

SCHOOLS WEEK

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

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Head gives Ofsted thumbs up

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'I'm still that ranty man!'

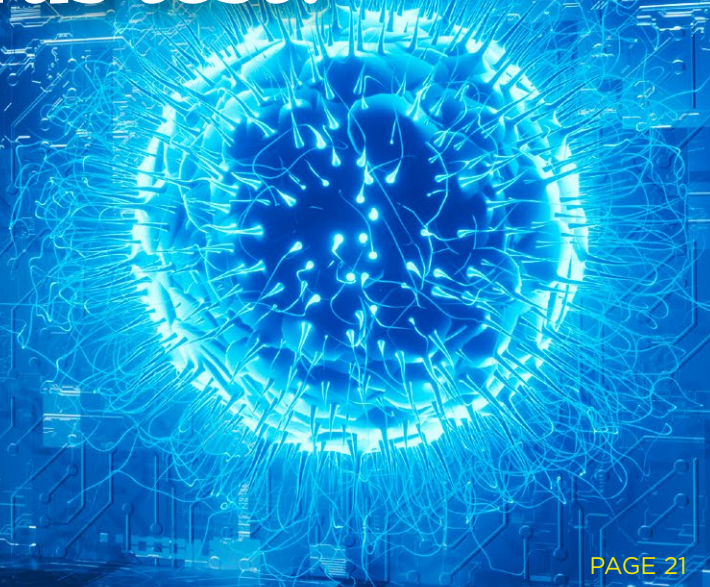
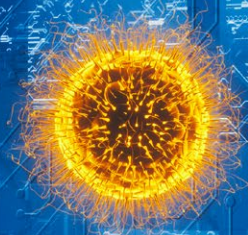


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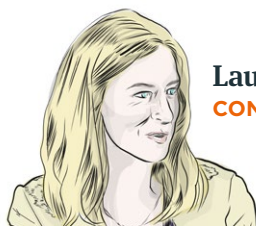
SCHOOLS WEEK

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Review: Do teachers need to read original research papers?

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Covid-19: UK government decides against school closures

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Closing schools at this stage in the spread of the coronavirus epidemic could do "more harm than good", Boris Johnson has warned.

The prime minister yesterday reiterated advice that schools "should only close if they are specifically advised to do so".

It comes after the government's emergency Cobra committee agreed to move from the "contain" to the "delay" phase of its response to the pandemic.

However, the government is advising schools to call off any international school trips they have planned.

Sir Patrick Vallance, the government's chief scientific adviser, said that while it's "true that there's some effect in closing schools" the effect is "minimal".

"Actually, you'd have to do it for 13 to 16 weeks or longer, and you don't have to be a very advanced mathematician to work out that the chances of keeping children not speaking to each other or playing with each other over 13 to 16 weeks is zero," he said.

"Therefore, you have to be very careful to make sure you take the right measures that will stop this, rather than things that might end up with children, for example, going to stay with grandparents at a time when they might be most vulnerable."

Dr Chris Whitty, the chief medical officer, also said it was important to "do the right things at the right time. This is going to be a long haul. It's critical we do not start things in advance of need."

The move to the "delay" phase of the government's response comes after the number of cases in the UK rose to over 450.

The government warned earlier this month that this phase of its plans could include school closures. The Republic of Ireland announced earlier this week that all of its schools would close. Italy, Japan and parts of China made similar decisions earlier this month.

New guidance advises against overseas trips for under 18s, whereas trips for over 18s "can continue".



Prime Minister Boris Johnson

Guidance states travel insurance may cover non-refundable cancellation costs, but leaders should check their policy.

The spread of the disease has also prompted the cancellation or postponement of a number of education sector events.

The Big Bang Fair, a science and engineering event for thousands of pupils due to be held at the Birmingham NEC this week was called off, and organisers of the Schools and Academies Show in London in April have announced it will be postponed.

