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NEW 'BAD BANK' ACADEMY TRUST SWOOPS IN



Students 'unlawfully' kicked out for missing 'minimum' grades

- Sixth formers in limbo after year 13 entry barred just days before new term
- Lawyers say school is acting unlawfully in case that echoes St Olave's scandal
- But sixth form insists its practice is above board as 'A-levels not for everyone'

INVESTIGATES

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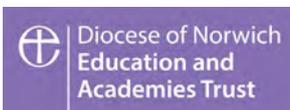
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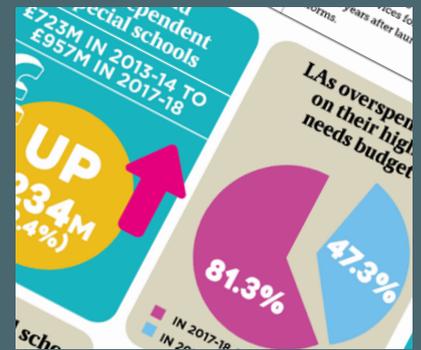
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Editor's top picks



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News

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New free schools wave leaves AP out in the cold

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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EXCLUSIVE

The government's latest free school wave does not allow applications for new alternative provision, despite a major pledge from ministers to encourage and prioritise them.

Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, told The Times earlier this month that opening new schools for excluded pupils would be prioritised.

And when the Department for Education this week launched the new wave it said it "particularly encourages" applications for new AP schools.

But the government has now admitted that only bids for mainstream free schools will be considered.

Cath Murray, who leads on alternative provision policy at the Centre for Social Justice think tank, said: "Establishing new AP free schools is just a tiny piece of the puzzle - if the government can't deliver on their promises here, what hope do we have for everything else needed to improve AP?"

She said recent reports showed how stretched high-needs funding was. "AP requires not only capital improvements and workforce development, it needs guaranteed place funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to ensure providers can retain and develop their staff from year to year."

Many in the AP sector saw



Gavin Williamson

the education secretary's pledge as a glimmer of hope, especially after his predecessor, Damian Hinds, earlier this year talked about improving the provision for excluded pupils.

But Schools Week has been told that proposers of new AP schools have to use an existing - and heavily restricted - application round, which is only open to bids in two counties in England.

The special free school application round was launched last year for bids for new special schools and alternative provision.

Local authorities first had to bid for the right to get a new specialist school; the names of 39 successful areas were announced in March.

But only two - Warwickshire and Worcestershire - were successful in their bids to get new AP schools. Sponsors now have to bid for the right to set them up, and have until September 30 to apply.

However, no plans for further special rounds have been announced, and with proposers of AP schools unable to apply through the latest mainstream wave, it is unclear when new provision will come to fruition.

Matt Morris, the headteacher of the North East Derbyshire Support Centre, said the finding exposed how the government's supposed switch in focus towards AP was



"disingenuous at best".

Hinds launched the free school wave 14 in January, but its official spring start never happened, allowing the prime minister Boris Johnson to announce it on Monday.

In that announcement, the government said it "particularly encourages applications from parts of the country that have not previously benefited, as well as alternative provision and special schools".

But a note on the government's website points would-be AP applicants back to last year's special wave.

The Timpson exclusions review, published in May, found "much variation in the quality of the offer within AP" and called for a "practice improvement fund ... of sufficient value, longevity and reach" to boost outcomes.

However the government would only commit to a "practice programme", with no mention of extra funding. The DfE did not respond to a request for comment.

Early (years) start for Gibb as minister expands brief

JOHN DICKENS | @JOHNDICKENSSW

Nick Gibb will take on policy for early years education under an expanded ministerial portfolio.

The immovable schools minister - serving his fifth education secretary - will lead on early education and childcare funding, support for the early years workforce, curriculum, quality and early education entitlements.

He will also take on responsibility for PE and school sport, and the pupil premium.

The ministerial brief shake-up comes after Michelle Donelan took over as temporary children's minister while Kemi Badenoch

goes on maternity leave.

Donelan, a member of the education select committee from July 2015 to October last year, will also support Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, in his role as skills lead.

The department has not appointed a designated skills minister to replace Anne Milton.

Meanwhile Lord Agnew, the academies minister, has also taken on a wider portfolio with responsibility for the further education provider market, including quality and improvement.

He will also lead on EU exit preparation,

delivery of the careers strategy, the opportunity areas programme, school food and safeguarding in schools.

Chris Skidmore has also returned as universities minister after Jo Johnson - the brother of the prime minister - resigned, describing his position as "torn between family and national interest".



Nick Gibb

News

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EXCLUSIVE



OGAT chair heads new trust for 'orphan' schools

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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The chair of the Outwood Grange Academies Trust is to lead a new academy chain that will take on failing schools shunned by other sponsors.

Earlier this month Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, announced plans to pilot a specialist trust for institutions in the north of England that are often dubbed "schools no-one wants" or "orphan schools".

Schools Week revealed last September how many of these schools are left in limbo as a result of complex legal issues. One has waited eight years to become an academy.

The new trust, the Falcon Education Academies Trust, will be chaired by David Earnshaw (pictured), a former headteacher and technology company director who also sits on the board of the Inspiration Trust, an academy chain set up by Lord Agnew, the academies minister.

The new trust will be "expected" to take on the most challenging schools by "offering a route into a strong academy trust that allows school improvement to begin immediately".

A DfE spokesperson said Earnshaw's work as chair of OGAT "proves he has a track record, and the necessary skills, to support and transform underperforming schools".

But some supporters of academies say the proposal is not without potential pitfalls.

In a blog post, Jonathan Simons, the former Downing Street education adviser-turned Public First policy wonk, warned that the government was likely to need incentives "around some elements of financing and Ofsted" if the so-called "bad bank" trust model was to succeed.

"These are the things that put many MATs off taking on small schools, or those with big deficits, or those with PFI, or those that will take several years to get above Ofsted requires

improvement," he wrote.

"There has to be an acceptance that ... recognition must be given of the special circumstances."

This might involve holding off from issuing financial notices, pausing Ofsted inspections of recently-moved schools and allowing "some deficit budgets".

Simons also warned there was a danger that talent could be "spread too thin", and that the trust's inability to control its pipeline of schools might also cause issues.

Mark Lehain, the founder of Bedford Free School and director of the school reform lobbying group Parents and Teachers for Excellence, said it was probably "simpler and cheaper" to pay existing "great trusts" to take over schools struggling to find a sponsor.

However, he said that he was "reassured by the involvement of Earnshaw".

"He really knows his stuff, and will be able to bring in other experts. So long as it doesn't detract from the work of our existing great trusts, it should be an exciting addition to the school improvement scene."

According to Companies House, Earnshaw was appointed as a director of the new chain on August 1.

Other directors include Christopher Dalzell, also an OGAT trustee, and Margaret Brown.

Earnshaw is also one of three controlling "members" of the new trust, with Felicity Gillespie, a former adviser to the DfE and director of early years at the investment fund Aurora, and Thomas Attwood, a trustee of the T4 academy trust and a former trustee of The Kemnal Academies Trust.

Earnshaw's appointment, however, will raise eyebrows among critics of academies because of his association with two controversial trusts, both of which have faced criticism for their approaches to behaviour and exclusions.

Ofsted focuses on behaviour in new ITT framework

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

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Ofsted will next year introduce a new framework for inspecting initial teacher training that will include an increased focus on how trainees are taught to manage behaviour.

The inspectorate will consult in early 2020 on plans for the framework, including how far-reaching the new emphasis on behaviour will be.

Ofsted has not revealed any other proposed changes to the framework, which is set to come into force from September next year. However, *Schools Week* understands it is likely to include a greater emphasis on mentoring and subject knowledge.

Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector of schools, said the focus on behaviour management would help to ensure that the next generation of trainee teachers "understand the important principles of behaviour management, how to teach pupils to behave and how to create an environment where pupils can learn".

Current guidance says that inspectors may ask providers for evidence of how they improve the quality of teachers' skills in promoting and managing good behaviour.

Ofsted's teacher wellbeing report, published in July, found that poor behaviour was a "considerable source of low occupational wellbeing", and teachers did not always feel they had support from senior leaders and parents to tackle it.

The inspectorate, which has been researching behaviour in schools, recommended today that schools develop a clear and consistent whole-school behaviour management policy, embed routines to minimise disruption and communicate clearly with parents.

But Spielman reiterated the importance of behaviour policies being applied "flexibly" for pupils with special needs, mental health issues or difficult life circumstances.

Last year, Damian Hinds, the former education secretary, announced plans for the first substantial review of government behaviour guidance, including £10 million to support 500 schools to develop behaviour policies, including detention systems and new sanctions and rewards schemes.

Last month, Boris Johnson said he would give schools "the powers they need to deal with bad behaviour and bullying so that pupils can learn".

Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, said Ofsted's move would help "empower teachers to deal with low-level bad behaviour".

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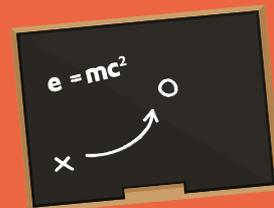
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Investigation

NO A-LEVELS FOR YOU, SCHOOL TELLS PUPILS

KATHRYN SNOWDON
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A school in north London has unlawfully booted out sixth-formers halfway through their A-levels because they hadn't achieved high enough grades.

Three parents have told *Schools Week* their children were left devastated by the "horrifying" and "appalling" decision of Queens Park Community School in Brent not to allow the pupils to progress to year 13.

One received an official letter confirming the decision the day before students were due to start the new term last week.

Ofsted rated the 1,300-pupil school "good" at its last inspection.

The disclosure comes after a high-profile scandal at St Olave's, a leading grammar in Bromley, Kent, in 2017. An inquiry found the school had acted illegally by throwing out sixth-form students who failed to get top grades in AS and equivalent internal exams.

Government rules state it is unlawful to exclude students over academic attainment.

In correspondence seen by *Schools Week*, senior leaders at Queens Park told the three



“They have been offered the opportunity to start a more suitable BTEC”

families their children were “below the required minimum standard to progress into year 13”.

Erin Smart, an education solicitor at Irwin Mitchell, said: “There are very strict rules by which you can remove pupils from a school roll and exclusion is one of them, but exclusion can only be used for disciplinary

matters. If pupils are enrolled on a sixth-form course then they can't be removed halfway through for academic reasons. It's just completely and utterly unlawful.”

She said this position was “confirmed” in the St Olave's case with the government reiterating that excluding pupils either “temporarily

or permanently for non-disciplinary reasons is unlawful in itself”.

Queens Park confirmed in a statement that when students “are clearly not meeting the minimum grades after a year of study we encourage them to find more suitable alternative courses on which they can succeed”. A spokesperson added: “A-levels are not for everyone.”

The spokesperson insisted that the students “have not been excluded”, adding: “They are all offered the opportunity to start a more suitable BTEC qualification as an alternative to A-levels.”

