

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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Mystery of £3m pay-out revealed



Heads: We won't be gagged on funding



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## Election manifesto special

Four pages of news and analysis on Labour and the Liberal Democrats' pitches on education

### LABOUR

- PARTY WINS FUNDING WAR WITH £10.5BN PLEDGE - PLUS £5,000 PAY RISES FOR ALL
- BUT PLANS TO STRIP MATS OF POWER UNCLEAR



### LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

- CASH TO REVERSE CUTS, 20,000 NEW TEACHERS AND ABOLISH EBACC
- BUT QUESTIONS OVER REMAIN BONUS AND FREE SCHOOL MEALS PLEDGE



# School staff 'vulnerable' as medical support disappears

- Special school heads in emotional plea for help as nurse numbers dwindle
- New report reveals staff picking up 'increasingly complex' care procedures
- 'It makes you fear for your own job and fear something will happen to a child'

INVESTIGATES

FREDDIE WHITTAKER & JAMES CARR | @SCHOOLSWEEK

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## Editor's top picks



Cameron's STEM recruitment pledge flops

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When is off-rolling not off-rolling?

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## Chartered College: Time to stand on our own two feet



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# Cameron's £67m STEM scheme running a third empty

**JAMES CARR**

**@JAMESCARR\_93**

**EXCLUSIVE**

The government is failing to fulfil its promise to upskill 15,000 teachers in maths and science under a £67 million scheme that David Cameron pledged would "pull our country up in the world".

New figures show the Department for Education has failed to fill a third of its teacher subject specialism training (TSST) courses over the past three years.

The free training, to improve subject knowledge for non-specialist and returner teachers, was announced by the former prime minister in 2014.

He said it would raise school standards in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and "lift our children's horizons". The courses were later rolled out in modern foreign languages (MFL).

But take-up is also slumping, with the DfE meeting just 55 per cent of its target to upskill 3,000 teachers in STEM last year.

Chris Keates, the acting general secretary of the NASUWT teachers' union, said the findings should come as no surprise and called on the government to take action "as a matter of urgency".

"The education system in England is in the midst of the worst teacher recruitment and retention emergency in living memory.

"Poor pay and career progression prospects, excessive workload, a lack of flexible working opportunities and a lack of respect for teacher professionalism lie at the heart of this crisis."

*Schools Week* obtained the figures, which cover from 2016-17 to 2018-19, after a freedom of information request.

Of the STEM courses, the government filled 96 per cent of its 3,000-teacher target in 2016-17.

However, this plunged to 1,235 fewer teachers last year.

Meanwhile, the number of teachers taking up MFL training has also fallen, from 605 in 2016-17 to 448 last year.

But as the DfE's recruitment target was lower for last year (650) compared with 2016-17 (1,000), it has actually got closer to



reaching its target.

Last year it filled 69 per cent of places, compared with 60 per cent in 2016-17.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), said the take-up was likely to have been affected by "intensified" teacher recruitment and schools funding pressures.

"Teacher shortages exist in many subjects so it may be difficult for a school to justify releasing a teacher for one shortage subject to train in another shortage subject.

"This is likely to be compounded by funding pressures, which make it difficult to afford the cost of providing cover."

The DfE's most recent workforce census revealed teacher retention rates are getting worse. The five-year retention rate dropped to 67.7 per cent for those who qualified in 2013, compared with 68.5 per cent in the previous year.

The government has also missed its secondary school teacher recruitment targets for six years running.

During a Downing Street speech announcing the plan in 2014, Cameron said: "If countries are going to win in the global

race and children compete and get the best jobs, you need mathematicians and scientists – pure and simple.

"This is all part of our long-term economic plan for Britain – making sure our children have the skills they need to thrive and get on. And by sticking to it, we will lift our children's horizons and pull our country up in the world."

DfE figures for the scheme's first year in 2015-16 show it started well with 99 per cent of the 3,000 places filled.

But Barton suggested that teachers could be put off adding to already heavy workloads.

Keates said the government must act to ensure pay and working conditions in all schools were "sufficient to recruit, retain and motivate the workforce".

The DfE's recruitment and retention strategy, which it billed as the "biggest teaching reform in a generation", was launched in January. One of the proposals includes a two-year training package for new teachers.

The Conservative party has also pledged to lift teacher starting salaries to £30,000 by 2022.

## The numbers that tell the story

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
STEM Target	3,000	3,000	3,000
STEM Enrolment	2,899	2,042	1,664
% filled	96%	68%	55%
MFL Target	1,000	1,600	650
MFL Enrolment	605	537	448
% filled	61%	33%	69%

# Testing agency pays Pearson £3m (but won't say why)

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR\_93

EXCLUSIVE

The education giant Pearson has been revealed as the mystery supplier who received £3 million from the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) to settle a legal dispute over outsourcing the management of assessments.

The agency's annual accounts, published last month, detailed the pay-off – but the Department for Education refused to say who the recipient was.

*Schools Week* can now reveal the cash was paid to Pearson to settle a dispute over awarding outsourcing giant Capita a £109 million deal to run its test operations.

However, neither Pearson nor the DfE would explain specifically what the payment was for, citing legal restrictions.

Jon Richards, the head of education for UNISON, said: "Once more the DfE is hiding the detail of another huge, unnecessary payout."

It was "scandalous the taxpayer is footing the bill... Much-needed cash that should be going to our underfunded schools is now leaving the education system."

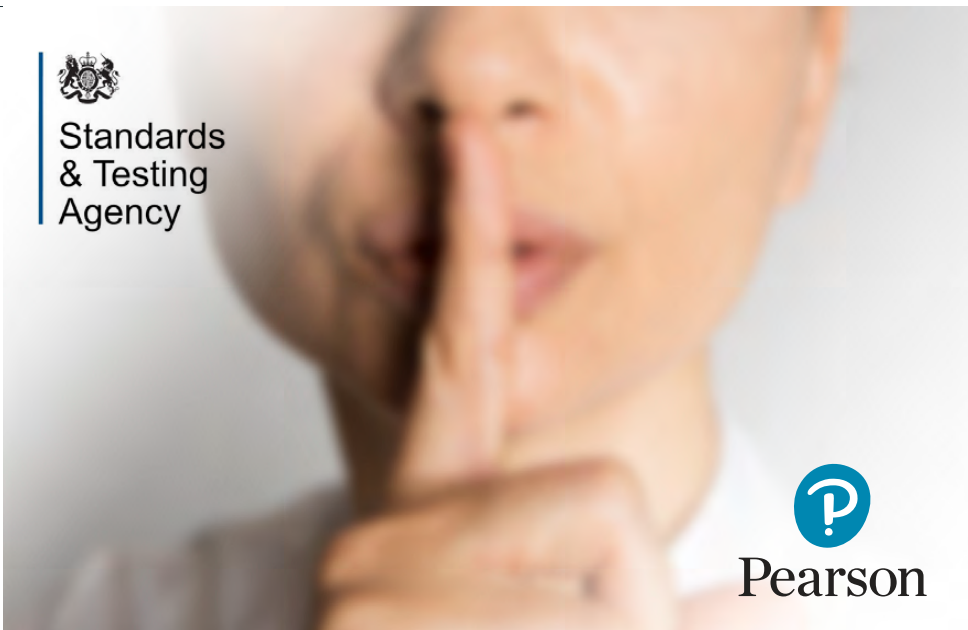
Capita won the contract, which will run from 2020-24, to manage the STA's administration, processing and support for all primary school national curriculum assessments.

The contract streamlines a number of services previously delivered through several companies. They include the printing, distributing and collating of more than nine million test papers annually for key stage 1 and key stage 2 tests and the phonics screening check.

Capita will also administer the marking of four million key stage 2 test papers each year – which has been delivered by Pearson since 2009.

Pearson would only say that the claim related to the "contract process".

The STA, responsible for



developing and delivering statutory assessments, is an executive agency of the DfE.

The department was also tight-lipped, saying the payment related to the procurement of the STA's test operation services.

The DfE also said it was a "mutually agreed settlement" – which suggests the department may not have followed appropriate rules on its procurement process.

While there doesn't appear to be similar examples in education, the Department for Transport paid £33 million to Eurotunnel to settle a claim in March.

The cross-Channel operator complained it had been not invited to bid for contracts to provide extra freight capacity in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

A DfE spokesman said while disputes with suppliers were "rare", when they did occur a resolution in the "best interests of the taxpayer" was sought.

"Following legal advice, the department concluded that a settlement was the best course of action to minimise costs and ensure vital operational work was not interrupted."

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, launched a "root and branch" review of the STA's operations in 2016, following

two "high-profile" security breaches that caused "significant publicity and reputational damage" to the agency.

One was Pearson which "mistakenly uploaded" the key stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test on to its secure marker portal site a day early.

The paper was spotted by a marker who leaked the material to *The Guardian*.

While no sensitive test information was released and the test was able to go ahead, Claire Burton, the agency's chief executive, said the breach was "deeply regrettable and highlighted weaknesses in the agency's practices concerning quality assurance".

Pearson, a FTSE 100 company that recorded a pre-tax profit of £498 million in 2018, said it had a "good track record" of delivering the STA contract.

"During this time we have consistently, without fail, ensured on-time and accurate marked test papers for millions of school children across the UK. We have met the commitments asked of us by the Standards and Testing Agency."

When Capita won the contract, its chief executive Jon Lewis said its technology and service management capabilities would "identify and deliver efficiencies and improvements ensuring both value for money".



Jon Richards

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# Election watch

## Schools policies from Labour

The Labour Party's official manifesto for the 2019 general election was launched this week.

Besides the party's school spending plans and a few other nuggets, the document is mostly made up of pledges either made in 2017 or announced since.