A conference for exam boards organised by exams regulator Ofqual for March 19 has also been cancelled.

However, at the time of going to print, the ASCL annual conference, due to start in Birmingham today, was still due to go ahead. The leadership union has also issued advice for headteachers on preparing for coronavirus.

Writing for Schools Week, Hayley Dunn, ASCL's business leadership specialist, urged leaders to check their emergency plans, revise or draft risk assessments and consider designating a liaison and communications role "for keeping up to date with information and fielding inquiries within the school".

"In the event of a partial or full closure,

[they must] provide clear expectations to families and staff of what work will be carried out," she said.

"For staff, consider any additional infrastructure, equipment and advice needed for those adjusting to homeworking, including appropriate working hours and use of equipment, login details and remote access."

The National Governance Association has also issued guidance for its members, stating that the "best and most appropriate way for governing boards to support their school leaders is to allow them to manage the school's response without the involvement of the board, unless it is requested".

Any decision to close schools will undoubtedly lead to questions about the impact closures will have on emergency service workers and other essential personnel with children.

There are also questions about how disadvantaged pupils will receive free school meals.

Vic Goddard, the principal of Passmores Academy in Essex, said he had asked the Department for Education whether his school could issue a supermarket voucher to families of eligible children in lieu of a hot meal at school.

News



Ofsted re-rates Harris school, admitting error in report

JAMES CARR

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EXCLUSIVE

Ofsted has amended the report of a school run by one of its most high-profile critics after inspectors wrongly applied new transitional measures.

Harris Academy St John's Wood, in north London, was rated 'good' by the schools watchdog in January – including 'good' judgments for 'quality of education' and 'leadership and management'.

However, the inspectorate has now upgraded the school's 'leadership and management' rating to 'outstanding'. They also removed the caveat of transitional arrangements which it had originally applied to the 'quality of education' judgment.

Ofsted has said it will now provide additional training to inspectors on when to apply such arrangements after a complaint by the Harris Federation, which runs the school.

Inspectors use their "professional judgment" to decide whether to apply transition arrangements as a temporary measure under the new framework where a school has taken "appropriate action but is still in the early stages of developing a curriculum".

In the wake of the initial judgement back in January, Harris chief executive Sir Dan Moynihan told The Times the report showed the school was "excellent in every way" but "makes clear inspectors took issue with the three-year programme for GCSE".

In the same interview, he slammed the new framework as favouring middle-class pupils – launching a row which has led to the Department for Education preparing to intervene.

In a letter to parents, Harris Academy St John's Wood principal Graeme Smith said the trust felt that "aspects of the inspection process were flawed" and Ofsted has since apologised for the error.

The school's overall 'good' judgment has remained the same. But Ofsted said the school's "leadership and management should more accurately be judged outstanding than good".

They added the evidence from the inspection also suggested the curriculum in place supported a 'good' judgment in 'quality of education' "without the need to factor in transitional arrangements".

A spokesperson for the inspectorate added: "Our robust complaints process is in place to allow our judgments to be challenged and then undergo appropriate scrutiny so that everyone can have confidence in our final judgments."

Ofsted is currently consulting on plans to withhold publication of inspection reports until it has resolved complaints about them. This would mean that schools would have to submit a formal complaint within two days of receiving their final report, rather than the current ten days.

In the St John's Wood report, Ofsted stated there were year 9 pupils who do not study history, geography, art or music. It added: "Leaders, governors and trust directors have not ensured that all pupils in year 9 receive their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum that is at least as ambitious as the national curriculum."

However, Moynihan said the extra GCSE year was central to the success of getting good grades for deprived children and called the new regime "a middle-class framework for middle-class kids". St John's Wood was in special measures before Harris took over.

Ofsted has consistently denied having a curriculum preference, yet has criticised schools for shortening their key stage 3 to two years.

Elsewhere, the inspectorate has also upgraded a provisional 'good' judgment into 'outstanding' at Bedford Free School after complaints.