However, in correspondence seen by *Schools Week*, Jude

‘THEY’VE JUST DISMISSED HIM’

The parents and their three children, who all wish to remain anonymous, say there has been a “disgraceful” lack of communication from the school and an absence of duty of care to their children.

One parent, whose child had been at the school for six years and who took part in lots of extracurricular activities, said: “When they needed him to step up and do things for the

school, he always did it. On this one occasion when he's had a bad year and we needed the school to support him, they didn't.

“They kicked him out and I think that's the most disappointing thing. He's given everything to the school and he's being treated as though he's walked in with a set of kitchen knives. That's how it feels – that they've just dismissed him and they don't care about him.”

Another parent spoke about the toll the school's decision has had on her and her family. “They've let us down and they haven't given me time to get him ready for the next steps or to look for a different school. The poor boy doesn't know what he wants to do now. He's lost confidence. He's just staying in his bed and doing nothing.”

Investigation



Queens Park Community School

Jude Enright

Enright, Queens Park’s head, tells parents that the school is “unable to offer” their child a place this academic year, without mention of the option of a BTEC.

The three parents said they would have “jumped” at the opportunity of a BTEC had it been offered.

Currently, two of the three pupils have not been able to find a place elsewhere.

Dan Rosenberg, an education lawyer at Simpson Millar, said a BTEC offer could be made, but “not where the alternative is leaving the school”. Continuing with A-levels had to be an option.

“Offering BTECs without the option of continuing with A-levels is a way pushing children who are more likely to obtain lower grades out of the school.

“It is not lawful and leaves parents and children scrabbling around trying to find another place that’ll let them carry on with their A-levels at the very last minute, which is obviously very detrimental for them.”

Rosenberg said that schools “seeking to improve their league table performance in this way should be a thing of the past”, particularly given Ofsted’s crackdown on off-rolling in its new inspection framework.

The school did not respond to further detailed questions about

school’s decision that was sent out on September 4 – the day before pupils were back – and another sent on September 11, nearly a week after pupils returned to school.

The independent inquiry into St Olave’s last year found that it treated pupils as “collateral damage” in its bid to achieve high grades.

The Guardian reported in 2017 that about 16 pupils had been told their places for year 13 had been withdrawn after they failed in exams to get three Bs.

St Olave’s head and chair of governors resigned after the practice was reported, with the school later allowing the

withdrawn pupils to return after parents threatened legal action.

Media coverage also led to a wave of schools abandoning similar policies. The DfE wrote to all schools informing them that enrolled sixth-formers could not be removed over academic ability.

Schools Week has previously revealed how a legal loophole allows 16 to 19 free schools and sixth-form colleges to push out low-attaining pupils at the end of year 12.

However, this exception does not apply to sixth forms attached to secondary schools, such as Queens Park Community School.

A Brent Council spokesperson said that parents who have concerns should use the Queens Park Community School Academy Trust’s complaints procedure.

The DfE has been contacted for comment.

“He’s being treated as though he’s walked in with a set of kitchen knives”

the lawyers’ comments.

The three pupils who have not been allowed to continue on to year 13 took a variety of AS and internal exams in the summer last year. They achieved a mixture of C, D, E and U grades.

All three parents admit that their children had not done well. Each received at least one U grade, but passed in other subjects.

But they were shocked to be told that they had fallen below the threshold needed to continue with sixth-form study.

One said that she felt her child “might as well have been excluded”, adding that official channels would be in place if they had been.

The school said that it informed parents in mid-August that their children had failed to get the grades needed to continue with A-level study.

Yet *Schools Week* has seen an official letter confirming the

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Investigation

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Grammar satellite's pupils left to go it alone

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EXCLUSIVE

Ministers are under pressure to investigate a grammar school that has now stopped sending pupils to its satellite site – despite the arrangement being a key justification used to prove it was working as a single school.

In October 2015 the Weald of Kent grammar was given permission to open a satellite nine miles away in Sevenoaks.

Justifying the decision, Nicky Morgan, the then education secretary, insisted the sites would function as one school, including a "cross-site" curriculum that would bring pupils together at least once a week.

New grammar schools are illegal, but existing schools can apply to expand, including on to separate sites.

However, Elizabeth Bone, Weald of Kent's headteacher, has confirmed that from this year pupils will be taught separately and only brought together for extra-curricular days.

Lucy Powell, who was shadow education secretary in October 2015, has vowed to write to Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, over "real concerns" the satellite was now "in fact an illegal grammar school".

"A full and proper independent investigation of the practices at the Weald of Kent grammar must take place urgently to ascertain whether the school is acting within the law and to the letter of their agreement with the Department for Education when this school was established," she said.

Two other grammar schools in Kent – Barton Court in Canterbury and Queen Elizabeth's in Faversham – have also applied to open new satellite sites.

Only one of the selective schools will get permission, expected this autumn, to open a new campus near Whitstable.

Dr Nuala Burgess, the chair of the anti-selection campaign group Comprehensive Future, said: "Until Sevenoaks has

Nicky Morgan - written ministerial statement, October 15, 2015:

- I am satisfied that this proposal represents a genuine expansion of the existing school, and that there will be integration between the two sites in terms of leadership, management, governance, admissions and curriculum

- My decision in this case has been taken on the basis of the proposal from the Weald of Kent, in line with legislation and criteria determining what constitutes an expansion. It does not reflect a change in this government's position on selective schools

Nicky Morgan - oral statement, October 19, 2015:

- The school intends to bring all Year 7's together for at least half a day a week, and that will extend to all five year groups as the extended site fills up

- There will be a range of cross-site curricular activities, including in personal, social, health and economic education, languages and music, reflecting the integrated split-site school



Weald of Kent Grammar School - proposal to develop annexe 2015

- The preferred option is to establish one staff which is utilised flexibly to maximise timetabling opportunities and where all students enjoy at least one half day a week working together as a single cohort

been properly investigated, plans for all new grammar satellites must be put on hold. If not, we can only assume that the surreptitious creation of new grammar schools was always the hope of the selective school expansion fund."

She said the way Weald of Kent ran the two sites was no different to an academy trust with two schools. The satellite was "tantamount to the creation of a new selective school via the backdoor".

The school's proposal for the annexe, which opened in 2017, also said its headteacher would spend half the week at each site and pupils would "enjoy at least one half-day a week working together as a single cohort".

The school declined to comment on how often the headteacher visited each site or whether there were two separate teaching teams, but Bone said leaders "attend both campuses" and governance and administration were shared.

She insisted it was "one school which operates across two campuses". Pupils initially travelled between sites once a fortnight for lessons, but the school was now able to deliver specialist teaching at both campuses "in a manner that represents the

best use of public funds".

The government has set up a £200 million expansion fund for selective schools. Guidance states that grammars can only expand to a satellite site if it is "genuinely part of the existing school" and not the establishment of a new school.

Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, considering factors such as pupil movement between sites, staff working on both sites, shared facilities and governance.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said it was "of paramount importance that we have absolute clarity over exactly what constitutes expansion, at what point this tips over into being a new school, and what happens in such circumstances".

Weald of Kent's funding agreement is for a single school and the government can act if it is in breach of this.

But a DfE spokesperson said: "On the basis of the evidence available to the department we are content that the school continues to operate within the criteria for expansion."

Ofsted blow for Harris as inspectors question EAL exam entry

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS

@PIPPA_AK

The Harris academy trust has received its first ever Ofsted rating below 'good' – with inspectors flagging how pupils were entered into an "inappropriate" EAL qualification.

Harris Academy Orpington was rated as 'requires improvement' in a report published on Wednesday, making it the first academy in the 47-school Harris trust to receive an inspection rating below 'good'.

The report also flagged that too many disadvantaged pupils were suspended and that strict behaviour rules caused "resentment and a sense of injustice" among pupils.

A spokesperson for Harris said it was "pleased" the school was no longer failing (it was previously rated 'inadequate'), adding they were "confident" the school will "secure the improvements it needs".

However, inspectors flagged various practices used by the school that have been labelled as gaming, including entering pupils into "inappropriate" qualifications.

Schools Week revealed in April how the Harris Federation was entering hundreds of native English speakers in Year 11 into a qualification intended for pupils with English as a second language.

Inspectors stated that "virtually all pupils in Year 11" at Harris Academy Orpington were entered for the qualification, despite the fact that 95 per cent of them spoke English as a first language.

Year 12 students who took the qualification said

they "did not know why they were entered and received little teaching in preparation".

Current leaders also acknowledged that the "mass-entry to this qualification, initiated by leaders who have since left the academy, was inappropriate". The practice has now stopped.

The Cambridge International level 1/2 certification in English for Speakers of Other Languages was dropped from performance tables last year, but previously counted in the open "third" bucket of progress 8.

Harris told Schools Week in April it was "categorically not gaming the system".

Inspectors also stated the trust had "very high entry levels" among its first cohort of year 11 pupils in 2017 into the English computer driving licence (ECDL).

They suggested this may be the reason behind an initial surge in results in 2017 that had not been sustained, adding pupils taking the qualification were known to "gain grades far in excess of those they are able to achieve in other subjects".

The ECDL was removed from league tables in 2017 after several Schools Week investigations over gaming concerns.

In 2015 school leaders were being urged to enter "vulnerable" pupils into the fast-track ICT qualification, which could be taught in just three days but was worth the equivalent of a GCSE in performance tables.

Inspectors also said "too many" pupils receive fixed-term exclusions at the school, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special needs.



Harris: We did not game the system

- Top trust entered hundreds of native speakers for ESOL qualification
- Former Ofsted director had labelled the practice 'pure gaming'
- But Harris said pupils were entered for 'real-exam' prep, not boosting scores

The number of pupils leaving the school's roll was also "much higher than typically seen". Eighteen pupils had left in the last academic year to be home educated.

Strict behaviour rules were found to have caused "resentment and a sense of injustice" among pupils, who complained of being "isolated" from normal lessons due to "minor breaches" of the uniform policy and were "resentful" about restrictions placed on their access to toilets.

However, the report praised leaders for being "determined to improve the life chances of the pupils" and making "clear improvements" to the education provided by the predecessor school.

A spokesperson for Harris added: "Uniquely among large multi-academy trusts, this is the first time in our history that one of our schools has got less than a 'good' in an Ofsted inspection."

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA_AK

Ban all watches in exam halls, says inquiry

All watches should be banned from exam rooms and awarding organisations should do more to monitor leaks of exam papers on the dark web, says an investigation into exam malpractice.

The findings of an independent commission, published on Tuesday, found invigilators had trouble keeping up with the technology that could allow pupils to cheat during exams.

Smart watches are already banned from exam halls, and schools have the power to ban watches if they choose, but the commission proposes a ban on all watches, unless a pupil has a special need for one.

The Joint Council for Qualifications, which represents all exam boards, said it would consider the report's recommendations.

Cheating pupils can use advanced technologies such as in-ear technology, magic calculators and false fingernails that hide microphones.

However, the commission found "little evidence" that any technology other than mobile phones was "widely used" in English schools.