### SCHOOLS POLICIES

1. A £10.5 billion increase in the schools budget by 2022-23
2. A fairer funding formula "that leaves no child worse off"
3. Maximum class sizes of 30 in all primary schools
4. Scrapping key stage 1 and 2 SATs and baseline assessments, refocusing assessment on "supporting pupil progress"
5. £160 million pupil premium to fund arts education for every primary pupil
6. A review of the curriculum to ensure that it "enriches students and covers subjects such as black history and continues to teach issues like the Holocaust"
7. Bringing free schools and academies under the control of parents, teachers and local communities
8. Giving schools control over budgets and day-to-day decisions, overseen by "an accountable governing body with elected representatives"
9. Putting councils in charge of admissions and allowing them to open schools
10. Putting National Education Service regional offices in charge of delivery and co-ordination of schools, including peer-to-peer improvement based on the London Challenge
11. A common rulebook for all schools, set out in legislation
12. Replacing Ofsted with a new body "designed to drive school improvement"
13. A teacher supply service to tackle wasted money going to private agencies

14. Making schools accountable for the outcomes of pupils who leave their rolls
15. "Proper regulation" of all education providers
16. Reform of alternative provision
17. Extending free school meals to all primary pupils
18. Encouraging breakfast clubs
19. Tackling the cost of school uniforms
20. The return of the school support staff negotiating body and national pay settlements for teachers
21. Closing the tax loopholes that currently apply to private schools
22. Charging VAT on private school fees
23. Tasking the Social Justice Commission with advising on the integration of private schools and the creation of a comprehensive education system

### POLICIES THAT AFFECT SCHOOLS

1. A 5 per cent pay rise for teachers, support staff and all other public sector workers in April 2020
2. A network of mental health hubs and 3,500 professionals to give every child access to a school counsellor
3. 4,500 more health visitors and school nurses
4. A ban on fast food restaurants near school sites



Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn

# Election watch



## Labour: academy heads will take control again

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**

**@FCDWHITTAKER**

Labour has promised to put academy headteachers back in charge of their budgets and the day-to-day running of their schools, sidelining multi-academy trusts' central teams.

However, the party's manifesto published yesterday leaves big question marks over how such a system would work.

Other headline policies include "closing tax loopholes" for private schools, boosting funding by £10.5 billion and 5 per cent pay rises.

The manifesto says that the academies system is "over-centralised, inefficient and undemocratic" and pledges to bring academies "back under the control of the people who know them best – parents, teachers and local communities".

Schools will be overseen by an "accountable governing body with elected representatives". But there are no further details about how this would shut out academy trusts from decision-making.

The manifesto repeats the promise of the shadow education secretary Angela Rayner (pictured) to bring all schools under a common rulebook, but gives no further detail of what those rules would be.

Jonathan Simons, a former education adviser to Gordon Brown and David Cameron who now works for the think tank Public First, said the plans were "vague".

"A commitment to greater oversight from elected representatives probably means councillors sitting on trust boards with parents and staff, but that's not clear."

The party confirmed councils would have responsibility for the "delivery of education", as well as managing admissions, and would regain the ability to open new schools.

Oversight and coordination would be carried out by regional offices of the National Education Service. It is not clear whether regional schools commissioners would be replaced.

The party says it will make the money available for the pay rises, but it will be up to national pay bargaining to determine how it is allocated. It is unclear who would decide whether trust CEOs would receive rises.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said the section on academies "begs more questions than it answers".

"It outlines a system in which governance, admissions and school

place provision would be reformed, but it isn't clear what would happen," he said. The promise to set up NES regional offices was also "vague".

"What we would certainly not want to see is another round of costly and disruptive structural reform to the education system."

Labour also said its proposals to charge VAT on private school fees could lead to about 5 per cent of independent pupils moving into the state sector.

As of June, there were 580,000 pupils in private schools – meaning up to 29,000 more pupils would enter the state system.

Based on the average of the cost of educating pupils in state primary and secondary schools, an exodus of this size would cost the state £158 million in per-pupil funding each year.

But private school leaders say they expect as many as one in five pupils to leave the private sector if the VAT change is imposed, with research suggesting this would cost more than £400 million within five years.

Mike Buchanan, the executive director of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses'

Conference, said the taxes were "putting politics before pupils and will have serious unforeseen consequences".



FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## Labour ahead in school cash bidding war

Labour's promise to pump £10.5 billion into the schools budget by 2022 makes it the winner in the funding war.

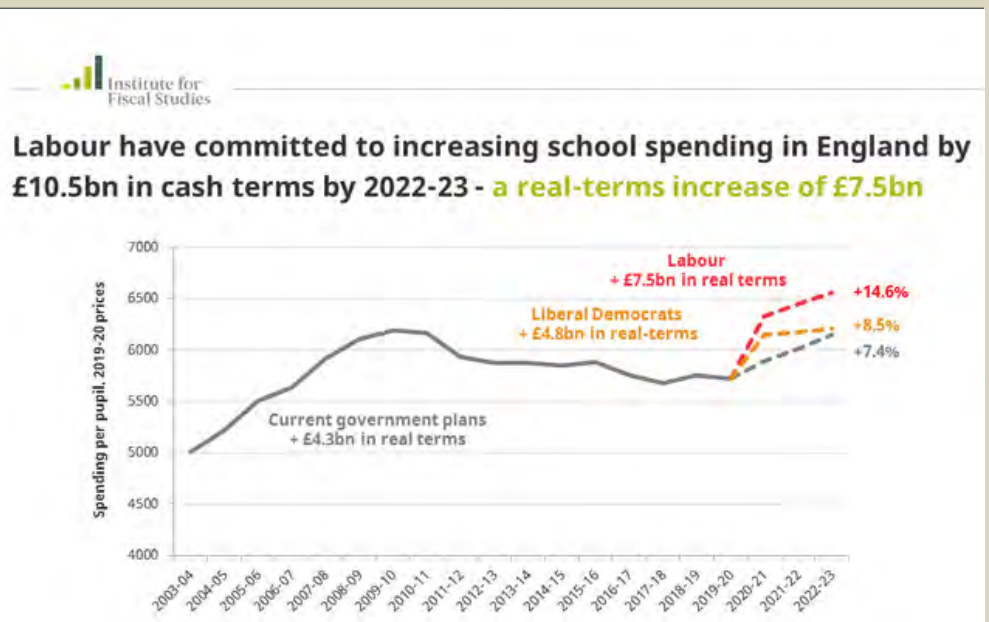
Under Labour's plans, the schools budget will rise by £6 billion in 2020-21, and then a further £2.3 billion in 2021-22 and £2.2 billion in 2022-23.

While the Liberal Democrats have pledged a similar amount – £10 billion – this won't be delivered in full until 2024.

The Conservatives have promised £7.1 billion by 2022.

Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, which factors in inflation and cost pressures, shows Labour's plans are a real-terms rise of £7.5 billion over the next three years, compared with £4.8 billion for the Lib Dem plan and £4.3 billion for the Conservatives.

Luke Sibieta, an IfS research fellow, said the Lib Dems and Conservatives would



"effectively reverse cuts of 8 per cent in spending per pupil over the past decade".

"Labour would go further still, with a 15 per cent real-terms rise in spending per pupil".



# Election watch

## Schools policies from the Lib Dems

The headline pledges in the Liberal Democrats' manifesto released on Wednesday are to boost school funding by £10.6 billion, guarantee teachers an annual pay rise of 3 per cent and train 20,000 more teachers.

Many of the policies featured in some guise in 2017 and 2015, while other key pledges – such as abolishing Ofsted – have already been announced.

Here's everything you need to know.

### 1 £10bn extra funding, plus guaranteed pay rises

The schools budget will rise by £10.6 billion – but not until 2024 (it's also important to note this equates to just £4.8 billion in real terms).

The extra cash will be rolled out incrementally, starting with a £4.6 billion increase next year.

The party has also pledged to “end the crisis in special educational needs and disabilities funding” by halving the £6,000 that schools currently pay towards the cost of a child's education health and care plan.

As well as matching the Conservative's £30,000 salary pledge for all new teachers, the party has promised annual pay rises of at least 3 per cent.

### 2 Abolish the EBacc

This manifesto goes further on school accountability than past documents.

This time the Lib Dems say they will protect arts and creative subjects and “act to remove barriers to pupils studying these subjects”, which will mean abolishing the English Baccalaureate.

The performance measure has been blamed for a decline in the proportion of pupils taking arts subjects because it incentivises schools to focus on academic disciplines.

### 3 A “curriculum for life” (that is out of politicians' hands)

This involves rolling out citizenship, financial education and life-saving skills to all schools, including academies, to “teach the core skills required for children to flourish in the modern world, including critical thinking, verbal reasoning and creativity”.

The party would also set up an independent body to decide any future curriculum changes. (These commitments were also made in previous manifestos.)

The party also wants to bring in an entitlement to 50 hours of fully funded continuing professional development for all teachers by 2025.

### 4 Scrap Ofsted, SATs and league tables

Ofsted will be replaced with a new “HM inspector of schools”, which will conduct inspections of state and independent schools every three years.

The party says the regime will consider “a broader range of factors” than Ofsted, including “the social and emotional development of children, and the wellbeing of staff and pupils”.

The Lib Dems have also promised to replace league tables with “a broader set of indicators, including information about pupils' and teachers' wellbeing, as well as academic attainment”.

SATs will be replaced with a “formal, moderated teacher assessment” at the end of each phase of education “and some lighter-touch testing”.

### 5 Give councils more powers over academies

As in 2017, the Lib Dems are promising to give councils responsibility for admissions and exclusions at all schools. The party's intention is that councils will act as “strategic education authorities” for their areas.

The party has also reaffirmed its pledge to make multi-academy trusts face full inspections, and allow councils to open new community schools.

It will also oppose “any future expansion” of grammar schools and devolve all capital funding for new school spaces to local authorities.

### 6 The best of the rest

The party will require inclusive school uniform policies “that are gender-neutral and flexible enough to suit different budgets”.

Free school meals will also be extended to all pupils in primary schools, a pledge made in earlier manifestos.