Ofsted said none of the school's specific complaints were upheld but "our review of the inspection did conclude that the quality of education was outstanding".

Schools Week reported in January that Ofsted apologised and overturned a provisional 'inadequate' judgment at Park Academy West London after a complaint that inspectors had not understood its "innovative" new curriculum.

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9 in 10 like new Ofsted inspections, statistics show

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Nearly nine in ten respondents to a post-inspection survey after Ofsted brought in its new framework said they were satisfied with the visit.

Statistics released yesterday (Thursday) show that 88.6 per cent of 1,336 responses strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that they were satisfied with how the inspection was carried out.

In the same category, 7 per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed while 4.3 per cent neither agreed or disagreed.

Responses were received between September 1 and February 29.

Elsewhere, 89.8 per cent agreed the inspection report was clear, with 6.1 per cent disagreeing. And 87.7 per cent agreed the inspector feedback on the quality of education judgment will "help my school improve". A total of 6.7 per cent disagreed with this statement.

Speaking at a conference on Saturday, chief inspector Amanda Spielman said it was just a "small and vocal minority" who were criticising the new framework.

She added: "I don't think that the ratio of positive to negative is coming through, but we take the negative really seriously."

Ofsted has come under fire from school leaders – including influential chains such as the Harris Federation – for its new framework, which focuses much more on curriculum rather than on results.

Harris's chief executive, Sir Dan Moynihan, who spoke earlier at the London conference on Saturday, said the "pendulum had swung too far, and outcomes are not important enough".

Some schools with three-year GCSEs are being criticised for narrowing the curriculum – leading to trusts moving back to a two-year key stage 4 and three-year key stage 3.

Moynihan said this was because leaders were worried their Ofsted rating will drop: "They are afraid they will lose kids, and lose budget and enter a downward spiral."

But Spielman added that the vast amount of disadvantaged children "should do really well on a full curriculum".

News

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School leaders lap up controversial MBA apprenticeship

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

School leaders are taking advantage of a controversial management apprenticeship that education secretary Gavin Williamson is "unconvinced" provides value for money.

The National College of Education had the highest number of people starting the level 7 senior leader apprenticeship, known as the MBA apprenticeship, out of all training providers in the first quarter of 2019-20.

The college is part of the education-services organisation Oceanova, run by Dave Cobb. All the higher-level apprenticeships his company delivers are to school staff, mostly academy trust chief executives, headteachers and deputies.

However just last month, education secretary Gavin Williamson launched a review into the MBA apprenticeship, saying he was "unconvinced" it was "in the spirit" of reformed apprenticeships or provides value for money.

Tom Richmond, director of the EDSK think tank, said the "rebadged management

training courses" are "consuming hundreds of millions of pounds that could have been used to help young people start a career in a skilled job or occupation".

But Cobb told sister title FE Week the apprenticeship is often a "mischaracterised" as being done on the cheap by senior executives at FTSE companies.

"Around 90 per cent of our level 7 learners are doing it as a master's. It is an important qualification for senior leaders and actually when you look at the numbers, over 60 per cent have been done in the public sector," he said.

"I'm not sure Gavin Williamson would stand by policies that cut off funding to public sector leaders, which is what this is doing."

Cobb claimed the apprenticeship was the "goose that lays the golden egg in terms of retention, and now we're talking about reducing the funding where it's clearly working very successfully".

Schools are struggling to take advantage of the levy.

Apprentices made up an average of only 0.9 per cent

of the workforce in schools across England in 2018-19, despite the government's 2.3 per cent public sector target.

Cobb claimed the apprenticeships are a hit with schools because of the "substandard" National Professional Qualifications for teachers.

He added: "If we're facing a recruitment crisis in education we're facing a bigger leadership crisis and actually master's is the currency amongst these people. They're postgrad qualified professionals in their own right in schools."