The report also flagged the rise in the number of pupils granted access arrangements and special consideration in

exams, and whether this was "legitimate growth" or an "abuse of the system".

It noted the "highest proportion" of special consideration requests were for Progress 8 subjects. It was a "matter of concern that the playing field is not level between well-resourced centres that can afford to have large students with access arrangements and other centres which do not, or cannot afford to, have the time and resources to process and invigilate large numbers".

Ofqual is working to collect "more meaningful" data on access arrangements.

Lilac Sky report STILL not published

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

EXCLUSIVE

The Department for Education has failed to meet its own pledge to publish a long-awaited investigation report into a defunct academy trust.

The nine-school Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust (LSSAT) shut in 2017 amid a government investigation into allegations of financial malpractice.

Schools Week revealed later that year how annual accounts exposed misdemeanours, including staff paid severance cash before being rehired the next day and public money spent on "luxury" booze.

The department last year refused to release a copy of the investigation report, requested by *Schools Week* under freedom of information laws, stating it intended to publish it that academic year (2018-19).

However the investigation – launched more than three years ago – has still to surface.



The actions contradict statements from Lord Agnew, the academies minister, who said in July that academy finances had an "unprecedented level of accountability and transparency".

Schools Week was again refused access to a copy of the report under FOI this month.

Tanya Arkle, the deputy director of south academies at the Education and Skills Funding Agency, said the investigation had ended and "following internal processes" it "intends to publish a final version of the report this academic year".

She added: "I can assure you that we believe it is in the public's interest to be fair

and transparent about issues relating to how public money is spent. Publishing findings is an important part of this and our aim is to publish where it is appropriate to do so."

The DfE has not given a reason for the delay. LSSAT schools were transferred to other trusts more than two years ago.

A financial notice to improve issued to the trust in 2016 said that condition improvement funding cash was propping up revenue costs.

Annual accounts published by trustees parachuted in by the government to oversee its closure revealed a further list of financial breaches.

More than £200,000 was paid to a company owned by Trevor Avere-Beeson, the trust founder, without meeting government rules. Avere-Beeson also had to repay cash spent on luxury alcohol for an awards evening that was classed as an "inappropriate use of public funding".

The government had to write off more than £500,000 it was owed by the academy trust after its collapse.

EXCLUSIVE

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS | @PIPPA_AK

'Challenged' trust pays £122,000 in single exit package

An academy trust in Norfolk paid out a severance package of £122,000 to one employee in a year in which it faced "significant" financial challenges.

The Right for Success Trust, which runs 11 schools – most of them primary – was the only trust to pay more than £100,000 in a single exit package during 2017-18.

However, the trust's accounts admit to "significant financial and operational challenge" and a "deterioration" of its financial position during that year, due partly to taking on three new schools with deficits.

It would not say who received the money, but insisted all payments were "subject to strict scrutiny".

Valerie Moore, the trust's chief executive and accounting officer, left in August 2018 after receiving a remuneration package of between £235,000 and £240,000 for that year, up from between £120,000 to £125,000 the year before.

The £122,000 severance figure was detailed in the annual academy sector accounts published in July, but *Schools Week* made a freedom of information request to find the trust's name.

High pay-offs, however, may be coming to an end.

In April, the government announced a £95,000 cap on pay-offs for all public sector workers, including school staff, although a spokesperson for the Treasury said no date had been set for when this would come into force.

Our freedom of information request also revealed the two trusts that paid more than £100,000 in single exit packages in 2016-17.

Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) paid £108,000, despite being under a financial notice to improve, while the single academy St Edward's Church of England Academy Trust, based in Staffordshire, paid £102,000.

A spokesperson for AET said the "majority" of its payment was contractual and authorised

by the government. Any severance payments above £50,000 must be approved by the Education Skills and Funding Agency and the Treasury.

St Edward's was contacted for comment.

In 2014-15, Great Academies Trust paid £200,000 to one unnamed employee. However, exit packages of more than £100,000 remain rare, with just seven agreed in the academies sector since September 2015.

A spokesperson for Right for Success said it could not comment on individual cases, but insisted all payments were "subject to strict scrutiny, are fully compliant" with funding rules.

A Department for Education spokesperson said academy trusts must "justify" any non-contractual severance payments and ensure they represented value for money. All exit packages were paid in accordance with each trust's compensation schemes.

NASUWT faces new legal challenge

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

The NASUWT, the teachers' union, is facing a fresh challenge over claims that its former president and other officials held office while ineligible for full union membership.

The Northern Ireland Certification Office, which regulates union activity, has confirmed it will hear a complaint from Susan Parlour, the former NASUWT NI president, that five officers, including Dan McCarthy, the former national president, held their offices despite being disqualified from doing so.

The union's rules state that only those "employed as qualified teachers" and those with contracts of employment requiring them "to teach, lecture or instruct whether on a full or part-time basis" are allowed to be full members and hold offices such as the presidency.

In her complaint, Parlour claims that McCarthy, Dave Kitchen, Russ Walters, Fred Brown and Michelle Codrington-Rogers served as president, senior vice-president, treasurer, ex-president and junior vice-president respectively while they were not working as teachers.

McCarthy resigned earlier this year, citing personal reasons, but is not listed on the union's website as its "ex-president", an official executive role normally assumed by outgoing office-holders.

Kitchen is now the president, with Codrington-Rogers as his senior vice-president. Russ Walters remains treasurer.

None of the individuals named in the complaint or the NASUWT responded to a request for comment.

The challenge is the latest development in a high-profile dispute between the union and a number of its employees and officials. Several senior officers have been suspended after criticising the union's leadership.

On October 9 the union will face a separate hearing by the certification officer in London over claims it broke the law by allowing Chris Keates, its general secretary, to serve for more than five years without a re-election.

Parlour was recently booted out of the union's executive after questioning the suspensions of employees and the timetable for a general secretary election.

The union claims the Northern Ireland teacher was "aggressive", behaved "inappropriately" and acted in a way that was "prejudicial to the interests of the union".

EXCLUSIVE

Rebrokerage process needs reform, says departing trust boss



Frank Norris

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The government must reform its academy transfer approval process to allow both sides more time to work out if they fit, says the outgoing boss of one of England's fastest-growing chains.

Frank Norris, until recently the director of the Co-operative Academies Trust, said chains such as his were being rushed into takeovers that did not always suit either side, which could result in schools being left in the lurch.

The academy transfer market is big business. In 2018-19, 307 academies moved to a new trust.

The Department for Education has spent £31 million in grant funding since 2013 to entice trusts to take over failing schools.

Currently regional schools commissioners approve academy moves on the advice of headteacher boards (panels of school leaders). Although due diligence on issues such as school finances, human resources and standards is carried out, there is no requirement for a conversation about whether the cultures of the school and trust align.

Norris, who admitted his trust had walked away from schools after RSC approval because of issues that failed to come up during the initial due diligence, said a two-step approval process was needed.

"You've got this slightly odd world where you've applied to the headteachers' board, they then like it and approve it, and that then becomes the trigger to say it's going to happen," he told *Schools Week*.

"The RSCs see it as 'we've approved it, therefore it's got to happen', when actually there's still a lot more due diligence going on."

The government has faced criticism for

its approach to moving academies between sponsors – particularly when the local community, staff or governors oppose a RSC's choice. The decision is seen as final with no grounds to fight it locally.

Sir David Carter, the former national schools commissioner, told *Schools Week*: "Whether it needs a two-stage process I'm not sure, but what I think is missing is...a response from the school community."

He added that too few boards questioned the impact that supporting a new school would have on the children the MAT already had.

While trusts were getting better at due diligence of buildings, funding and HR, "the bit that they don't do enough around is that cultural fit" — which he described as "really hard".

"You're talking about a three-way conversation here, between the RSC, the trust that's going to take the school and the trust that's giving it up. In that three-way conversation, the bit that's sometimes missing is the school."

Michael Pain, the chief executive of Forum Strategy, which represents MATs, said communities should have a say in who took on their schools, recommending a "try before you buy" approach to allow schools to become associate members of trusts.

"The current approach to due diligence is very narrow," he said. "Organisational development and sustainability is also about culture, vision, values, and being responsive to the needs of communities."

A DfE spokesperson said its commissioners moved "robustly to secure the best sponsor match possible to deliver the changes that pupils deserve.

"The commissioners continue to monitor and support an academy that has transferred until they are satisfied that these improvements have been made."



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News

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Councils raid reserves to boost high-needs budgets

KATHRYN SNOWDON
@KATHRYN_SNOWDON

The government's auditor says that insufficient funding and severely stretched council budgets have left children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) without the provision they need.

A National Audit Office (NAO) report, published on Wednesday, paints a worrying picture for the financial health of councils, showing they are raiding reserves to prop

up their high-needs budgets (see graphics below).