But the party has gone slightly further this time, promising free meals to all secondary pupils whose families receive universal credit (UC). This follows a move by the Conservatives to remove provision for some UC claimants.

According to a costings document supplied alongside the manifesto, this policy will cost £1.16 billion in 2024-25.

The party also wants a specific individual responsible for mental health in all schools, which would in turn have a statutory duty to promote the wellbeing of their pupils.



Lib Dem leader Jo Swinson

# Election watch



Jo Swinson, Hinchley Wood school in Surrey

## Lib Dem pledge 'won't change' decade-long squeeze

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**

@FCDWHITTAKER

Plans by the Liberal Democrats to boost school spending will still mean the sector has spent more than a decade without spending growth.

The party has said that if it forms a government, the total schools budget will rise by £10.6 billion in cash terms by 2024-25.

Party leaders say the money will be used to reverse the real-terms cuts of the past decade.

It will also cover other pledges, including 20,000 new teachers, annual 3 per cent pay rises for teachers and a fully funded CPD entitlement for all teachers.

But according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies the Lib Dems' funding pledge would still mean "more than a decade without spending growth up to 2022".

Research fellow Luke Sibieta said while this would "provide an early boost" it "wouldn't change the picture of a long-run squeeze on school resources, with no change in spending per pupil between 2009 and 2022".

The party plans to increase the schools budget by £4.6 billion in 2020-21, and a further £1.5 billion a year between 2021-22 and 2024-25.

This would give schools a larger early boost than under the Conservatives, who have pledged to increase the budget by £2.6 billion in 2020-21.

According to the IfS, once today's prices and cost pressures are taken into account, the Lib Dem plans work out as a real-terms rise of £4.8 billion by 2022-23, compared with the £4.3 billion offered by the Tories.

The Lib Dems have also promised to match

the Conservatives in upping starting salaries for teachers to £30,000.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said that the additional commitments would "absorb a sizeable chunk of the extra money".

Analysis by Jonathan Simons, a director at the lobbyists Public First, estimated the pay policies would cost about £1.3 billion a year by 2024, while the cost of the extra teachers would be about £630 million.

Simons also estimated the CPD entitlement would cost almost £1.3 billion, while a pledge to halve the £6,000 schools have to pay towards additional support for pupils with education, health and care plans would cost £585 million.

Jo Swinson, the party leader, said her party expected a "Remain bonus" of £50 billion over five years as a result of blocking Brexit.

The figure is an estimate of additional tax revenue from a stronger economy if the country stayed in the EU. The IfS found there was "a lot of uncertainty over such an estimate", but said it was "within the range of plausible estimates for the extent of that additional revenue" if the UK remained.

The party has allocated an extra £1.16 billion to extend free school meals to all primary pupils and secondary pupils whose families receive universal credit.

Christine Farquharson, from the IfS, said if the party kept the allocation at its current rate of £2.30 a meal, extending FSM eligibility to all primary pupils could cost about £700 million in 2024.

"That's not a full answer to whether the Lib Dems' costings...are reasonable, but it suggests that they're not totally out to lunch," she said.

## 'We will not be gagged,' heads tell candidates

**JOHN DICKENS**

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Hundreds of headteachers have used their personal email addresses to warn election candidates about school funding pressures, vowing: "We will not be gagged."

The government last year warned headteachers over using school resources for "party political activities".

Tory politicians were unhappy about schools sending letters to parents that described funding cuts.

During the pre-election period, known as *purdah*, public bodies also have extra responsibilities to remain neutral.

But Jules White, a West Sussex headteacher who leads the Worth Less funding campaign, said: "We will not be gagged from contributing in a balanced and factual way to ensure there is informed debate about educational funding and provision."

Headteachers in 300 constituencies have written to candidates with a "state of play" report that makes clear school funding must "remain a top priority for any new government".

Robin Bevan, the headteacher of Southend High School for Boys, said there had been a "ridiculous pantomime of competing school funding claims" between politicians and school leaders.

"We need a single, transparent public benchmark for funding so politicians can't lie and school leaders are confident in their understanding of the situation."

The National Education Union vice-president said headteachers who raised concerns about funding were sometimes seen as "troublemakers or overtly political".

Bevan said "straightforward" school funding statistics would mean "nobody can silence us by claiming we're political."

"Headteachers can and should have a public voice in matters relating to the professional delivery of education."

Jonathan Slater, the Department for Education's permanent secretary, has promised to build his department's reputation as a "trustworthy communicator" of statistics.

It follows several slapdowns by the statistics watchdog. The department has also promised to publish a "comprehensive set" of official school funding figures.



# Headteachers' Roundtable

# SUMMIT



**FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2020**



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**SCHOOLS WEEK**

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**Headteachers' Roundtable**

# Schools on the front line



## Special school staff left to fill gaps in medical care

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER & JAMES CARR**  
**@SCHOOLSWEEK**

Special school staff are being left “vulnerable” and fearful for their jobs because they have to pick up “increasingly complex” care procedures with dwindling support from medical professionals.

An investigation by Schools Week discovered that school leaders are terrified of reprisals if things go wrong on their watch, after a year-long research project found staff have been left to “fill gaps” in NHS provision.

The meeting of complex health needs of children in special schools is being delegated to non-medical staff “without appropriate governance arrangements and no additional funding”, the report claimed.

We found examples where school staff were hauled in front of the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) over allegations that they failed in their supervision of care. One headteacher told of how a teaching assistant almost lost their career after a mistake in which a child could have died.

There are now calls for new guidance, amid concerns that schools could be breaking the law by effectively providing NHS clinical nursing services.

“This seems to be a recipe for problems that headteachers and school governors are unprepared for,” Judith Smith, who chairs the Yorkshire and Humber special school leaders’ network, warned.

She added that heads were “increasingly concerned” that the transfer of responsibility for healthcare services is happening “at the same



EXCLUSIVE

time as a growing complexity of medical need in the student population”.

### Nurse numbers fall, need grows

A school nursing conference this year was told there were now 30 per cent fewer school nurses (around 2,100) than in 2010. And the number of children with complex needs was increasing.

In Bradford, for example, the number of nurses has remained static since 2013. However a rise in children in special schools means the ratio of pupils to nurses has shot up from 1:65 to 1:88.

Bradford was one of the four areas that featured in the “special needs school nursing project” study, commissioned by the Bradford District Achievement Partnership and released yesterday.

All schools have a legal duty to make arrangements for supporting pupils with medical conditions.

Trained nurses are allowed to delegate certain tasks – such as injections, help with asthma inhalers, nasal or oral suctioning and ventilation care – to “unregistered” staff such as teachers and support workers, so long as the task is “within the other person’s scope of competence” and training is provided.

But Marijke Miles, chair of the NAHT union’s SEND sector council, said: “We’re finding increasingly complex medical needs in schools being managed by staff on the lowest grades with training which is difficult to get and difficult to

**Continued on next page**

## Teachers accused of misconduct over care needs supervision

Unions have vowed to lobby ministers to look into the issues, admitting that school leaders are “at risk”. They fear that staff will be held responsible for failures of medical care they are unprepared for.

Staff have also faced disciplinary hearings over their failure to properly administer medical care. In November last year, Matthew Pryer, a former SEND co-ordinator at Brandhall Primary School in Oldbury, West Midlands, was banned from teaching for a

minimum of two years for instructing a pupil to take medication unsupervised and failing to tell the parents that their child had self-administered medication.

The TRA panel that decided his fate found the pupil “appears to have received two double doses as a result of being allowed to take the medication unsupervised and was at risk of taking further medication later that same day”.

In July 2018, Peter Trythall, headteacher of the now-closed Stanbridge Earls independent

special school in Hampshire, avoided a ban for a series of allegations about his management of the care of pupils.

Although some allegations – such as poor record-keeping – were found proven, the TRA threw out an allegation that he failed to adequately supervise school and medical staff to follow safe procedures in relation to a medication error.

A TRA panel threw out the same allegation against Trythall’s deputy, Robert Bailey.

# Schools on the front line



get refreshed. You get huge skills decay.”

The study found delegating some procedures has required “considerable training”. In Bradford, for instance, 4,495 teaching hours per year are commissioned for training education staff in special-needs schools and respite services.

Miles said that in Hampshire, where she is a head, school nursing has been “eroded to virtually nothing but vaccinations”, and nurses do not have the capacity to help with care plans, training or other aspects expected by parents.

Another headteacher, who spoke on condition of anonymity, recounted an incident where a lack of support nearly cost a teaching assistant their career and a child their life.

The worker had failed to check the pH level of a child dependent on oxygen before delivering a nasal-gastro feed. The feed was stopped before anything happened.

“Essentially they could have caused that child real, serious damage as the tube was in the wrong place – it could have killed them,” the leader, who accepts with hindsight that the school’s response was wrong, said.

“We hauled that teaching assistant to a disciplinary when actually we should have supported them. The nursing cover who trained them, who checked his competency – or not – they were quite happy to throw them under the bus.”

In Bradford, headteachers have warned of an increasing reliance on ambulance calls as they struggle with their care responsibilities.

According to data from the Bradford District Achievement Partnership, special schools in the area made 42 emergency calls in the autumn term of 2018-19. Of these, 25 came from just two schools.

One school said the number of 999 calls they made increased from 32 in 2017-18 to 41 in 2018-19.

In more rural areas, reliance on the emergency services becomes a real problem. “If there is any intervention required, we would get onto paramedics, ambulance, whatever, but living in a rural area you’ve got 45 minutes to an hour before an ambulance might come, so we have got to do something to intervene,” said Brian Richardson, head at KTS Academy, near Middlesbrough.

There is also a big difference in provision across regions. In Sheffield, for example, schools provide for health needs with advice from children’s community nurses, and have no nursing services whatsoever, whereas in West Sussex services are joint-funded by the local clinical commissioning group (CCG) and schools on a 50:50 basis.

