met and that there is a strong focus on delivering a high quality of education and a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. You will also hold the highest possible standards of safeguarding practice, and understand how we develop the whole child in harmony with their autism. You will be supported in your role by the Assistant Head Secondary and Assistant Head Primary. This position is a permanent role to start in January 2020, or sooner if available.

This is a really exciting time for Gretton School, its staff and students, do you have what it takes to share the journey, and effectively lead the school to its rightful bright future?

**For more information and to apply, please email [jobs@grettonschool.com](mailto:jobs@grettonschool.com)**

**Closing date: 11th July 2019**

**Candidates are expected to visit the school between 8th-12th July 2019.**

**Interviews: Week commencing 15th July 2019**



**GRETTON**  
SCHOOL

# GET RECRUITMENT READY FOR SEPTEMBER



ORGANISE YOUR SCHOOL'S RECRUITMENT ADVERTISING FOR 2019/20 WITH ANNUAL PACKAGES AVAILABLE AT SCHOOLS WEEK AND EDUCATION WEEK JOBS.

## UNLIMITED LISTINGS ANNUAL PACKAGES

**UNLIMITED BASIC LISTINGS**  
~~£3000 + vat~~ - £2100 + vat

Unlimited text, up to 10 attachments and  
Company Logo

**UNLIMITED FEATURED LISTINGS**  
~~£5000 + vat~~ - £3500 + vat

All the features of a basic listing, premium online  
positioning, inclusion on our weekly jobs email sent  
to over 30,000 school professionals and Tweets to  
over 61,000 followers

## UPGRADE OPTIONS

### BRONZE

Unlimited Featured Listings  
1 x Job of the Week slot/month

**£5000 + VAT**  
RATE CARD: £7660 + VAT



### SILVER

Unlimited Featured Listings  
1 x Half Page advert/month

**£8000 + VAT**  
RATE CARD: £10,640 + VAT



### GOLD

Unlimited Featured Listings  
1 x Full Page advert/month  
1 x Job of the Week/month

**£10,000 + VAT**  
RATE CARD £16,700 + VAT



Rates are per school/organisation. Group/MAT  
rates available on request.



**Offer rates available until  
Friday 28th July 2019**



For more information and to book your package, please contact  
Clare at [clare.halliday@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:clare.halliday@schoolsweek.co.uk) or on 020 3432 1397