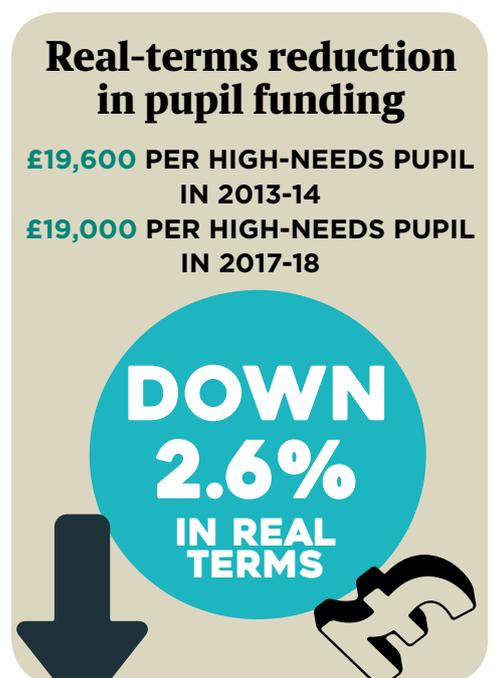
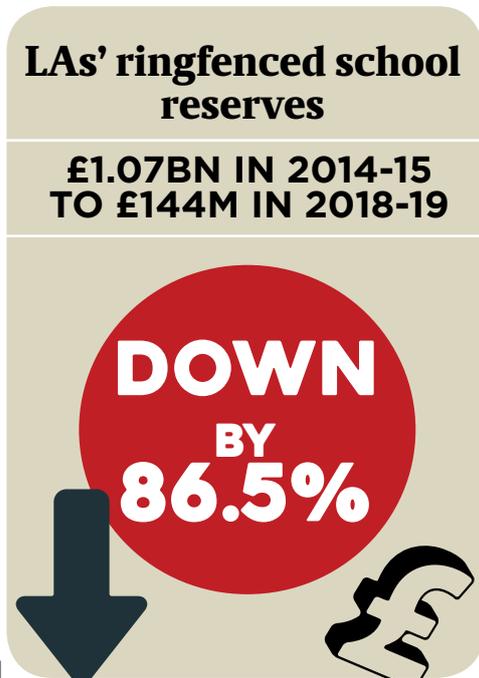
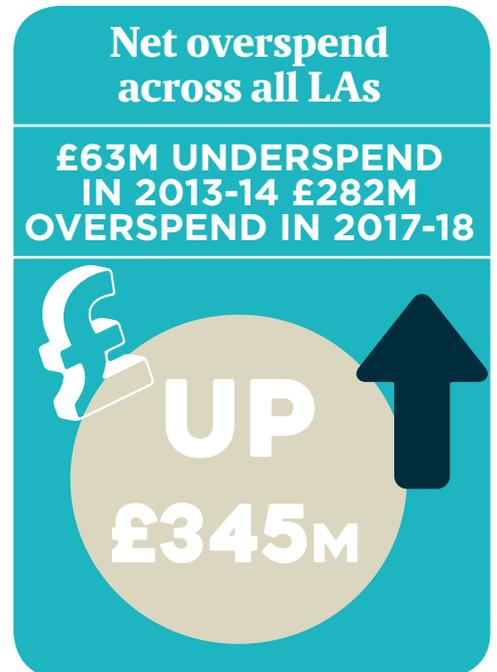
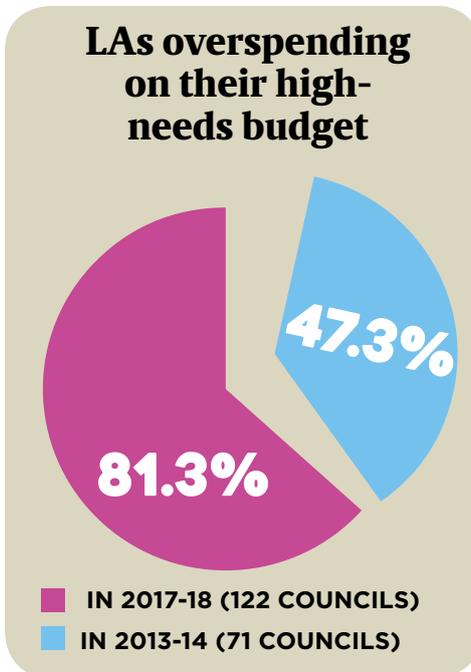
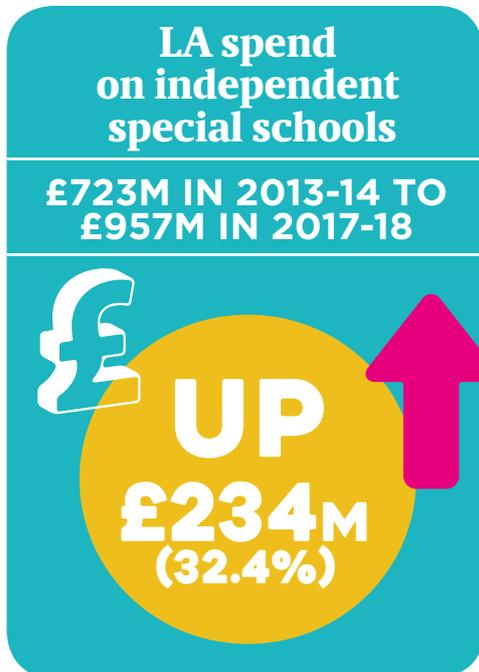
The NAO says the Department for Education should look at the consistency of support across the country, and urges the department to make changes to funding and accountability to encourage mainstream schools to be more inclusive.

It comes as the government launches a review into tackling the "postcode lottery" of support services for children with SEND, just five years after launching its own major reforms.

Gillian Doherty, the founder of SEND Action, says "disabled children and young people are being denied their right to education".

Ian Noon, the chief policy adviser at the National Deaf Children's Society, says the findings are "yet more evidence of the shocking failure of the SEND system to meet the needs of disabled children".

The government has pledged an additional £700 million for SEND pupils next year. A DfE spokesperson says SEND support has been improved to "put families at the heart of the system".



News: While you were away

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The policy announcements you may have missed over the summer holidays

Don't worry if you switched off during the holidays. We've rounded-up all the key stories you may have missed

Gavin Williamson, the new education secretary, wasted little time getting his feet under the table at the Department for Education before announcing some pretty big-ticket policies over the summer. In case you missed them, here's what you need to know.

MORE MONEY HAS BEEN PROMISED, BUT IT'S STILL A WHILE BEFORE CUTS WILL BE REVERSED

The first big announcement was the finer details of prime minister Boris Johnson's pledge to up school funding by £4.6 billion (plus inflation) by 2022.

Schools have a three-year spending plan (good news), which will see the schools budget rise by £7.1 billion overall to £52.2 billion in 2022-23.

Next year's cash will also include a one-off £700 million for pupils with special needs. The government has also committed to covering the rise in pension costs, totalling £1.5 billion per year.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies says that the funding package works out at about £4.3 billion extra (when you account for expected inflation), meaning it will pretty much reverse the spending cuts inflicted since 2009.



*Any upcoming election could obviously throw this off course, but it would be surprising if a new government reneged on delivering the extra cash

BIG SALARY BOOST FOR NEW TEACHERS (BUT AGAIN, IT'S A FEW YEARS AWAY)

Meanwhile, the government also announced the minimum salary for teachers will rise to £30,000 by 2022. The current minimum salary outside London is about £24,000 – so it's a massive 25 per cent rise. London weighting will also be applied on top of the £30,000.



However, schools will have to cover the pay rises from the £7.1 billion funding boost (it's not known how much this will cost, but nearly a quarter of teachers are currently paid under £30k).

The government said this would boost the reputation of teaching in the competitive graduate labour market. While it may boost recruitment, the jury is out about what's being done to keep teachers in the classroom (retention).

OFSTED 'OUTSTANDING' EXEMPTION OUT, NEW FINANCE RATING IN

The exemption from inspection for "outstanding" schools, brought in by Michael Gove, the former education secretary, in 2011, will be dropped from September next year.

The move will ensure parents are "confident their children's schools are continuing to deliver the best education".



But ministers have also committed to introducing a "rating for financial management and oversight" in

inspection reports for schools or academy trusts. This is a longer piece of work that ties into Ofsted's "long-term aim to improve financial management".

Unions say the watchdog is "incapable" of making robust judgments in this area.

'BAD BANK' TRUST TO TAKE ON ORPHAN SCHOOLS

A new academy trust, specifically to take on the schools no one wants, will be piloted in the north of England. The government said this will be run by school leaders with a "proven track record of turning around underperforming schools".

The trust will be "expected" to take on the "most challenging schools" by "offering a route into a strong academy trust that allows school improvement to begin immediately".

Previous *Schools Week* investigations have revealed some of the schools stuck in limbo without a sponsor for the longest are down to unresolved legal issues blocking conversions – mostly to do with the pesky PFI (including one school now waiting EIGHT years!!!)

So it's unclear how the new trust will resolve these issues, nor whether it will just be given extra cash to take over such schools.



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EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Cloak and dagger among grammar schools

It may seem clear that it's illegal to open new grammar schools, but there is nothing clear about the government's definition of a 'new' school.

Do we really believe that two school buildings, that teach two sets of separate pupils nine miles away from each other, are really just one school?

Whatever metaphysical definitions the DfE may be employing, the question remains: is it allowing grammar schools to break the law?

With more grammar schools lining up for the chance to open their own satellite site, and millions more in funding ready to be dished out, the question of what happens to the Weald of Kent Grammar School is an important one.

The DfE should drop its cloak-and-dagger approach to sneaking in new grammar schools and agree to investigate if its rules have been broken. It's time to find out if the DfE will uphold its own laws.

Parents need a voice on unlawful exclusions

The high-profile case of St Olave's grammar school unlawfully throwing out sixth formers who didn't get top grades in 2017 was a wake-up call for the sector.

A host of schools were found to be excluding pupils from entering year 13 based on their academic ability. As the independent inquiry into St Olave's found - that's against the law.

The fact a school is still employing this practice is alarming.

The parents we spoke to at Queens Park felt helpless over the school's decision - which was against their wishes.

However, the council washed its hands of the case, saying the academy is its own admissions authority. The government didn't bother responding, either. So where should parents go?

Those at St Olave's had to threaten legal action to force the school into action (the school ended up allowing banned students to return).

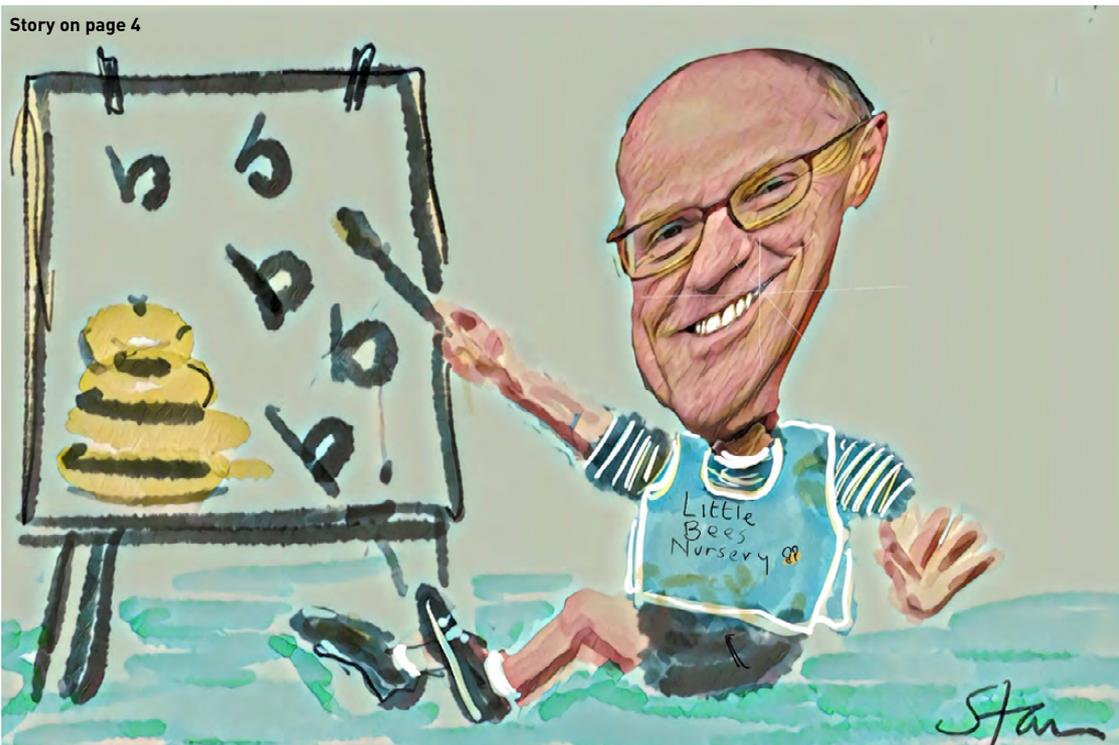
Would the admissions system not be fairer if an independent local body had powers to police and stamp out this sort of practice?