In Kent, only 4 of 13 special schools had NHS nursing or physiotherapy provision commissioned by local CCGs. Some of the remaining nine directly employed a permanent or agency nurse or therapist, but others relied on school staff and a 999 ambulance service “if required”.

## Are schools breaking the law?

In a paper compiled for the conference, Emma Smith, an independent consultant, warned that the current delegation practice “may have contributed to establishing what could be an unlawful model”.

“When clinical procedures are delegated to school staff, it is the school, as employing organisation, that becomes responsible for this activity,” she said.

“Case law has demonstrated that, when NHS

nursing tasks can be delegated, they still remain nursing tasks. This leads to the critical question that has previously been overlooked: on what legal authority are schools providing NHS clinical nursing services?”

Calls are now growing for “clear and consistent governance structure”. Graham Quinn, chair of Special Schools Voice, said there was no publication for school governors and leaders to “suggest how they should respond to this practice of the NHS passing medical care tasks over to schools”.

Guidance from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) states that a rise in youngsters with life-limiting and threatening conditions, along with a strategic shift from hospital to community care, has increased the need for the delegation of identified care needs.

This was “in order for children and young people to maximise opportunities available to them”, the guidance stated.

But Jacqui Wennington, headteacher at Springwood Primary School in Salford, said: “It makes you fear for your own job, but the ultimate bottom-line fear is that something will happen to a child and we will be responsible for it.”

The RCN welcomed the call for additional guidance to provide “consistency and equity” in service provision.

Fiona Smith, the RCN’s professional lead for children and young people nursing, said: “While media headlines focus on waiting times in hospitals and a lack of beds, many of those who need the help of nurses in schools and community settings are often missing out on the specialist care they need because of the lack of specialist nurses.”

## ‘We have more children receiving complex care than the infirmary’

Southfield School in Bradford has the equivalent of 1.4 full-time nurses and 0.25 full-time healthcare support workers, despite having 214 pupils with care plans, up from 91 in 2016.

The school has seen an increase in the number of care plans which require manual handling, physiotherapy, feeding and speech and language care, and the research found care being provided was becoming “increasingly more complex, requiring additional training, supervision and assessment of school staff by nurses”.

The study said: “School staff feel they are left

to fill gaps in NHS funding and provision.

“The special school nursing team are unable to meet the current need with existing resources, due to the number of school staff who require training and assessment and competing priorities from areas such as safeguarding and clinical services.”

Dominic Wall (pictured), the school’s headteacher, told *Schools Week* that they had “more children receiving complex health care support every day than on all the paediatric wards of the Bradford Royal Infirmary”.

He added: “The law seems to treat my deputy

and myself more like the mother and father of a large family living in a semi-detached house on the ring road in Bradford.”

He called for special schools to be recognised as “quasi-clinical settings” with national statutory guidance to ensure safe practice “in the same way that care homes for the elderly do”.



News

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# FIFTH OF PUPILS GIVEN EXTRA TIME FOR EXAMS

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

One in five pupils had extra time to complete their exams this year as the proportion of students given access arrangements increased by 9 per cent.

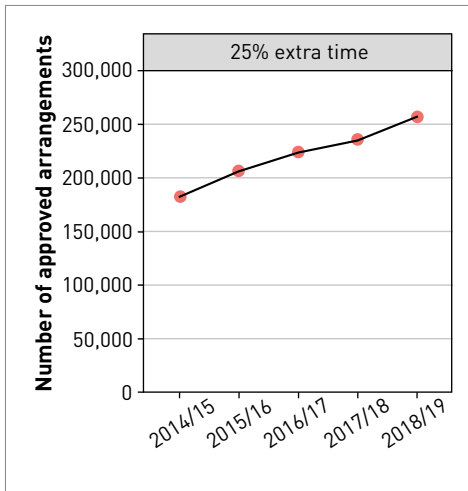
Figures published by Ofqual yesterday show the number of pupils given 25 per cent longer to complete GCSE, A-level and AS levels this year was 256,710 (19.4 per cent of the total).

That is up by 9.2 per cent from the 235,105 pupils (17.9 per cent) in 2017-18.

The overall number of approved access arrangements – which also includes computer readers, bilingual dictionaries and scribe technology – rose by 3.4 per cent last year to 404,600 pupils.

*Schools Week* reported research last year that found schools wanted “much clearer” guidance on access arrangements.

Andrew Harland, director of the



International Examination Officers’ Association which did the research, said that schools were “struggling to cope” with rising numbers of requests for special provision.

However, some examiners warned that extra help may be being offered to pupils who did not need it, leading to inflated

grades.

Independent schools had the highest proportion of pupils given extra time, at around 27 per cent (excluding the “other” school category, which includes special schools and had 30 per cent).

Around 17 per cent of pupils at non-selective secondaries got extra time. The proportion was just 8 per cent in selective schools.

The proportion of pupils getting a computer reader/reader stayed roughly the same, with just a 0.2 per cent drop. Youngsters using a bilingual dictionary with extra time dropped by 15.7 per cent.

Harland said last year that teachers should have more say in determining how pupils might be helped to access an exam.

For example, a pupil might need to be allowed to listen to music if it helped them to concentrate, or an autistic pupil could need to take tests in a familiar environment, rather than an exam hall.

JOHN DICKENS | @JOHNDICKENSSW

## School concedes collective worship legal case

Campaigners say religious schools must offer secular alternatives for pupils withdrawn from collective worship, following an academy trust climbdown from a court case over compulsory prayers.

The Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust will provide alternative materials that further spiritual, moral and cultural development for students withdrawn from collective worship at Burford primary school.

The trust has also agreed to stop holding a leavers’ ceremony for children in a local church and giving Bibles as leaving presents.

Lee and Lizanne Harris launched a judicial review after hearing their two children were made to watch re-enactment of Bible scenes during weekly collective worship assemblies.

They argued the Christian worship was in breach of their right to freedom of belief under the Human Rights Act.

Campaigners say they will now press schools to introduce inclusive assemblies, however the Department for Education stressed there are no further implications for other schools as a



result of the decision.

The trust said it made an out-of-court agreement, without an admission of liability, to avoid “wholly unnecessary court costs” at a time when “school funds are stretched”.

However, the settlement could reach £100,000, including paying up to £40,000 of the parents’ costs, as well as £60,000 of its own legal expenditure.

Anne Dellar, the chief executive of the trust, said: “While recognising every parent’s right to withdraw their child from collective worship, we are saddened that this case has diverted valuable funds and staff time.”

A small community school had been placed

at “the sharp end of a national campaign”, she said.

In a joint statement the parents said the case had “established that schools have a duty to make inclusive assemblies available to all pupils who want them”.

Humanists UK, which supported the parents, said it would encourage schools “still mandating unshared religious practices to cease to do so or to provide meaningful inclusive alternatives”.

*Schools Week* revealed last month how more schools opting out of the legal requirement to provide a daily act of Christian worship were choosing “multi-faith” alternatives.

Schools are allowed to change their collective worship from being “wholly or broadly” Christian in nature, a rule that has been in place since 1944.

However Dellar said the arrangement at Burford was “short term” and would “lapse when the youngest of the two children leave the school”. She added the ‘good’-rated primary was a “happy, successful and inclusive school”.

# KICK START CAREERS IN CARE AT SCHOOL



**DAWN CONSTANCE MULVANEY**  
CACHE Alumni Editor



Careers in social care and early years education offer long term career prospects with opportunity for promotion and progression, as well as job security and, in today's diverse economy, the caring sector is set to provide a huge amount of opportunity for learners who aspire to make a difference in the lives of others.

In fact, there's never been a better time to support learners to explore careers in the caring sector, with adult social care and childcare both experiencing a 'boom' in vacancies fuelled by increasing lifespans, funded nursery places and a push towards more individualised care.

Helping learners to explore career options can be tricky, as traditional careers advice is often set-up to support learners who wish to pursue roles with high salaries and defined career routes. Learners may not find out about the roles that they could aspire to until after their secondary school education is complete.

We want students to thrive in their chosen profession and accessing and using the right resources, before they make decisions about their future, is a great way to make sure that they understand the broad range of careers available to them in the care sector. They'll also develop



an understanding of the behaviours, skills and knowledge they'll need to evidence to achieve their career goals.

## Useful resources to explore

Using the career maps from CACHE, for [health and social care](#) and in [early years](#) can help to show learners the range of progression opportunities available across the caring sector. They'll be able to explore a range of job titles and in more detail using the [National Careers Service's Job Profiles pages](#), which give a great overview of job roles, including information about salary expectations and entry routes.

Giving learners access to case studies, practitioner interviews and information about care and early years career routes and progression, such as those found on the free to join [CACHE Alumni website](#) during careers

sessions, or asking learners to take [Skills for Care's 'A Question of Care' quiz](#) as part of their careers exploration can be excellent ways of helping learners to explore opportunities and identify whether they'd fit well in a values-based role within care or childhood education.

The [Level 2 Technical Award in Health and Social Care](#) or [Level 2 Technical Award in Child Development and Care](#) from sector specialist CACHE, are qualifications which learners can access during their secondary and high school careers and which might be taken alongside other qualifications at the same time as GCSEs. These qualifications give a broad and sufficiently in-depth base from which level 2 learners at key stage 4 can begin to make informed decisions concerning future career goals and aspirations.

If you're still unsure about caring careers, inviting Skills for Care's 'I Care Ambassadors' into the classroom may provide a free and immersive way of giving learners access to high quality speakers with real experiences and insight to share about careers in the care sector, covering the whole age spectrum.

If you'd like to help learners explore vacancies, the [government's recruitment site for care roles](#) is easy to access and [Tinies' Inspiring a Future in Childcare campaign](#) has some free, downloadable resources to help explore Early Years careers.

Allowing learners to develop their knowledge of careers in care early will allow them to embed skills and knowledge and to develop a sound knowledge of the sector, care provision and the roles of different practitioners before moving into an apprenticeship or level 3 qualification with a firm idea of their future learning and experience needs.