However, he claimed it's difficult for schools to engage with the levy as it's "not part of their culture... There's still an unintended snobbery around apprenticeships, because the word apprentice means failure."

Former national schools commissioner, Sir David Carter, has also been recruited to lead the firm's MBA programme.

Williamson has asked the apprenticeships quango – the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education – to deliver the outcome of its review by June 1.



Dave Cobb



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Investigation: CEO pay

JUST 1 IN 5 CEOS HAVE PAY DOCKED AFTER CRACKDOWN

Schools Week's annual CEO pay league tables - the original and most comprehensive round-up - are back. We crunched through over 250 academy trust annual accounts - here's what we found ...

**JOHN DICKENS,
JAMES CARR
& SAMANTHA BOOTH**
@SCHOOLSWEEK

INVESTIGATES

Fewer than one in five academy trusts that were warned over high levels of pay subsequently reduced salaries for their top bosses.

The annual Schools Week analysis of chief executive pay also found 20 trusts where pay was hiked by £20,000 or more, with a single-school trust boss getting a £35,000 bonus.

The findings suggest the government's crackdown on chief executive pay isn't working.

The number of bosses paid over £200,000 has risen to 23, up from 21 in last year's analysis.

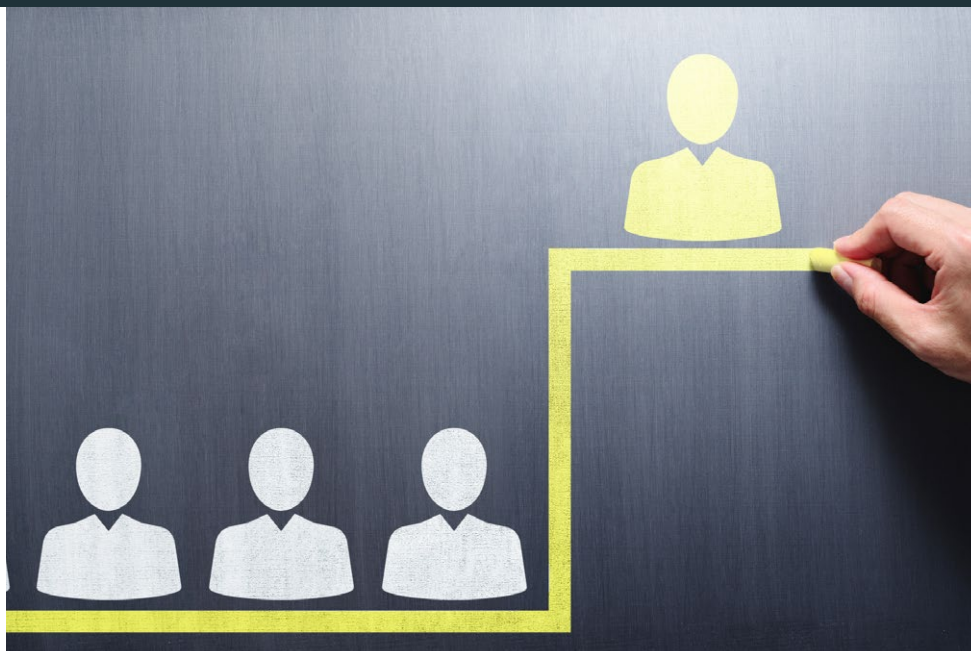
Furthermore, nearly a quarter of trusts who have been warned multiple times over pay have also hiked salaries.

But there have been changes. The one-school Knole Academy Trust, for instance, appointed a new CEO on a whopping £125,000 less than their predecessor.

Dr Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the "scandal of excessive CEO pay continues unabated" and urged the government to "take much firmer action".

The government has previously said ministers have no power to intervene and are reliant on the "good will" of trusts to slash salaries.

The Department for Education said they are now reviewing accounts to inform this year's pay strategy. This will include "assessing



commitments made by trusts in earlier rounds of high pay" and will take into account financial and educational performance.