SCHOOLS WEEK



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Story on page 4



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‘I want people to talk about UTCs like they do about the Russell Group’

Simon Connell, the new chief executive of the Baker Dearing Trust, is on a mission to change perceptions of university technical colleges, he tells Billy Camden

Things are changing at the organisation that runs university technical colleges. The Baker Dearing Trust’s new chief executive, Simon Connell is determined that it will move from “quantity to quality” with no more of the 14 to 19 providers opening anytime soon. Instead, he

says, it will “consolidate” after nearly ten years of “high growth”.

Connell, 48, took over the top position this summer from Charles Parker, who led the trust since its incorporation in 2010.

He is under no illusion that UTCs have continued to struggle and a big push is needed to get their quality and student numbers “right” to improve the programme’s reputation and win people over.

He says there aren’t many things that he and

the scheme’s architect Lord Baker disagree about, but the “size of growth for the programme in the short term” is one of them.

It is well-known that the former education secretary wants as many UTCs across the country as possible. Connell says his focus will, however, be on filling existing colleges over the next three years.

“It would be a shame to lose complete momentum in the programme by not having any new openings, but we need to get capacity up

significantly from where it is at the moment – and at the same time improve the perception of the programme.

“I want the education secretary and others to talk about our group of schools in glowing terms, in the way they do about leading educational establishments, such as the Russell Group universities. I want everyone to be impressed with what we do and that has to be the focus.”

Forty-eight UTCs are now open, a number that will be the same this time next year when Doncaster UTC opens after being in the pipeline for years, but South Wiltshire UTC closes – the eleventh to shut.

Dwindling learner numbers persist at most UTCs: Analysis by *FE Week*, *Schools Week’s* sister paper, of data on the government’s “Get information about schools” website shows that numbers fell in nearly half (43 per cent) from 2018 to 2019.

And the average number of students across all UTCs sits at 282 (46 per cent) for 2019 against an average capacity of 615.

Ofsted performance is, at least, slowly improving. Of the 16 UTC inspections in 2018-19, 11 (69 per cent) were “good” or better. But overall just 59 per cent of all inspected UTCs currently sit among the higher two grades – nearly 20 percentage points lower than general FE colleges in 2017-18.

Connell is a numbers man. He has a double first in maths from the University of Cambridge and has spent most of his career in London working for big investment banks such as Merrill Lynch.

So how does he plan to improve UTC figures?
“The two big thrusts of my strategy are to ensure there is a uniform standard of employer engagement around the programme – I want every UTC to be doing as well as the top third are,” he says.

“Second is that Baker Dearing needs to be promoting student stories.

“Often they don’t start at a good place when joining the UTC, but they come out the other end a really well-rounded, highly valuable member of society. And they’re employable; that is critical.”

He believes that Ofsted ratings will only get better as the watchdog’s new inspection framework will focus on the quality of education rather than “teaching to the test”.

“Over the next couple of years that will filter through to local community perception and that will help to grow student numbers.”

Ofsted grades for all inspected utc's

Ofsted grade	Number	% of total inspected
Outstanding	2	6
Good	19	53
Requires Improvement	12	33
Inadequate	3	8

Looking back on the Baker Dearing Trust, Connell says there perhaps was a “little bit” of a view that it is “UTCs or nothing”.

“We don’t want to be fighting MATs. We want to be working with them”

“If we can win over the system by raising our game and integrating a little bit better with everybody else, then we have that platform for growing as we’ll have more supporters.”

One way that UTCs have begun integrating is through joining multi-academy trusts, a move that Lord Baker said would “water down” the programme.

“Are MATs part of the solution? Yes,” Connell says, adding that half of UTCs are now part of trusts.

“One thing we didn’t expect when we launched this movement ten years ago was how hostile local schools would be to UTCs.

“There are three reasons for that: money, a focus on results, and a land grab where MATs have wanted to control their local area. If that is the way it is, we don’t want to be fighting them, we want to be working with them.”

Connell is also open to UTCs changing the 14- to 19-student age range. It could be a “pragmatic” solution to those technical colleges that have struggled to recruit, he says.

But his analysis shows that it is not the starting age that determines whether a UTC is full. “If you’re in a reasonably populated area, have a good education defined by Ofsted and you

have a distinct proposition with good employer engagement and great project-based learning, you are going to be close to full whether you start at 14 or 11.”

However, he says it is “really important” to use “UTC” in the names of the technical colleges.

“Those that have taken it out, we want to change that,” he says. “We want them to be proud of being a UTC.”

In November 2017 UTC Cambridge rebranded as the Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology after joining Parkside Federation Academies, a multi-academy trust. And in May last year Sir Charles Kao UTC changed to the BMAT STEM Academy when it joined the Burnt Mill Academy Trust.

Connell says these decisions haven’t “damaged relationships” between the colleges and Baker Dearing, but “success will come when they call us up and say ‘we were wrong to do this’”.

Many education leaders have made their views known on the UTC programme: they think it little more than Lord Baker’s vanity project that has wasted millions of taxpayers’ money as a result of government bailouts and rebrokerage costs to MATs.

Does Connell believe they provide value for money?

“The way I think about value for money is the return on investment,” he says.

“What we have to show is that young people who go to UTCs, if that provision of education costs more, then down the line there needs to be a larger payback to society. The reality is it is too early to say.

“Our education system needs to keep pace with the fourth industrial revolution and we need to invest in our core business. That’s a fact of economics. Investment costs more, so I think it is right and proper that the government supports the UTC programme. But it is also right that Baker Dearing works hard with UTCs to ensure taxpayer money is wisely spent.”

NOW IS THE TIME TO ENSURE THAT NO YOUNG PERSON IS LEFT BEHIND



DAVID GALLAGHER
Chief Executive Officer, NCFE

Approaching the new school year should be an encouraging time. It's an opportunity to make a fresh start and put action to your plans made during a reflective summer. This year, schools may feel encouraged further as the inclination to start a fresh has been bolstered by the launch of the new inspection framework from Ofsted.

Change was necessary as the now defunct Common Inspection Framework (CIF) had been indicated as a key driver of negative education press, including the declining mental health of teachers and mountainous workloads leaving teachers with very little time to teach.

Now launched, the new Education Inspection Framework (EIF), has given schools more licence to use their expertise to offer intervention at a personal level. The previous parameters and accountability measures within which schools had to operate have been given a thorough makeover with curriculum and, crucially, personal development, at their very core.

That being said, the new EIF hasn't been met with an entirely positive reception, with critics claiming that there hasn't been enough done to directly address and alleviate workload of teachers. However, the impact of the changes may initially appear indirect, perhaps more likely to be associated with a harmonious environment, engaged learners and improved behaviour. Previous data and anecdotal evidence, including case studies we've gathered from learners who have undertaken V Certs, has shown that there's a positive correlation associated with learners who've been given the freedom to approach education differently.

A broader curriculum has also been shown to have a positive impact on exclusion rates. Statistics from the Department for Education (DfE) report on 'Non-GCSE qualifications in



England: key stage 4 entries and absence and exclusions outcomes' summarised their findings as: '[For] pupils, and pupils on SEN support, in state-funded mainstream schools, taking a Technical Award is associated with pupils having lower absence rates, lower permanent exclusion rates and lower fixed exclusion rates, when compared to similar pupils who did not take a Technical Award.' With the highest reported exclusion rates in a decade in mind, now is absolutely the time to act upon this evidence and the new EIF makes it more possible for schools to do so.

The accountability measures which preceded the new EIF did not drive achievement but instead aided and abetted a high stakes environment at which the cost of underachievement was paid at the expense of the learner.

We need to ensure that learners leave school with a level of personal development and strong foundation of knowledge from which they can grow. The skills young people gain at school should allow them access to the range of diverse and changing career paths which are offered by our rapidly developing world.

It is also understood that the good mental health of students is hugely important to an enriched and positive learning experience, and something that can affect a learner's entire educational journey and impact upon them achieving in all of their subjects. We're committed to our part of this important conversation as we know the wellbeing of learners, and teachers, is paramount to a positive experience and success

in school and beyond.

If you haven't already, I would encourage you to explore our website or speak to one of our advisors about how we can support your PSHE delivery, including our new suite of Relationships, Sex and Health Education qualifications.

It would be disingenuous to suggest that accountability measures shouldn't drive decision makers within schools, however, the percentage of learners who follow a traditional curriculum which allows schools to claim performance points, shouldn't be the sole motivation behind curriculum choices, especially a curriculum which pertains to be holistic, diverse and fair. For this to be possible, there needs to be a change in attitude, alongside the changes to the EIF, across the education sector, so that curriculum managers do not feel bound by measures but can address the needs of every learner and make evidence-based decisions.

We're passionate about learners leaving school equipped with the skills that are valued by employers and that will help them get on in all aspect of their lives. I'd invite you to explore what we can offer you to support you at the start of this academic year and let's use this opportunity to really make a difference together.

Please visit [ncfe.org.uk](https://www.ncfe.org.uk) to find out more about how we can support your curriculum planning or email curriculumplanning@ncfe.org.uk.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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TOMAS THUROGOOD-HYDE

Head of governance and legal,
Astrea Academy Trust

We need to proceed to the exit responsibly

Not all the advice that schools are giving and receiving about Brexit is correct. Worse, some of it is potentially harmful, says Tomas Thurogood-Hyde

The political machinations over Brexit – or the lack of them, depending on your politics – have caused uncertainty in many sectors, and education is no different. This is especially true given the increased prospect of a “No Deal”, in which the UK would leave the EU without any transition period or special access to the single market.

People are asking what it means for them and their organisations. School leaders, trustees, governors and parents also want to know where they stand if there is No Deal. Unfortunately, publicly available answers to some of these questions have not only been wrong, but have been communicated in a way that alarms and confuses.

Will the children of EEA and Swiss citizens continue to be entitled to a place at school?

Yes. The government’s EU settlement scheme makes clear that there is a transition period between “exit day” and the deadline for applying to the scheme: June 30, 2021, if we leave with

a deal and December 31, 2020, if we leave without one.

Where these children are already on roll, Brexit creates no mechanism by which they can be removed. Regulations strictly limit the grounds for removing a child, so for any school to say that such a child was no longer

entitled to a place would likely be an unlawful exclusion.

Moreover, the existing advice to admission authorities is that they must not refuse the offer of a place on the basis of any uncertainty over the child’s immigration status.

Schools need to be clear on these points and communication with parents should be careful not to give

any impression that their child’s place at school is at immediate risk.

Should schools be encouraging parents to apply for settled status?

How much advice and support schools give their communities varies, depending on their context and circumstances. There is no legal requirement to offer this support, but there’s certainly nothing to prevent it.

Schools can do this in a number of ways: passing on the government’s advice sheets, including links to the settlement scheme in newsletters or by email, and inviting parents in to complete applications on the school’s computers. Some schools will have parent support workers, interpreters, bilingual staff or parent volunteers, as well as strong links with local authorities or charities who can support these families.

“Parents must be told their child’s place is not at immediate risk

How should colleagues from the EU be supported?