Explore Department for Education approved CACHE qualifications and find out how to kick start careers in care in your classroom at [cache.org.uk/schools](https://cache.org.uk/schools).

# We WILL make it on our own, says CCT

**JAMES CARR**

@JAMESCARR\_93

The Chartered College of Teaching has told ministers it will be self-sufficient from March as its membership hits 32,000.

The news comes as the professional body for teaching launched its "teachers' manifesto" ahead of the general election.

The document calls for experienced staff to be allowed sabbaticals, a national "CPD expectation" so teachers can do a master's and for accountability over pupil wellbeing.

Meanwhile the college (CCT) has told the Department for Education it will not be asking for further grant funding when the current £5 million, four-year grant ends in March.

The latest membership figures stand at 32,000, with 6,000 recruited since the end of June.

However, CCT is still a way off meeting its initial membership target of 40,000, a figure that the college says is more "aspirational".

Professor Alison Peacock, the college's chief executive, said: "It is pleasing to be able to say we are self-sufficient as we look towards the next stage of our journey."

"We know there is a huge amount of work to do to reach more teachers and highlight how we can support each teacher and leader in developing their career."

The college has become self-sustaining by "diversifying" its income streams, including securing new grants from Nord Anglia, Mercers' Charitable Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

The college has also boosted its proportion of paying members, up from 42 per cent in June to 73 per cent.

Of the current 32,160 members, just under 20,000 are full fee-paying members (62 per cent). Of the other fee-paying members, 1,700 are newly qualified (who pay half), 1,200 professional affiliates and 667 paying fellows (bringing the total to 73 per cent).

That leaves 8,749 student teacher members (27 per cent) who do not pay.

Peacock said the college now had a "strong offer" taken up by members "from across the country in all phases".

Its teachers' manifesto, launched this week, is based on responses from 1,000 of its members. It urges all parties to "focus on the support of our teachers".



Professor Alison Peacock

Peacock said: "If we are to tackle the recruitment and retention crisis then we need to show just how valued our teachers are."

Some of the more controversial proposals include a "national expectation for teachers to complete regular CPD" with "support for those who show a desire" to complete formal qualifications such as a master's or chartered teacher status (the latter is provided by the CCT).

A call earlier this month from the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers that all teachers should have a master's got a mixed response from the sector.

The CCT has not put forward a framework for how such a model would work or said whether the DfE would foot the bill.

But it follows the Headteachers' Roundtable election manifesto, released last week, which also called for every teacher to be able to do a fully funded masters.

The CCT also wants greater support for experienced teachers who "often carry the

burden of high staff turnover".

The manifesto suggests that if these teachers were allowed to take sabbaticals it could create an incentive to increase teacher motivation and wellbeing.

Elsewhere, the college wants more flexible and part-time working to be integrated into school calendars "as is common practice in other jobs".

It also calls for a change to the accountability system with "increased focus on 'unmeasurables', such as student wellbeing, the ability to collaborate and resilience".

There were few details on this proposal, apart from members suggesting a new system where these factors would be included in appraisals.

The CCT said 80 per cent of the 1,000 responses were from teachers and fellows (teachers with more than ten years' experience). The remaining 20 per cent were students and professional affiliates (those who work with teachers).

## THE TEACHERS' MANIFESTO

### 1. IMPROVED QUALITY OF TEACHER CPD

- CPD providers should be quality-assured
- National expectation for teachers to complete regular CPD
- Annual CPD entitlement for all teachers

### 2. IMPROVED TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION

- Tackle the negativity surrounding teachers from politicians and media
- Greater focus on flexible working
- More support for experienced teachers, such as sabbaticals
- Increased focus on "unmeasurables", such as student wellbeing

### 3. TEACHING PROFESSION IS RESEARCH-INFORMED

- Teachers to have access to research through university libraries
- More non-contact time/inset days

### 4. ESTABLISH CAREER PATHWAYS FOCUSED ON CLASSROOM PRACTICE

- Expert teachers to become mentors for trainees
- DfE to provide secondments in other schools
- More flexibility to transfer pay grades from one school to another



News

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SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ORDERS ESCALATE TO 1,400

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The number of school attendance orders issued to home-educated pupils across England has soared.

The rise comes as the government delays the introduction of a compulsory registration of home-schooled children because of the general election.

A survey by the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) this week revealed a 171 per cent increase in the number of school attendance orders issued by councils over the suitability of home education.

A total of 1,400 such orders were issued by 61 local authorities in 2018-19, up from 515 in 52 councils in 2017-18.

Councils can issue school attendance orders when they are not satisfied education is being provided outside a school setting. Failure to comply can result in a fine or prosecution.

As a result of initiating the order process or issuing a formal school attendance order in 2018-19, 902 children returned to school-



based education.

The ADCS, which represents the highest-ranked education officials on local authorities, estimates that 78,781 children across England were in elective home education at some point in 2018-19, up slightly from 78,466 in the previous academic year.

Gail Tolley, who chairs the ADCS's educational achievement policy committee, said it was "not good enough that we have no way of knowing whether all children and young people being educated at home are safe [and] receiving a suitable education".

Elective home education follows when parents choose to take their children off a school's roll.

However, those responsible for pupil welfare in local communities fear the system is sometimes abused by schools keen to remove troublesome pupils before exams, or by parents who want to send their children to illegal settings.

"At the most basic level we need to know how many children and young people are being home educated in this country," Tolley said.

The government consulted earlier this year on plans to develop a compulsory register of home-educated pupils that would be maintained by local authorities. However, the consultation has been delayed by the upcoming election.

The ADCS report found the main reason for home education was a "philosophical or lifestyle choice", followed closely by health or emotional health and "general dissatisfaction with the school".

Ofsted warned last month that home education was often the "last resort" of parents of secondary school children with complex needs after their relationship with school had broken down.

JOHN DICKENS | @JOHNDICKENSSW

Unions demand sprinklers in all schools

Education unions have told the government to end its "shameful" record on fire safety and fit sprinklers in all schools.

Four unions, including the Fire Brigades Union, this week wrote to Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, after a huge blaze at student accommodation in Bolton.

A Schools Week investigation in September found just 3 per cent of schools that had suffered fires in the past five years had sprinklers fitted.

It also comes as the government drags its feet in response to its consultation over updated guidance into fire safety design in schools, launched in the wake of the Grenfell Tower disaster

In the letter, which cites figures from Schools Week's investigation, the unions said: "For years we have been ignored while your government allowed its own rules to be flouted. The fire in Bolton was far too close a call. It must mark a

turning point."

Unions have set an 18-month deadline, by which point "all school buildings must be made safe".

They have asked Williamson to ban the use of flammable cladding on any educational building, remove all flammable cladding from all educational buildings, and make sprinklers mandatory for all new buildings and retrofit sprinklers in all existing premises.

Schools Week's sister paper FE Week revealed how a college with "failed" Grenfell-style cladding will remain open - despite increased concerns after the Bolton fire in which about 100 people were evacuated. Two students suffered minor injuries.

An investigation by FE Week in October revealed Highbury College in Portsmouth had requested up to £5 million from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to replace Grenfell-style cladding that had 'failed' a safety test.

The DfE has yet to make a decision on the request.

The unions' letter points out that only 15 per cent of new schools built under the Priority Schools Building Programme are fitted with sprinklers.

"It is two and a half years since the Grenfell fire. Since that terrible night, your department has failed to act," the unions said.

"Your department has only required that school buildings over 18m tall are checked for flammable cladding.

"The other action of your department was to launch a consultation on school fire regulations. This closed on May 31 and you have neither published the evidence submitted nor responded to it."

The letter is signed by the Fire Brigades Union, the National Education Union, National Union of Students, and the University and College Union.

# EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## Labour's vague pledges don't match academy tough talk

Labour's tough talk on academies has not been matched with action.

Their words are clear. Academies are "over-centralised, inefficient and undemocratic".

A Labour government would "end the fragmentation and marketisation of our system by bringing academies back under control of the people who know them best".

But their commitments are anything but clear.

They say budgets and day-to-day decisions will be transferred back to schools - overseen by an accountable governing body with elected representatives.

But how do you take these powers away from multi-academy trust leaders? That's not explained.

Labour would also make councils responsible for the "delivery of education". Again, no details.

Meanwhile we're told again all schools will be subject to a "common rulebook", set out in legislation. You guessed, no further info.

Going into a general election, if the party wants radical change - it should be open with voters about how it will achieve it.

## Our most vulnerable children are being failed

Our investigation into the state of emergency in our special schools might not come as a surprise to those in the sector, but they should be a striking wake-up call for politicians.

Support staff, teachers and school leaders say they are putting their careers on the line performing medical procedures they are woefully underequipped for.

It makes sense for certain routine procedures to be delegated, with the right training and support from on-site or easily accessible medical staff.

But the situation described in some areas is woefully short of what we should expect from our education system.

These are some of the most vulnerable children in our society, and they are currently being failed because healthcare services have been cut to the bone.

School and children's nursing services must be improved, before we see an increase in serious incidents and school staff, unwittingly, with blood on their hands.

SCHOOLS WEEK



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# Interview

JL DUTAUT | @DUTAUT



## “I’d never even heard of a PRU, but I decided to give it a go”

**Marie Gentles, headteacher, Hawkswood primary PRU, Chingford, Essex**

**A**lternative provision and pupil referral units are never far from the headlines. One of those headlines in June this year – “Inside pupil referral unit where ‘unteachable’ kids as young as FIVE often ask teachers for a hug” – was about Marie Gentles’ school.

The head of Hawkswood primary PRU in Waltham Forest, east London, was the only leader (dozens were asked) who allowed journalists in as part of *The Sun*’s investigation into children in PRUs, some supposedly as young as two, as a result of exclusion.

“The original headline was just awful,” Gentles

says. “It also used the phrase ‘sin bin kids!’” As part of her visit, the journalist had been allowed to speak to a child and see his work. “His mum was devastated. It took months supporting her to get that title changed.”