What crackdown? Bosses still getting pay rises

Since 2017, the Education and Skills Funding Agency has sent letters to academy trusts that have a staff member who is paid above £150,000, or multiple salaries of between £100,000 and £150,000, asking for justification, with evidence, for paying such high salaries from taxpayers' cash.

Our analysis is based on the 277 trusts we identified that had received a letter. Thirteen trusts had either closed or had not published accounts yet, leaving 264 trusts.

Of those, 124 (45 per cent) saw pay rise for their

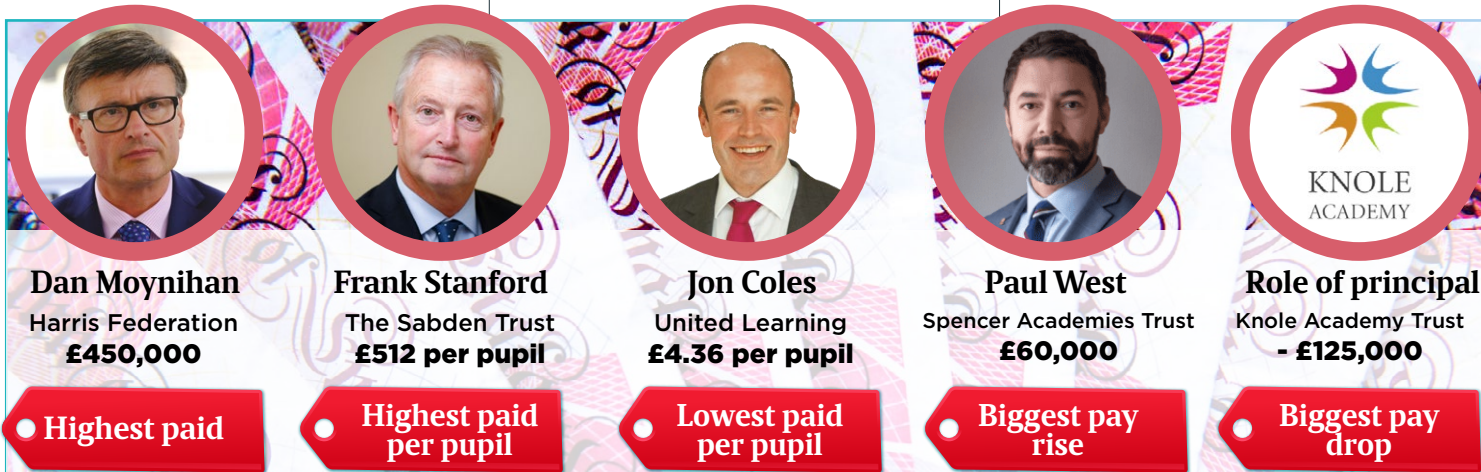
highest-paid employee between 2017-18 and 2018-19.

One-third (92) had seen no change, while just 18 per cent (49) saw pay fall.

However, the number of bosses paid £150,000 or more dropped from 129 to 117 in the same period.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said executive pay is a "thorny and complex issue... Trust boards have to ensure that these often-demanding roles are appropriately rewarded while under perfectly legitimate public scrutiny about the value-for-money of their decision making."

He urged trusts to follow National Governance Association guidance stating pay must be



Continued on next page

Investigation: CEO pay

"affordable and sustainable in the long term, and appropriate for the level of responsibility".

What about those being targeted by multiple warnings?

Nearly a quarter of the 58 trusts that received two warnings from the DfE over high pay still increased salaries.

But, 24 per cent reduced pay, while just over half made no change to salaries.

Valley Invicta Academies Trust, which has eight schools, saw the minimum pay jump from £150,001 in 2017-18 to £200,001 in 2018-19. It had two joint CEOs until June last year, when one of them took over as sole CEO.