The transition arrangements apply to teachers and support staff just as they do to parents. The most pressing point to make is that, if the UK leaves without a deal, EEA and Swiss nationals will still have until December 31 next year to apply to the scheme. They continue

to live and work lawfully in the UK throughout the intervening period.

As employers or managers, boards and school leaders have a duty of care towards their colleagues. Again, government advice is available to employers but, on a more human level, leaders should think about how best to offer certainty to teachers and support staff.

This might mean simply checking in with colleagues to see if they have concerns, but it could also mean allowing them flexibility to make the application and to collect the documents they need, or helping to put them in touch with relevant advisory services.

Many school leaders wonder whether if it is their place to get involved in such personal arrangements, but governors and trustees should make sure that proactive support of staff is part of the ethos of the school (and, in a larger trust, all schools). This should not be confined just to Brexit planning.

We have an opportunity to share a single view on the law and our ethos as a sector: our children and our colleagues from the EU will be as entitled to a place in our schools the day after Brexit as they are today. Let that be the message we send home with pupils.

Note: This article uses the terms “EU citizen” and “EEA national” interchangeably insofar as they relate to eligibility for school places and employment.

The views expressed here are the opinions of the author based on current official advice. They do not constitute and cannot be relied upon as legal advice.



Opinion

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

The recent GCSE results have vindicated free schools for their tireless efforts, says Unity Howard. But there's more to the movement than warm-strict discipline

The much-anticipated GCSE results of the first cohort of students at Michaela Community School in north London showed the power of their headteacher's vision of a highly academic curriculum and warm-strict discipline. Across every subject more than 50 per cent of grades were level 7 or above, against a national average of 21 per cent. Katharine Birbalsingh's determination and belief in this approach has transformed the lives of her students, with results even the most ardent of opponents would struggle to criticise.

It is right that Michaela's achievements are publicly celebrated. But the school is, in fact, just one of more than 500 free schools – 61 of them opening for the first time this month.

Much has been made of their very "traditional" approach to behaviour, and it's fair to say that Michaela's results aren't a huge surprise, given that clear and consistent behaviour policies are integral to school success. In fact, they have been a feature of the free school policy to date, with new schools challenging what had become the status quo on behaviour.

Of the free schools Ofsted has inspected, 39 per cent have been rated outstanding for behaviour, compared with 17 per cent for all other schools. This means that free schools are more than twice as likely to score the highest grade for behaviour.

This summer, 65 per cent of students at Bedford Free School achieved grade



UNITY HOWARD

Director, New Schools Network

Free schools don't follow one behaviour model

4 or higher in English and maths. At Jane Austen College in Norwich, part of the Inspiration Trust where teachers have a similarly "warm-strict" approach to behaviour, it was 75 per cent. In the same trust, Ofsted rated Charles Darwin primary, in

the free school programme is that there is no need for conformity in behaviour policies. Rather, it allows for a wide variety of approaches across different schools, determined by the leaders that run them. Many take a vastly different approach

“ Teachers can now take control of their dream school

the same trust, as outstanding in all categories. Its teachers were commended for having the highest expectations of behaviour, and a consistent approach aimed at increasing pupils' self-discipline and responsibility.

However, the true advantage of

to behaviour and prove that a school fostering a softer approach to boundaries and an ethos of encouragement can thrive.

XP School in Doncaster, where the focus is on character development delivered through cross-subject expeditionary learning, 86 per cent of

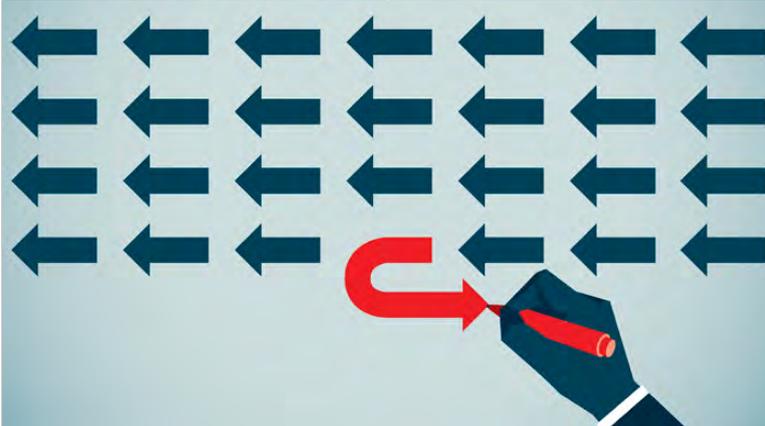
students received grade 4 or higher in English language and history. Similarly, 72 per cent of pupils at Wye School in Ashford, Kent, received grade 4 or higher in five or more subjects. The school has developed an imaginative and positive behaviour policy, which is well understood by all and is becoming effectively embedded.

Fundamentally, the free school policy offers every new school the ability to foster a strong ethos with clear behavioural policies from day one. The vision behind the school takes years of development and honing, and is rigorously challenged as a key facet of the application and assessment process.

It is this clarity and consistency that presents the conditions for schools to thrive, regardless of the approach they adopt – whether that is a Michaela-like model or something more akin to XP in Doncaster.

The point is this: free schools have quickly become a beacon of new ideas and driven improvement across education. Where teachers once felt powerless to challenge the system and implement their own ideas, they can now take control of their dream school; communities can demand more for their children and reject the failed approaches of the past to create something different and better, tailored to their needs.

These schools have used their freedoms to thrive and whether their behaviour model is based on tough love or handing out tokens for good behaviour, we should celebrate them. What's more important is that we protect the founding vision of the free school policy: giving teachers, leaders and communities the opportunity to define what works for their pupils.



Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



The Leadership Factor: The seven characteristics of exceptional leaders

By Drew Povey, with Laura McInerney

Published by John Catt Educational

Reviewed by Claire Glover, Day 6 teacher, Ashcroft school, Cheadle

Drew Povey's second book is vastly different to his first. *Educating Drew: The Real Story of Harrop Fold School* detailed his journey as a headteacher in a "tough" inner-city school and the struggles he faced. In *The Leadership Factor* he focuses on what makes a good leader. It is more practical and research-based, and I thought that the charm of his first foray might be lost. I need not have worried.

In his introductory chapter, he looks back to the teachers that had the most effect on him – and those that didn't. In a sense, he argues, our familiarity with leadership begins in our formative school years. For Povey it has been a conscious and developing study, and 35 years of reflection and experience have led him to deduce a formula for effective leadership, or "the leadership factor".

This isn't a typical leadership book. It does set out seven characteristics of effective leadership, which is formulaic for sure, but that's the point.

One thing it isn't is prosaic. As well as meaningful anecdotes and plenty of research, it contains a questionnaire audit about the key leadership traits it sets out, and a link to a full psychometric audit that can be done online. The questionnaire is straightforward and comprises seven tables, with clear and concise instructions. This is more than a book to stimulate reflection; it is a practical tool for self-evaluation and improvement.

As such, the book can be used in a variety of ways. It can be read from start to finish, of course, or as the author himself suggests, you can complete the audit and focus on the sections that resonate with you. Povey offers a five-step way to use it for impact. As one becomes familiar with it, though, I imagine it would be very easy to simply dip into relevant sections for guidance and enlightenment. I know it will be a useful book to refer back to at different stages of my career, or when faced with particular challenges, and I know I will return to it many times.

An important section explores the difference between leadership and management. If you are looking for ways to tell people what to do or guidance on how to develop processes, then this isn't the book for you. It's about people, vision and how to sell it – the heart and soul of leadership, as Povey says.

If you are in any doubt that leadership matters, the chapter *How do you lead an ostrich egg?* is bound to persuade you that it does. Leadership without vision, without respect for the people who will implement it, and without a plan to bring these together is tantamount to burying your head in the sand. To take your eyes off any of these aspects is to create wilful blind spots with potentially damaging consequences.

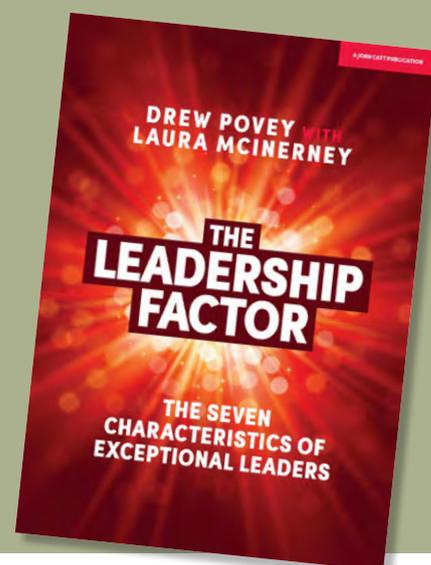
The book is split into three sections: leading yourself, leading others, and

leading others to lead themselves. Each section looks at different factors such as charisma and confidence that make up the author's formula. But this isn't a book that rests on anecdotes. To be sure, each section contains concrete examples, but there is also a wealth of research to back up the author's thoughts, as well as activities and practical tips.

More than that, the book contains an action plan to support readers to pursue the ideas it inspires in them through to impactful, concrete change.

The Leadership Factor is easy to read. Coupling honesty and real-life examples with substantive research means it is never dry, but also never vacuous. Povey has an obvious talent for connecting with his audience that really shines through.

Human relationships are at the core of his formula, and the book reflects that. It is written with warmth, heart and a real sense of purpose.



Research

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

How can we help students form good habits?

Harry Fletcher-Wood, associate dean, Ambition Institute

The new school year is a great chance to encourage students to form good habits. Habits are automatic responses to cues: desirable ones might include students listening to a peer quietly (the response) when we ask them to do so (a cue), or students doing their homework (the response) at 7pm on Wednesday (a cue). Reviewing the evidence highlights how important habits are, how long it takes to form them, and the key ingredients.

A 2002 study of undergraduates by Wood, Quinn and Kashy shows how different habitual responses are – and why they can be helpful. Researchers asked the students to record their daily actions and found that at least a third – probably much more – were habits. People were more likely to be acting habitually around daily routines than studying or socialising. They thought less about what they were doing, were less emotional, less worried and found what they were doing easier. This suggests advantages to helping students form good habits: once a habit has been formed, they don't need to think about it or worry about it – [the response has become automatic and easy](#).

If we've chosen a good habit that we hope students will form – writing in a focused way throughout the time we give them, for example, or always checking their working – how long will it take for the habit to stick? To my knowledge, only two studies have tested this specifically. Philippa Lally and her



colleagues (2010) asked students to adopt a simple health behaviour (the response) after a specific milestone (the cue), such as drinking a glass of water with lunch every day. It took an average of 66 days for the behaviour to become automatic – [the fastest was 18 days and the slowest seemed likely to take 254](#).

The second study is more encouraging. Kaushal and Rhodes (2015) studied how long it took new gym members to begin exercising habitually. As long as people exercised at least four times a week, they found that it took about six weeks for the habit to stick – at least among those who were able to form these habits. [Combining the findings of these two studies, we can estimate that students should be able to form a new habit reliably by half term](#).