Two years earlier BBC journalists had been invited in too. So what’s behind such openness? “Anyone who knows me will tell you I’m not a media person,” Gentles says with genuine laughter in her voice. “In 2017, I’d recently taken over as head – we had a new executive head too. But the previous incumbents had arranged to do *The Victoria Derbyshire Show*. We were committed.”

On the day Derbyshire tweeted: “She’s opened up her school to us today, giving us incredible access. She’ll talk to us about the kind of

techniques – including restraint – that help turn a child’s life around.”

“It turns out they really got the message, about the misunderstanding of PRUS and the children in them,” Gentles says. “We got so many messages of support from parents and other schools. We had visits from Holly Branson, Princess Beatrice and the Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin, and we got carried away. We thought we’d changed those perceptions.”

The experience with *The Sun*, specifically that headline, changed that view.

The school has since turned down an approach from Channel 4, but Gentles is determined that things will change, in perceptions and policy.

Despite the Timpson review’s call for a shake-up

# Interview: Marie Gentles



of the sector – and former education secretary Damian Hinds accepting all its recommendations “in principle” – there have been few policy changes.

Not content to wait for politicians to act, in January Gentles will leave Hawkswood with one of her deputies, Katy L’Aimable, to set up a behaviour consultancy to work with schools, parents, police and social care.

She will also be joining The Difference, developing a new leadership pathway for teachers dedicated to improving outcomes for the most vulnerable learners. Its existing leaders’ programme recruits mainstream middle and senior leaders to spend two years in PRU senior leadership before helping them to return to mainstream with their new knowledge and skills.

“In our current climate,” she says, “we have to do more to support mainstream staff to get behaviour right. However, because of where we are, we also need to invest in PRUs and AP because there’s a growing need for them.”

It’s a case of needing to look at it from a different point of view, she says.

“If we reframe our thinking about what we want for the long term, things look different. There is always going to be a cohort of students who require something else and that’s fine, but if we work on early intervention and prevention, then we wouldn’t find ourselves firefighting.”



## “We were never included in the annual sports day”

Gentles accepts there’s been a lot of progress during her career, but there’s a long way to go and she has a few ideas.

“I did a four-year teaching degree. I was at a really nice teaching school, but I can’t remember a single thing we did on behaviour. We should have behaviour training every year just like we have safeguarding training.”

Because we don’t, she says, we still treat the behavioural and the academic separately. “We get visitors who’ll look at our timetable and they’ll say that’s great, but we can’t do that at our school because the behaviour isn’t good enough. That’s where it’s gone wrong.”

The Timpson review said improving PRUs should be a matter of urgency. To make that happen, Gentles says, those sometimes uncomfortable conversations need to happen. “Historically we were so segregated. When an email went out about borough sports day, we would never be included in it. We fought for that. It can’t be about those children and these children, but our children.”

That segregation was never right, but Gentles points out that today’s challenges, like county lines, don’t discriminate and make partnership all the more pressing.

That’s also why she can’t be contained by a single role anymore. Gentles spent her first seven years at Hawkswood as its deputy head, the past three as its head, and she feels she couldn’t be leaving it in a better place. An inspection in January this year confirmed the school is still ‘outstanding’, a repeat of a June 2015 judgment.

“I’ll still be serving Hawkswood, but from a different angle,” she says. “I just can’t do it within the capacity of my current role.”

Like most teachers in PRUs, Gentles started her career in mainstream. “It was this lovely little Catholic school with next to no behaviour issues.” From early on, she was one of those teachers with a special touch for challenging behaviour. “When there was the odd child who showed behaviours they would always get sent to my classroom. And then when they came to my room, there weren’t any issues and they got on with their work.”

She didn’t ask for children to be sent to her. They just were – and that was part of the problem, although she did not realise that at the time.

Gentles stayed at that school four years and was promoted to NQT supervisor very early. Through that experience, she says, “I started to recognise that maybe I had a bit of an understanding with children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and additional needs. But I wasn’t quite sure what that understanding was.”

Where that understanding came from says much about the values Gentles attaches to education.

“I had a really good upbringing. Mum and dad were at home. I have an older sister and a younger brother. We lived in a nice home in Highams Park [in east London] with nice neighbours and we went to good schools.

“We didn’t really come across any harrowing stories. We weren’t amongst that,” she says. “But it was normal for us to have adopted and foster children in our extended family.”

Her mother, Jennifer Bancroft, worked in a care home for the elderly, but when carpal tunnel syndrome forced her to quit she became a foster carer. Her mother’s two sisters also fostered.

It was her mother who taught her the value of coupling care with high expectations. This defines her attitude to education and has progressively brought her closer to the most vulnerable children in our school system.

# Interview: Marie Gentles



Gentles joins a panel at The Difference



Princess Beatrice visits Hawkwood

Gentles' father, Geoffrey, a BT engineer on shift work for most of his career, instilled self-belief in his children. For him that meant the belief that they could go to university and be successful professionals.

"When we were growing up, there was no conversation about it. We all just knew we would go. But there was still enough room for us to just be who we are."

That unwavering expectation of academic excellence is something Gentles has taken with

her throughout her career, and nowhere has it been more transformative than at Hawkwood.

She left her first school for a far more challenging context in Newham, east London. "I threw myself in at the deep end. I don't know what I was thinking."

It was the same scenario. A lot of children were sent to her class. "This time, I realised it wasn't right. I felt we should be working together so that any teacher in that situation should be able to support those young people's needs."

Gentles is a mother of two, a 16-year-old son and an 11-year-old daughter. The former is at college, and works at Hawkwood as a volunteer one day a week.

Her daughter's birth and a move to Waltham Forest made her ready for a new challenge. A job came up at a local PRU. "I'd never even heard of a PRU, in teacher training or anywhere else, but I decided to give it a go."

She describes her first day, telling the story of a little boy who, in the blink of an eye, went from an angel to having to be physically contained. "I was shocked. This was primary? What is going on here?"

But it didn't take her long to change her way of looking.

"I had an Australian colleague who said to me 'you're exactly what I need here'. Before, it was almost like a glorified youth club. When I started delivering these lessons in my room, the children were making significant progress – regardless of their starting points – and I just thought, 'Isn't this what we're supposed to do?'"

Ten years on, she has changed the actions of everyone in that school, and its students' results. Looking at PRUs through Gentles' eyes, I can start to see the steps to resolving the tensions around exclusion, and that's no mean feat.

There may yet be hope for different tabloid headlines.

# Opinion

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



STEVE PRESTON

Managing director, Mime



## Progress 8 fails young people with special needs

**Thousands of pupils with complex needs are guaranteed a negative P8 score and are at increased risk of exclusion as a result, writes Steve Preston. They and their schools deserve better**

When you visit the performance table for secondary schools, the Department for Education makes it clear that Progress 8 (P8) is its key accountability measure by putting schools with the best scores at the top of the list. Yet, of the 754 special schools in England with pupils at key stage 4, only one has a positive P8 score. Does this mean that the thousands of pupils in our special schools aren't making good progress?

In theory, P8 takes account of a pupil's starting point. The measure compares each pupil's attainment at key stage 4 with other pupils coming from the same point at key stage 2. All well and good, except that the premise is that every child is able to access and achieve a GCSE-level qualification. This will often be out of reach for those with severe learning difficulties.

Based on our recent analysis, about a third of pupils with education, health and care plans (EHCPs) have an Attainment 8 (A8) score of 0

because they didn't pass any GCSE-level qualifications. But since some pupils with very low key stage 2 attainment do achieve some GCSEs, anyone with an A8 score of 0 will have a negative P8 score.

This means that, each year, more than 3,000 pupils with EHCPs are guaranteed negative P8 scores, regardless of the progress they may have made.

This is especially pronounced for SEND pupils with more complex needs, but the problem exists for the SEND cohort as a whole. Nationally in 2018 EHCP pupils scored -1.09 on the P8 measure, and those on SEN support -0.43.

Not only does this fail to recognise

**“ The premise is that every child is able to achieve GCSEs**

the progress these pupils have made, but it reflects badly on their schools, no matter what they've done to support that progress. In turn, that may mean schools instead prioritise resources where the impact is more visible.

It isn't surprising that schools for whom P8 is a core accountability metric are tempted to look for ways of

ensuring that pupils with SEND don't negatively affect their scores.

As highlighted in our recent post-16 SEND report for the Greater London Authority, it appears that SEND pupils are more likely to be off-rolled than other pupils especially when they have lower levels of prior attainment.

However, many pupils with complex needs are making good progress, but not in ways that are traditionally easy to measure. Schools are working hard on ways to account for this and the government owes it to them to consider how to recognise it, especially in schools that have a high proportion of

many SEND pupils make.

Incorporating the achievement of entry-level qualifications at key stage 4 would help. In time, though, we would like to see the achievement of targets in EHCPs become the de-facto standard for measuring progress for these pupils.

One step towards improving measures for SEND outcomes and to give credit to schools and local authorities is our recently published inclusion index – a first attempt to use publicly available data to measure inclusion at the local authority level by looking at the placement of SEND pupils, as well as their outcomes in terms of attainment and exclusions.

If accountability measures can be refocused away from just exam results – or at least just GCSE results – this should disincentivise schools from excluding pupils with SEND. Ultimately, this will mean schools are given credit for the fantastic work they do with our most vulnerable pupils. Better yet, it will mean young people with SEND will see their progress appropriately recognised, and have access to the same opportunities as their peers.

learners with complex needs.

For mainstream schools this could mean additionally publishing adjusted P8 figures without pupils with very low starting points, or without those in SEN units or resource bases. However, while this would help to remove the incentive to exclude, it would still fail to recognise the important progress

# Opinion

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

**Ofsted has been downgrading schools that “off-roll” students. But what does it actually mean? Cath Murray explains**

The whole area of alternative provision (AP), off-rolling, exclusions and managed moves can be confusing.