At Paradigm Trust, which has six schools, its highest paid member of staff earned between £180,001 to £190,000 last year, up from £160,001 to £170,000 in 2017-18.

A trust spokesperson said the two years are "not comparable" as chief executive Bill Holledge was given a promotion from interim chief operating officer to full-time CEO. They added: "An uplift with promotion is not unusual."

The one-school trust Holland Park School, in west London, also saw a rise. Head Colin Hall's pay rose by £10,000 to at least £270,000 last year.

Boustead said that while some trusts have responded to government pressure, "other CEOs continue to receive unjustifiable salaries... Funding is for pupils, not over-inflated salaries for

"Funding is for pupils, not for over-inflated salaries for CEOs. The DfE must take firmer action"

CEOs. The DfE needs to take much firmer action and introduce national provisions on MAT CEOs' pay."

Of the trusts that decreased pay, one-school Knole Academy Trust led the way. Accounts show former principal Mary Boyle, who retired at the end of 2018, was paid between £205,000 and £210,000 in 2017-18. She was replaced by David Collins, who is now paid £80,001 to £90,001, according to accounts.

Theresa Homewood, trust chair of governors, said: "When recruiting [Boyle's] successor, governors took the opportunity to align the salary of the head teacher with national pay scales. The current governing body scrutinises spending carefully to ensure prudent use of financial resources."

Who's who in the best-paid bosses

Sir Dan Moynihan, chief executive of the Harris Federation, tops the tables again after a £10,000 rise took his pay to at least £450,000.

Second is Julian Drinkall, chief executive of Academies Enterprise Trust, whose total pay rose to at least £295,000, up from £290,000 in 2017-18.

The trust said Drinkall has waived any increase to his £264,000 salary since joining in 2016. The rise is because he received a larger bonus this year of £31,000, compared to £26,000 last year, as "all major indicators relating to educational performance, financial health and professionalising governance" were "positive in the reporting year".

However, it was announced in November 2018, during the reporting year for last year's accounts, that the trust was to give up two more academies, which were rated 'inadequate'.

Regarding his pay, the trust also highlighted that Drinkall had waived any pension contributions.

Sir Jon Coles, who runs the country's largest trust, United Learning, saw his pay rise by £6,000, but the trust said he has reduced his pension contributions by the same amount.

Five of the bosses in our top earners also run fewer than five schools – three of them run just one school (including the third and fourth highest paid).

Trusts dropping out of the most highly paid table include Silver Birch, which closed, and

REVEALED: THE COUNTRY'S HIGHEST PAID CEOs

CHIEF EXECUTIVE	TRUST	MINIMUM PAY 2018-19	MINIMUM PAY 2017-18	PAY DIFFERENCE	NUMBER OF PUPILS	PAY PER PUPIL £	NO OF SCHOOLS
Dan Moynihan	Harris Federation	£450,000	£440,000	£10,000	36000	£12.50	46
Julian Drinkall	Academies Enterprise Trust	£295,000	£290,000	£5,000	33820	£8.72	62
Kevin Satchwell	Telford City Technology College	£280,000	£270,000	£10,000	1358	£206.19	1
Colin Hall	Holland Park	£270,000	£260,000	£10,000	1364	£197.95	1
Jon Coles*	United Learning Trust	£246,000	£240,000	£6,000	53000	£4.64	65
Hamid Patel	Star Academies	£235,000	£220,000	£15,000	13776	£17.06	24
Dayo Olukoshi	Brampton Manor Trust	£234,274	£220,000	£14,274	4596	£50.97	2
Steve Lancashire	Reach2 Academy Trust	£230,000	£230,000	£-	17680	£13.01	58
Andy Goulty	The Rodillian Multi Academy Trust	£225,000	£225,000	£-	3425	£65.69	4
Simon Beamish	Leigh Academies Trust	£225,000	£220,000	£5,000	15000	£15.00	23
Roger Leighton	Partnership Learning	£225,000	£210,000	£15,000	9207	£24.44	12
Ged Fitzpatrick	St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust	£220,000	£220,000	£-	3921	£56.11	8
John Murphy	Oasis Community Learning	£220,000	£210,000	£10,000	31000	£7.10	52
John Tomasevic	Nova Educational Trust	£215,000	£260,000	£-45,000	8954	£24.01	15
Steve Kenning	Aspirations Academies Trust	£215,000	£210,000	£5,000	8500	£25.29	14
Paul West	The Spencer Academies Trust	£215,000	£155,000	£60,000	15186	£14.16	17
Steve Morrison	The Kingsdale Foundation	£210,000	£210,000	£-	2026	£103.65	1
Clive Neathey	The Rosedale Hewens Academy Trust	£205,000	£205,000	£-	2485	£82.49	7
Hugh Greenway	The Elliott Foundation Academies Trust	£202,805	£169,720	£33,085	11000	£18.44	28
*Coles' salary is paid by the trust sponsor							