Another review, by Wood and Neal (2016) in the context of health behaviours, found that forming habits demands “repeated performance of rewarding actions in stable contexts”. So, if we're hoping

to help students form a new habit, we need to offer:

- **Repetition** – Students need to perform the action many times: listening every time a peer speaks or revising several times a week.
- **Cues** – We need a clear reminder for students to act: a hand signal or theatrical “shhh” for students to listen; a time and place to revise. Whatever it is, we should keep the cue consistent (to create a “stable context”) as it is the cue that will encourage the response.
- **Rewards** – We might offer rewards, but a reward could also be intrinsic. We might help students to see the value of an action, [by highlighting the good ideas their peers share or how much their revision is helping](#).

So, if we are taking this opportunity to encourage students to form good habits, we must give them enough time – several weeks – a clear cue, plenty of chances and a reason for action.



Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is **Jon Hutchinson**, assistant head, Reach Academy Feltham, and visiting fellow at Ambition Institute

@JON_HUTCHINSON_

Building a teaching and learning policy from a single idea: The genius of Prof Daniel Willingham

@MrARobbins

In front of every pupil at the start of a new school year is a fresh page in a new exercise book. Teachers and leaders, too, have the chance to start anew. Each year I promise myself that I will do less, better; focusing on the things that really matter and shedding any nonsense picked up along the past academic year.

Perhaps you are also thinking about returning to first principles. This blog by head of science Adam Robbins is an excellent place to start. He outlines how he has created a policy derived from a singular first principle: memory is the residue of thought. "I think by anchoring all we do on this one simple, but profound, idea we can maintain a set of shared principles whilst preserving professional autonomy."

Sure, this approach doesn't describe everything you'd care about in a school, but its purity and simplicity is incredibly appealing. I hope that Robbins blogs throughout the year to exemplify exactly how the policy is enacted.



"The ResearchEd conference is a lightning bolt of energy to kick off the year"

ResearchED 2019 national conference – my favourite so far

@kevbartle

As well as clearing out policy clutter, the start of a school year offers a chance to galvanise and inspire teachers and pupils. For me, the national ResearchEd conference is a lightning bolt of energy to kick off the year. Headteacher Kev Bartle feels similarly, noting that not only is it an opportunity to "submit ourselves to the rigours of academic thinking that we hope will be of some use to us in the year", but that it's also "bloody good fun and a chance to catch up with old friends and meet new ones". This post reviews the seven sessions he attended, and what he learnt from each.

Ark Soane Academy

@jo_facer

One of the talks Kev Bartle describes was by the inimitable Jo Facer who, along

with being a whirlwind of optimism and positivity, will take up the headship of a new school next year. This post distils everything that she has learnt in her career. There is deep humility here. Followers of Facer will know that she sculpted, pioneered and finessed many of these ideas and approaches. Every decision at the new school, she notes, will be underpinned by three key beliefs:

1. Impeccable student behaviour is possible and desirable.
2. A challenging curriculum full of powerful knowledge changes lives.
3. There are no limits to student achievement.

She acknowledges that "the opportunity to found a school from scratch is an incredible one," and although readers may be working in more established schools, there is much to learn from someone building something from the ground up.

Reflections from analysis of the 2019 KS2 reading SATs: part 2

@HertsLearning

It would be foolish to look ahead to the future without learning from the past. Each September I look forward to Herts for Learning's breakdown of the SATs taken by primary pupils.

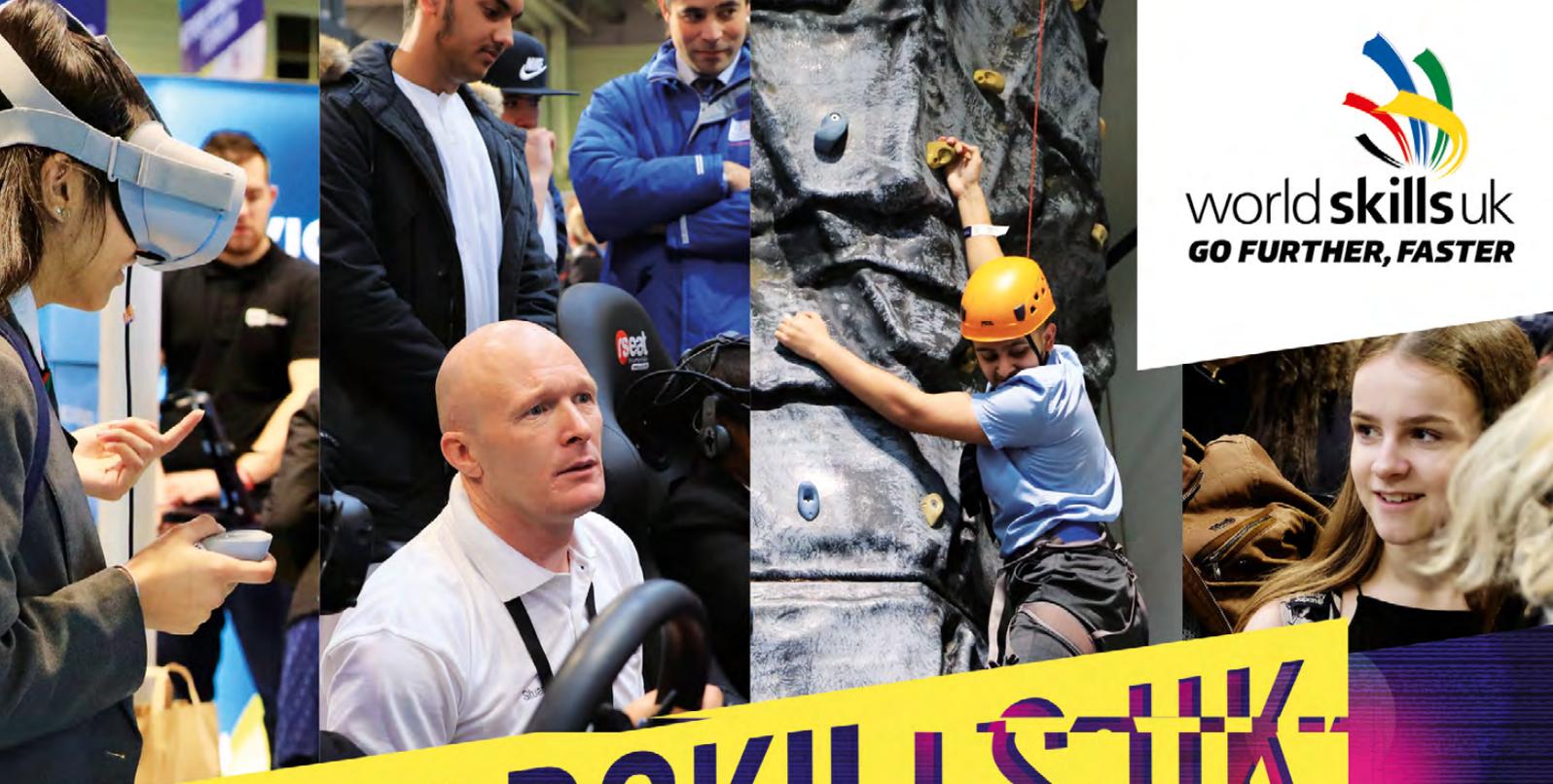
I am especially inspired by how the good folk at the consultancy eschew quick fixes and exam tricks, instead delving into the domain that feeds each of the test questions, and how we can improve our teaching of them. The perennial problem of "inference" is unpicked, as well as a closer look at the hot topic of vocabulary.

This blog is a gift for primary teachers, but should also be required reading for secondary colleagues to understand the expectations placed upon their children before they arrive in big school.

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I THINK IT'S A BIG EYE-OPENER. THEY CAN ACTUALLY SEE PEOPLE PHYSICALLY DOING STUFF. WORLDSKILLS UK LIVE OPENS STUDENTS' EYES TO THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE OUT THERE.”

Teacher, WorldSkills UK LIVE 2018

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Teacher pay 2019-20: What do schools need to know?

Donna Jagger

It is not the pay that is responsible for poor retention, it is the frustration at the lack of external professionals and resources, such as educational psychologists. Cuts have seriously hampered our ability to give all children what they need and deserve. Issues such as not being able to afford teaching assistants adds to the stress and workload. It is this that needs to be tackled. Extra pay is not a magic wand!

Keep schools open late to tackle knife crime, says children's commissioner

Jasper Williams

Exactly where are the teachers supposed to come from to do this? It will take twice as many as we have since teachers are already fully occupied and need their time after school to prepare for the next day's lessons and mark students' work. What art or woodwork teacher would allow children into their room without proper supervision? A mad idea. Just one more case of putting what should be parental responsibility on to teachers.

Agnew vows crackdown on schools with 'pernicious' exclusive uniform suppliers

Janet Downs

Lord Agnew is right when he says insisting on a monopoly supplier can be "pernicious". On the face of it, that's what the trust he founded, Inspiration, does. The website of Inspiration's Great Yarmouth Charter Academy says parents can buy items from other outlets. However, they must "exactly match" those supplied by the recommended supplier. As several of the items are embroidered and have a logo, it's unlikely they'll be found on the high street.

It would be more honest to stipulate a colour and list accepted styles easily purchased from any outlet.

The 'forgotten third' deserve the dignity of a new type of qualification, says Roy Blatchford

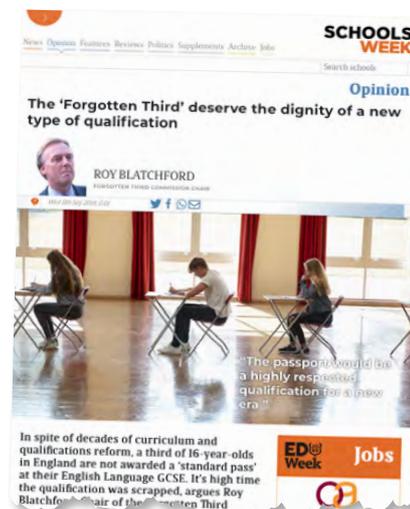
Martin Illingworth, @MartinIllingwor

Or get rid of exams altogether. No one needs to remember information anymore. It's in your pocket. We need different

REPLY OF THE WEEK **Mark Watson**

The 'forgotten third' deserve the dignity of a new type of qualification, says Roy Blatchford

Have to say I like the principle of having a "Passport for English" qualification, but I'm not sure I would agree with it replacing GCSE English language (or indeed GCSE English literature that curiously isn't discussed above). Couldn't it be an alternative/complementary option?



I also fully accept the problems of having a "forgotten third", but a qualification that everyone can get is not really a qualification. If every young person, regardless of capability, receives the same ungraded Passport for English then it would have no value whatsoever in the real world. Added to which, what is there that motivates anyone to work harder when it would have no benefit? The only way this works is if it's graded, in which case it doesn't matter if the official position is that everyone has passed ... in the outside world certain grades would be considered positively and certain grades would be considered negatively. And we're back to the same problem.