In a recent inspection, Ofsted said the school’s pupils educated in AP were “well cared for” and achieved good results. But the inspectors still downgraded it for off-rolling.

So when are schools allowed to send their pupils to alternative provision?

**AP placements**

When a child is not engaging with the school curriculum, despite the school’s best efforts, the school, parent(s) and child may agree they would be better off receiving some of their education in a different setting. This could be part-time vocational education; it could be a short-term placement that allows the child to catch up with their literacy and numeracy.

The aim should be either to allow the child to achieve qualifications they couldn’t otherwise get or to help them reintegrate into mainstream. If you’re a school commissioning a placement in AP, your rule of thumb should be this: Is this child making more progress (academic, social, emotional, vocational) than they would in mainstream?

If not, why are you paying them? Paying a provider simply to take a child off your hands is not a good investment — nor is it in the best interests of the child. Choose your APs wisely, and hold them to account.

What’s really important here is that



CATH MURRAY

Alternative provision lead, Centre for Social Justice

## Is it ever OK to remove a child from your school roll?

the child must remain dual rolled. So you’ll be coding them M in the school census and the AP will use code S.

of moving them to the roll of the AP? If they stay on your roll, you have an added incentive to make sure they

“ Choose your APs wisely, and hold them to account

**Managed moves from mainstream to AP**

These tend to happen for two reasons: The child has been attending an AP for a while on dual roll. The mainstream school doesn’t want the child’s GCSE results to count in their performance measures, and they remove the child from roll (usually in year 11).

This is off-rolling, pure and simple — and Ofsted will sanction you. In short, what is the benefit to the child

are getting the best education they can in AP.

Second, the local authority or school is trying to reduce their permanent exclusion (PX) numbers, so they persuade the parents to agree to a managed move, “to avoid an exclusion”.

The main advantage to the child is that it can feel less confrontational and more collaborative, which is why parents will often agree.

But it creates three problems. First,



it removes scrutiny. School leaders don’t have to prove to the governors that the child has met the threshold for PX, nor that appropriate assessments and interventions have been tried.

Second, when a child moves on to the roll of an AP in this way, there is no official process for reviewing whether they are getting appropriate education, and whether they might be ready to return to mainstream.

Third, if full-time AP is right for that child, there’s a strong argument that the mainstream school should still oversee quality. APs aren’t big enough to offer as broad and balanced a curriculum, and they aren’t held to account for academic outcomes. And while there are some excellent APs, there’s also a murky world of unregulated independent providers.

**What should schools do?**

Schools are under multiple funding and accountability pressures and I’m not arguing that this is easy. But here’s what I would advise:

- **Don’t off-roll.** Never (not even in year 11) remove a child from your roll so they can go full-time on the roll of an AP.
- **Have oversight.** Build relationships with the APs that you use and make sure your pupils are getting a good education there.
- **Innovate.** If there’s no good AP in your area, consider other solutions (lots of schools are developing their own in-house, on-site AP).

Finally, we need to look at how to adjust the existing accountability and funding system to make it easier for schools to do the right thing.



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**Maxine Greaves MBE**, Sheffield Hallam University  
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**Nav Sanghara**, Inspire Partnership  
**Jamel Carly Campbell**, Early Years Specialist  
**Bukky Yusuf**, Science & EdTech Leader  
**Serdar Ferit**, Co-CEO, Lyfta  
and leaders from our Regional BAMEed Networks



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*BAME and non-BAME practitioners, leaders and education sector colleagues are warmly welcomed to explore, learn and discuss issues which affect Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic educators.*

# Research

Baz Ramaiah reviews the evidence on a school-related theme. Contact Teacher Tapp on Twitter @TeacherTapp if you have a topic you would like it to cover

## A school motto can make a difference

**Baz Ramaiah, research lead, Teacher Tapp**

I'm fairly sure my school had a motto, but I can't remember what it was. What I can remember however, in encyclopedic detail, are the mottos of the great houses in *Game of Thrones*.

For those with slightly less nerdy proclivities, the great houses in *Game of Thrones* are a pastiche of the noble houses in early modern Europe. Each has a motto, which functions as an epigram of the values and characteristics to which the house aspire. The resilience and dissidence of House Martell is captured in its motto "Unbowed, Unbent, Unbroken", while the stoic pragmatism of House Stark derives from its words, "Winter is Coming".

In the real world, mottos play an equally important role in defining and depicting the values of institutions – from the Royal Mail to Rangers Football Club. In some schools, rather than treated as words on blazer pockets, mottos are chanted at the start of the school day, during assemblies, and at the end of lessons.

Teacher Tapp wanted to get a sense of how widely mottos are put to such use, so we polled teachers and found that daily use lies outside the norm. Seventy-two per cent of respondents had made no reference to their school's motto that day. In fact 55 per cent couldn't remember what their school motto was!

The motivation for this memory lapse is clear: teachers don't feel that mottos make much difference. Sixty-six per cent of polled teachers reckoned that if their school motto disappeared, student or staff attitudes or behaviour would not change.

Perhaps they are right. The values of a school are



Image: iStock

already in their policies and procedures, playing the necessary role in steering student behaviour. Adding a motto seems superfluous and self-indulgent.

But perhaps there's a misunderstanding about the purpose of mottos. They are not surrogates for policies. Mottos should be used as memorable refrains that lodge themselves in long-term memory, ready to be retrieved when a situation demands it.

Using a motto as a decorative afterthought is unlikely to have an impact, but as a genuine guide for moral action it can be part of a virtuous cycle. Over time, mottos come to guide how we go about making policy and developing procedures.

In *Game of Thrones*, characters often find themselves reaching for their house mottos when they're unclear how best to act. They serve as a moral orientation point, helping them to rediscover the values they identify with and wish to live by.

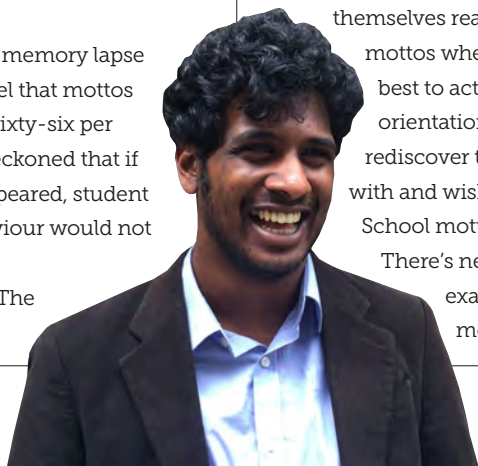
School mottos can do the same.

There's never been a more vivid example of this than the motto of Kensington

Aldridge Academy. The school once stood metres from Grenfell Tower. Four of its pupils died in the disaster. Forced to relocate to a new site and with the trauma of the fire hanging over them, staff and students needed immense fortitude to carry on.

According to the headteacher, David Benson, they found this in their motto, *Intrepidus*: "Today and every day I will be the best that I can be. Every challenge I will rise to. Every setback I will come back from. Every moment I will seize." Students already recited this motto at the start of their lessons. In the wake of tragedy, it provided a spontaneously accessible wellspring of strength.

This is a moving and instructive example of how schools can produce valuable mottos. They need to be easy to remember and easy to understand. More importantly, they need to mean something to the community and used regularly, whether through group recitation or inclusion in the curriculum. This weaving into community life can turn mottos into a moral north star, guiding students towards a life of strength, success and virtue – and away from an obsession with *Game of Thrones*.



# Reviews



Julia Skinner is a retired headteacher, who is now a trustee and founder of the 100 Word Challenge

@THEHEADSOFFICE

### Governing our schools: 10 years on @NGAEmmaK

You would expect changes in most things over ten years, and this post identifies some of those experienced by governors. The report at the heart of this piece identifies ten key issues for the sector, and although the conclusion that governance in schools is strengthening, some issues still need to be tackled. Emma Knights emphasises the voluntary nature of our board members, and touches on mandatory induction – which still has not been brought in, mainly because of lack of funding. The complexity of the work now expected to be covered by this huge army of volunteers can deter new governors, but having a clearer demarcation of roles has certainly brought a much-needed clarity.



### Vice-chairs matter @5Naureen

What does it feel like to be No 2 rather than No 1 in an organisation? Often, you are there to step in when No 1 is not available, but in the case of school governance, that is probably not going to be often. However, that shouldn't lead to complacency. If you do have to deputise, are you going to know what to do? In this post, Naureen Khalid outlines the importance of a properly trained vice-chair post that is not just for "stand-in times", but has its own status and purpose. With governing boards having so much to do nowadays, it seems like a good use of talent and provides some reassurance for succession.

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +

### I want to be the governor I never had @GovernorHub

In this GovernorHub Q&A, the teacher, school leader and author Ross McGill reveals his new role as a co-opted governor. Not an especially momentous announcement, yet McGill generated quite a storm on Facebook. The point of the post is to encourage more people to take up governorship, especially as McGill has such a high profile, but it does include criticism of the boards that the author worked with. Unfortunately, his criticisms of those governing boards appear to stem from a misunderstanding of the role of governors, at least according to the governors who took umbrage with him across social media. A short and poetic response to his comments can be found **here**. They make a good pair, and you can make your own mind up.

### We're all going on a governance hunt @dogpaws23

This light-hearted take on the Michael Rosen favourite *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* does hold some key messages for those considering becoming a governor. Within the clever rhymes and repetitions are the key areas that concern governing boards, with some pertinent thoughts of their impact. Approaching some of the very important areas of governance in this way may well put a smile on faces around the board.

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**SCHOOLS WEEK**



**£3,500-a-go mag 'misleading', rules ASA**

**Mark Watson**

Excellent work. Hopefully the more light that is shone on the shady business practices of this magazine will stop schools believing this is anything other than an opportunity to take out a paid advertisement.

However, I think it would be fair, especially as we're in the throes of (another) general election, to emphasise this magazine has been supported (intentionally or unintentionally) by politicians from various parties – not just the Conservatives. At the top of this article the second paragraph name checks two Conservatives, but David Blunkett, Lucy Powell, and I'm sure others, should be shuffling uncomfortably and thinking how to explain themselves ...