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Investigation: CEO pay

Transforming Lives Educational Trust, which has not yet published accounts.

Ark academy trust, which runs 37 schools, said it has this year taken national insurance payments out of chief executive Lucy Heller's salary – meaning it shows up as £191,017, rather than the £236,601 in last year's analysis.

The largest pay rise, as revealed by Schools Week in January, was for Paul West, chief executive of the Spencer Academies Trust, which had 17 schools last year. His pay rose from at least £155,000 to £215,000 last year. The trust previously said this was down to "organisational growth and complexity" and meeting "educational and financial targets".

Emma Knights, chief executive of the National Governance Association, wrote last month that trust leaders promoting ethical leadership are "embarrassed by the pay of some in the sector".

While, according to Knights, it is a "small fraction of MATs involved in astronomical pay, the coverage tarnishes all who lead MATs. It is not helping academies in the PR battles, playing into the 'privatisation' critique."

Huge difference in our pay-per-pupil measure

The analysis also found a huge disparity in pay according to pupil numbers – with the highest paid CEO earning 110 times more per pupil than the lowest paid.

However, a like-for-like comparison may be problematic as the highest earners in this category often oversee special academies or alternative provision, which tend to have far fewer pupils.

Frank Stanford, chief executive officer of the Sabden Multi Academy Trust in East Sussex, was the highest paid per pupil for the second year in a row (see table below).

His minimum pay of £170,000 worked out at £512 per pupil. The trust runs three special educational needs schools and an alternative

provision school.

The trust did not respond to request for comment.

In comparison, Coles of United Learning was paid £246,000 for 53,000 pupils – equating to £4.64 per pupil.

Elaine Colquhoun, executive principal of the Whitefield Academy Trust, which oversees two special schools, cautioned that the per-pupil measure doesn't "judge the complexity of the job" and may not be appropriate when assessing trusts with special schools.

The leader earned a minimum of £140,001, working out at £304 per pupil.

She said: "Our pupils all have special educational needs and encompass some of the broadest range of needs in the country – this means, for example, that one of our schools actually operates internally as three separate schools: primary, secondary, and one for children and young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and related health issues."

Colquhoun added the government had examined its pay structures and found them "reasonable in the circumstances".

Elsewhere, Serge Cefai, headteacher of the Sacred Heart Catholic School, in south-east London, earned £211 per pupil. His remuneration rose by £20,000 to £180,000 last year, according to annual accounts.

This was driven by a bonus of at least £35,000 – up from £15,000 in the previous year. His salary has remained the same on at least £145,000. The school, rated 'outstanding' since 2012, said two years of bonuses were paid in the year, which was an "unusual occurrence and approved by governors".

The school added that the head has opted out of the pension scheme to save "tens of thousands of pounds" and is now on phased retirement, so has a reduced salary.