I'm sure there's a lot more information available, but I'm unsure what the author is uncomfortable with. Is it that he doesn't think anybody should fail to pass, or that he thinks a third is too many? Would he accept a forgotten sixth, or a forgotten tenth?

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

attributes now such as presence of mind and healthy scepticism. Pupils should have e-portfolios that document their capacities and experiences.

No-deal Brexit 'won't water down school food standards' – Williamson

Andy Jolley, @ajjolley

There is no need to weaken school food standards that are routinely ignored anyway. If you don't do any monitoring and there are no consequences, you can't complain about noncompliance.

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

SATURDAY

Amanda Spielman, the Hermione Granger of the education world, was left wishing she was in possession of a time-turner at ResearchEd's annual conference.

The chief inspector is always in her element at the annual event, but it seems she was disappointed this year – by her inability to go to every session.

"Like everyone I wanted to clone myself to go everywhere," she tweeted.

Wingardium leviosa!

MONDAY

What do you do when your government is in crisis? Announce something that's already been announced, of course.

That appeared to be the rationale of Boris Johnson's team, which "announced" the launch of the 14th free schools application wave at 10.30pm on Monday (or earlier, if you were one of the lucky few who spotted the version of the story that was mistakenly published online in the afternoon).

But the announcement wasn't new at all. Damian Hinds, who was unceremoniously booted from the cabinet when Johnson took over earlier this summer, announced the launch of wave 14 way back in January, but the applications were never opened, giving BoJo and Co a free pass to make it look like they came up with it all by themselves. Canny!

Jonathan Slater, the permanent secretary at the DfE, may not be a laugh a minute during his excruciating regular appearances in front of the public accounts committee, but he clearly has a sense of humour.

During a meeting with Amanda Spielman, Slater presented the Ofsted chief with a hot drink in a "Little Miss Naughty" mug.

We understand she saw the funny side.

TUESDAY

One of the more surprising announcements in Theresa May's resignation honours list was the peerage from Jeremy Corbyn for Christine Blower, the former general secretary of the National Union of Teachers (meaning she will sit as a Labour peer in the House of Lords).

Blower's move up has raised eyebrows, given that in the not too distant past she stood AGAINST Labour in the 2000 London Assembly elections. She only rejoined the party in 2016 because of her admiration for Corbs.

Still, at least Blower's elevation is in recognition of a lifetime of public service in teaching and the trade union movement.

The same cannot be said for Nick Timothy, the former New Schools Network director and May chief of staff, who has been given a CBE for losing the former PM her majority in 2017...

WEDNESDAY

After surviving yet another cull of DfE ministers, Nick Gibb, now in his 1,756th year as schools minister, has been handed additional responsibility for early years.

The move comes after the Conservative leadership neglected to appoint a new skills minister in the reshuffle, instead lumbering Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, with the job, leaving him needing support from Kemi Badenoch, the children's minister, and Michelle Donelan, her maternity cover.

We wish Gibbo well in his new role, which we fully expect him to hold for decades. Bring on phonics tests for two-year-olds and daily times-tables recitation in nurseries!

THURSDAY

On day one of his new role Gibb appeared to already want to get away, tweeting a picture of WH Smith at London's City Airport, lamenting the colourful language on the front covers of some of the books.

"Three of the top ten 'Airport Exclusive' books at London City Airport's WH Smith have the F-word in their title. Has it really come to this? #notocoarselanguage," he tweeted.

Maybe he should take a leaf out of the book of the prime minister, who has clearly been reading *The Life-Changing Magic of Not Giving a F**k* for some time.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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East Yorkshire

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We need someone who has an excellent track record of “achieving against the odds”, who has strong business acumen, and excels in seeing and developing the potential in their teams. That person must be passionate about enabling all young people to achieve, and have the resilience to work within a challenging urban environment. Above all, we are looking to appoint someone committed to demonstrating their Christian faith in every aspect of the work they undertake in achieving these goals.

Closing date: 12:00 noon 19th September 2019

For further details please go to
www.sentamuacademylearningtrust.org.uk or email
salt@sentamuacademy.org



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Salary: £90,000 per annum



Accountable to: Chief Executive Officer

Place of Work: CAST Central Office, St. Boniface's College, Plymouth (working from home is supported by agreement)

Contract: Full-time, permanent, after six-month probationary period

Start Date: January 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter

Plymouth CAST, a multi-academy trust of 35 Catholic schools (33 primary, 2 secondary and 1 nursery) located in the south west of England, is looking to recruit a Director of Education to continue to lead the rapid improvement of our schools.

Plymouth CAST is a Catholic Trust with a compelling vision for the education of children and young people. The successful applicant is not required to be a practising Catholic, however will support and promote the Catholic ethos of the Trust.

This role will involve leading an experienced team of Education and Standards Managers who have built up considerable knowledge of our schools. We are well on our way to ensuring that all our schools provide at least a good quality of education. The Director of Education will also be the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the Trust.

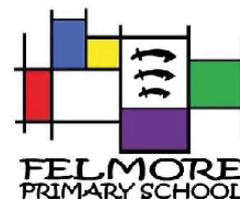
The successful applicant will be an experienced educational professional with a track record of success and impact in educational settings, significant experience of school improvement, extensive knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogy and a passionate commitment to improving the life chances of pupils.

If you are ready for a career-defining challenge in one of the largest MATs in the country, then please apply. If you would like to discuss the role further, please contact **Raymond Friel, CEO**, at raymond.friel@plymouthcast.org.uk.

Closing date: Midday on Monday 30 September

Shortlisting: Tuesday 1 October

Interviews: Tuesday 8 and Wednesday 9 October



HEADTEACHER

FELMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Job Description

Felmore Primary School has an exciting opportunity for a Headteacher to join the team in January 2020.

Pay Scale: LS18 - 24

Felmore Primary School

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- The ability to think strategically and develop a vision for our school
- Proven leadership and management skills with the ability to communicate effectively with all members of the school community
- Significant experience in improving teaching, learning and assessment so that all pupils are able to thrive
- The ability to adapt to an ever changing educational world
- A passion for fostering a love of learning in all pupils and be able to promote positive attitudes in pupils and staff
- Experience of working in partnership with other local schools and external agencies in order to contribute to creating a strong, resilient and responsive community

Our school and MAT can offer you:

- A strong committed leadership team
- A supportive and welcoming school environment with positive pupils who enjoy learning in a safe environment
- A team of talented and conscientious staff who work together to provide the best education and support for our pupils
- An enthusiastic and supportive Trust and Local and Local Governing Body
- Berlesduna Academy Trust values and invests in staff, offering excellent training, development and planned career progression.

Application

If you believe you are the person who can lead us to further success, we welcome your application.

Please call us to arrange a visit so you can experience our ethos first hand. Visits can be arranged by contacting Lisa Perry on lisaperry@berlesduna.co.uk or by phone on **01268 464759**. A printed information pack will be available when you visit us.

Please take care to complete the application in full, as any incomplete applications will not be considered.

We reserve the right to close the vacancy early so recommend that you submit your application at your earliest convenience.

Applications close Wednesday 9th October (Midday). Interviews will take place on Monday 14th October 2019.



*The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
All successful applicants will be subject to an enhanced DBS check, medical clearance and satisfactory references.
We are an equal opportunities employer.*



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F E D E R A T I O N**

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Salary: Competitive (dependent on experience)
Hours of work: Full or Part time
Start date: January 2020
Closing date: 23 September 2019
Interview dates: TBC

The Mossbourne Federation is the realisation of Sir Clive Bourne's dream to provide the children of Hackney with an outstanding education. Since 2004 the Federation has nurtured Sir Clive's dream by providing an outstanding education based on the core values of 'Excellence', 'No Excuses' and 'Unity'. Through upholding these core values, Mossbourne will be the first academy federation whose schools are without exception, exceptional.

The Federation currently includes four schools; two secondary and two primary schools.

The four main challenges for this newly created role will be to-

- Actively lead and manage on the expansion of the primary school cluster,
- Produce, share and implement a strategic vision for the primary schools
- Lead, manage and support Mossbourne Parkside Academy to produce and maintain outstanding academic outcomes and to
- Support Mossbourne Riverside Academy to continue to produce outstanding academic outcomes as the school increases in pupil numbers.

More information about the post and an online application form can be found on our website: www.mossbourne.org/vacancies

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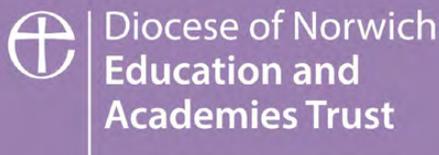
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DIOCESE OF NORWICH EDUCATION AND ACADEMIES TRUST (DNEAT)

The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) is an ever growing multi academy trust serving 34 academies and over 5000 young people across Norfolk and Suffolk. Our Trust aims to serve our schools' communities by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. The Trust is driven by the moral purpose of making a significant difference to the outcomes of young people in order to best prepare them for their next stage of education and adult life.

An Ofsted review of the Trust in March 2018 found: "Headteachers speak highly of the value added to their provision through becoming part of the family of Trust schools...Collectively, they were unequivocal in their endorsement of the high-quality training available to them."

We currently have two exciting headteacher vacancies in the Trust. If you are passionate about offering the best quality education provision to young people, we would like to hear from you.

EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER - Nar Valley Federation of Church Academies



Salary Scale: L15-21
Closing date: 9am on 16 September 2019
Interviews: 25 and 26 September 2019
Taking up post: 1 January 2020

The Nar Valley Federation of Church Academies are a group of three village schools located about 6 miles from each other. They became part of the Diocese of Norwich Education Academies Trust in March 2016. There are around 240 pupils across the three sites and a dedicated staff team working across the federation. This includes a Deputy HT and leadership team who have all worked tirelessly and extensively to bring the federation to its great position. To be the Executive Headteacher of this Federation moving forward will be a privilege - there is still work to be done, including further development of the curriculum, but the foundations are laid and you will have the time to evaluate and reflect upon what is working well before taking steps to develop the schools further.

HEADTEACHER - Thomas Bullock Church of England Primary Academy



Salary Scale: L12-18
Closing date: 9am on 16 September 2019
Interviews: 23 and 24 September 2019
Taking up post: 1 January 2020

Thomas Bullock Church of England Primary Academy is a lovely school of around 180 pupils, set in the spacious grounds in the growing village of Shipdham. The school became a sponsored academy when they joined the Diocese of Education and Academies Trust in 2014. The staff team are committed and hard working. They are looking forward to the next phase in the academy's development. The academy is excited to be recruiting a new Headteacher who will rise to the challenge of securing swift improvement and who will embrace the opportunities of working within a multi-academy trust and the levels of support and aspiration this brings.

Please send completed applications to: headship@epm.co.uk

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of all our pupils and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We follow safer recruitment practice and all appointments are subject to satisfactory enhanced DBS clearance, satisfactory references and verification of identity and qualifications.

For further information visit the DNEAT website:
www.dneat.org/vacancies