**DfE in £3m bailout of government-approved ICT supplier**

**Hilary Goldsmith, @SBL365**

Doesn't inspire faith in the Crown Commercial service. I think I'll stick to my own supplier selection process.

**Reducing class sizes top priority for next government, say teachers**

**Martin Brown, @louisesdad**

This is the BIGGEST difference between the independent sector and state funded schools. It's a huge inequality in working and learning conditions in classrooms – it needs fixing. #AbolishEton

**Headteachers' Roundtable doorstep manifesto – General Election 2019**

**Martin Matthews, @mm684**

I applaud the ethos and focus on children, but it's badly written for a wider audience... Hmm – master's for all? Including admin staff and governors? A school is a complex organisation and we need the very best from all aspects.

**Birmingham LA school downgraded from 'outstanding' for off-rolling**

**Mike, @mprezz221a**

Schools can only handle so much from students who struggle

**REPLY OF THE WEEK** Peter Hesselmann, comment

**Fact check: Conservative figures for Labour education spending don't add up**

"You would have more teachers in the state sector, who would be paying income tax and generating tax revenue," – true, but these additional state sector teachers would probably be independent school teachers already paying this tax, so one cancels the other.



Add to that the fact that many independent schools often pay more than state sector salaries, the tax income will probably reduce slightly.

"... and you would have more office supplies to buy for kids being educated in the state sector" – again true, but I believe the independent sector also uses office supplies and probably more than in the state sector.

The additional costs of more salaries and increased office supplies will require increases in the amount put into the education budget (a further burden on the taxpayer). And we haven't even considered the cost of purchasing and running additional school sites to house those ex-independent pupils if local state schools are already full.

I personally can't see how this can work without some significant increase in taxation levels or hike in public borrowing.

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

to cope. The government needs to provide alternative education or clear, reasonable guidelines on the most they can cater for in mainstream and stick to it. Otherwise allow off-rolling, which is a response to poor standards, guidance and support from government.

**The DfE's six new character benchmarks**

**Georgina Greaves**

I think these SHOULD be inspected and measured, but just this and nothing else. Just one addition of "how are we preparing our pupils for the future?" would be a much better way to allow schools and teachers the autonomy to provide a pupil, area and community appropriate provision.

# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

### FRIDAY

Journalists were turned away from a session on "collaboration between MATs" at a National Governance Association conference last week on the grounds that their presence would have affected the discussion.

We are aware that many people feel they have to watch what they say when reporters are about, but we wonder why there was particular secrecy over this session with Edward Vitalis, the finance director of Bright Futures, and Karen Froggatt, the chief governance officer for Wellspring.

Might it have something to do with the recent coverage of Bright Futures' handling of the Wigan UTC saga? Who can say?

### TUESDAY

A move by the Conservatives' press office to rebrand itself as "factcheckUK" on Twitter during the leaders' debate on ITV raised more than a few eyebrows.



Week in Westminster assures you the irony of this kind of behaviour is not lost on us. Last week a certain party made incorrect claims about Labour's

education policy and then repeated the false claims back to us when we asked about it.

Nor, indeed, was the irony of Nicky Morgan, a former education secretary known for her determination to build "character" in pupils, appearing on TV to defend her party's attempt to dupe voters.

\*\*\*

Full marks for trying to the Liberal Democrats' press team, which tried to get journalists to write about an announcement in its manifesto about a "curriculum for life". But it wasn't new – we first heard about it in the lead-up to the 2017 and 2015 elections.

### WEDNESDAY

It's not just the current education secretary who keeps repeating misleading claims about his government's education record.

Michael Gove, the unions' favourite bogeyman, was asked by Channel 4 whether his party would deliver on its

promises.

"When I was education secretary, I said that we would transform education – 1.9 million more children in good and outstanding schools as a result of that," he replied.

As *WiW* readers will be well aware, this figure has been deemed misleading by the UK Statistics Authority (and anyone with a solid grasp of education policy), because it doesn't take account of increased pupil numbers, changes to Ofsted inspections and other influences.

Still, he's only the chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Why should we expect him to be upfront?

### THURSDAY

The trade unionists loudly applauded Labour's proposal to give all public sector workers a 5 per cent pay rise. We're sure they'll be just as pleased if this 5 per cent rise boosts the already hefty pay packets of some academy trust bosses.

The party says the allocation of the rise will be subject to national pay bargaining. It's unclear whether chief executives will have to bargain with their own governors or through their unions like everyone else.





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Hours Part time – 2-3 days per week.  
Secondment would be considered.  
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Start Date To be negotiated

Closing Date for Applications 12 noon, Friday 6th December 2019

Interview Date Monday 16th December 2019

An exciting opportunity has arisen to join our dynamic and successful Central Team within Nexus Education Schools Trust (NEST) Multi Academy Trust.

We are seeking an Education Lead to join our School Improvement Team to:

- support the leadership, strategic development and school improvement policy of academies within Nexus Education Schools Trust (NEST).

Full details including an application form can be found on our website at <http://nestschools.org/careers/>

If you have any queries, please contact the Central Team Office on 020 8289 4767 or email Lisa Bromley at [lbromley@nestschools.org](mailto:lbromley@nestschools.org)



**BEDE ACADEMY**

**ASSISTANT VICE PRINCIPAL**

Bede Academy is seeking to appoint a well-qualified Assistant Vice Principal with energy, integrity and commitment to the Academy’s vision and Christian ethos to lead the provision for our SEND students as well as leading curriculum support for groups of students (particularly at KS3) who are at risk of underperforming.

The Assistant Vice Principal will have responsibility of training staff and quality assure in class/support, to deliver quality first teaching that meets the needs of students with SEND learning needs. You will need to be a qualified teacher who preferably holds the National SENDCo Award.

The role includes:

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- Liaising with classroom support staff, class teachers and senior leaders
- Liaising with and developing relationships with external agencies and parents
- Having the ability to inspire and motivate colleagues and students to promote co-operation, collaboration and teamwork.

[BEDEACADEMY.ORG.UK](http://BEDEACADEMY.ORG.UK)

Brindishe Schools  
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**SENIOR SCHOOLS BUSINESS MANAGER**

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Naturally this person will have highly effective interpersonal and communication skills, exceptional organisation and problem solving skills, with

an ability to work under pressure and prioritise accordingly. Good working knowledge of MS Office package and ideally HCSS Finance and Arbor MIS.

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recognise own strengths and areas of expertise and use these to advise and support others.

As this is maternity cover it is a great opportunity for someone who wants grow and develop their experiences and stretch their skills in an environment that has well established ways of working. Starting in January 2020 and finishing in May 2021 will mean there is a full term of handover before the maternity leave starts and a hand over period at the end of the contract.

Completed application forms please to be emailed to our Executive Head Rachel Waite [onrwaite@brindisheschools.org](mailto:onrwaite@brindisheschools.org) by **midday 9th December** followed by a hard signed copy sent to **Brindishe Green School, Beacon Road, London SE13 6EH.**

# Head of Inclusion



We are looking for a Head of Inclusion to lead and manage Ark Schools' approach to SEND and inclusion (including behaviour, exclusions and attendance) and, in so doing, ensure that all our schools meet their responsibilities under the SEND Code of Practice and other relevant legislation.

This is an exciting new role at Ark – providing you with an opportunity to shape our approach to inclusion and to make a real difference to our children and their families.

**Location:** Holborn, central London moving to White City, West London in January 2020 with regular travel between school

**Salary:** Highly competitive (+11% employer pension contribution)

**Vacancy type:** Fixed term, 3 years

**Apply by:** 28 Nov 2019

Ark is a fast-growing education charity committed to giving every child, regardless of their background, the chance to succeed in the career or university of their choice.

Our highly-successful network of 37 schools educates over 27,500 students across Hastings, Birmingham, London and Portsmouth. They

are achieving some of the best results in the country despite being largely in areas of historic academic underachievement. Ark also designs and incubates Ventures to tackle some of the most intractable issues in education both in the UK and internationally.

**We offer:**

- 27 days annual leave plus bank holidays. Rising to 29 days after 2 years of service
- We are committed to providing high-quality professional learning and training throughout your career with us
- Ark Rewards scheme which includes savings from major retailers, interest-free loans, season tickets, bicycle and gym discounts

For more details and to apply visit our recruitment portal, [here](#)

**Early applications are encouraged; we reserve the right to close this vacancy if we find the right candidate.**

*Ark is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people; all successful candidates will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.*

# WINTER OFFERS AT EDUCATION WEEK JOBS

Book ahead of the new year and save 30% on our annual packages.

**12 MONTHS UNLIMITED BASIC LISTINGS ~~£3,000~~ | £2,100**  
Basic listings include your company logo, unlimited text, attachments.

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Featured listings include enhanced visibility on our website, posts via our social media accounts, inclusion on our weekly jobs email (sent to thousands of education professionals) and all the features of a basic listing.

Rates displayed are per school or college. Group and MAT rates are available.

Discounted rates available until Friday 13th December 2019

To discuss our recruitment packages with a member of our Sales Team, please call 020 3432 1394 or email [advertising@educationweekjobs.co.uk](mailto:advertising@educationweekjobs.co.uk)



A photograph showing a group of young women sitting around a table, engaged in a craft or art project. They are looking at something on the table with interest. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or workshop setting.

# Kick start careers in care at school with CACHE

CACHE is the UK's leading sector specialist in care and education qualifications and we are able to support your key stage 4 and 5 learners with a range of level 2 and level 3 technical qualifications.



Child Development and Care



Health and Social Care

CACHE technical qualifications offer added value and support to your curriculum as well as performance points for your school.

## Open doors with qualifications from CACHE

“I am excited to progress to the next step with CACHE and undertake my level 3 and then go onto higher education.”

Roisin, learner at North West Regional College