Leora Cruddas, chief executive of the

Confederation of School Trusts, said she is in talks with the government over a more "sophisticated" approach to monitoring and benchmarking pay, based on the per-pupil metric.

She wants the government to machine read all accounts and produce a "simple" graph mapping the pay of accounting officers compared to pupil numbers, with a regression line and a tolerance threshold set either side.

She said this would show up the trusts that paying the larger salaries despite having just one school, and lead to a more "proportionate conversation and less hysteria", rather than using the "blunt threshold" of £150,000.

She added CST is "fully committed to an evidence-based process for setting executive pay and to the vigilant observation of financial probity, the ethos of public service, public sector values and the principles of public life".

It's not just academy bosses getting rises ...

Accounts for Haringey Council show Tony Hartney, listed as chief executive of the local authority-maintained Gladesmore and Crowland schools, got a 16 per cent rise.

His pay rose from £177,718 in 2017-18 up to £205,622 last year, which would make him the 19th highest-paid CEO in the country.

The school teachers' pay and conditions document states leaders' salaries can only be raised 25 per cent above the maximum pay range in "exceptional circumstances".

The council said Hartney was asked to take over as head of a neighbouring large primary school on an interim basis, so his salary was recalculated for the two years up to 2019 in accordance with pay rules. The arrangement has since concluded.

Elsewhere, the average principal salary for all further education colleges in 2017-18 was £136,000, according to an analysis by our sister title FE Week. For the trusts we looked at, the average was £148,000.

CEO PAY PER PUPIL

CEO (OR HIGHEST-PAID EMPLOYEE)	TRUST	MINIMUM TOTAL PAY 2018-19 (£)	MINIMUM TOTAL PAY 2017-18 (£)	PAY CHANGE (£)	PUPIL NUMBERS 18-19	PAY PER PUPIL (£)	NO. OF SCHOOLS
Frank Stanford	The Sabden Multi Academy Trust	170,000	165,000	5,000	332	512.05	4
Peter Evans	Learn @ MAT	135,000	135,000	0	328	411.59	4
Elaine Colquhoun	Whitefield Academy Trust	140,001	140,001	0	460	304.35	2
Bozena Laraway	St Helen's Catholic Junior School Academy	100,000	100,000	0	363	275.48	1
Seamus Oates	TBAP Trust	170,001	195,001	-25,000	625	272.00	11
Clare Verga	City of London Academy Islington Limited	185,000	180,000	5,000	801	230.96	1
Serge Cefai	Sacred Heart Catholic School	180,000	160,000	20,000	854	210.77	1
Kevin Satchwell	Telford City Technology College	280,001	270,001	10,000	1,358	206.19	1
Colin Hall	Holland Park	270,000	260,000	10,000	1,364	197.95	1
Peter Box	The Herefordshire Marches Federation of Academies	150,000	120,000	30,000	889	168.73	3

Continued on next page

Investigation: CEO pay

This average is similar to the pay of the best-paid education union leader, Paul Whiteman of NAHT, whose salary and benefits came to £147,158. Based on the most recent accounts available, the average pay (not including pension contributions) across the four unions' five general secretaries was £122,000.

Academies compare favourably to other sectors

An analysis by trade publication *Inside Housing* found the country's largest housing associations were paid on average £174,896 in 2017-18.

Meanwhile, according to the *Health Service Journal*, there were 15 NHS trust CEOs paid more than £250,000 in 2017-18, compared to just four in the academy sector.

The NGA last year called for the government to introduce a system similar to NHS trusts where those wishing to award pay of more than £150,000 per year have to get ministerial approval.

Sam Henson, director of policy and information at the NGA, said the department is now looking to other sectors to explore how they can "get the message across" on pay.

But there's an emerging gender gap

Of the 30 best-paid trusts, just five were led by women. The average pay for a male CEO among these trusts was £232,000. Among the five female CEOs it was £196,000.

However, this isn't just a chief executive issue. There is also a gender pay gap at headteacher level. According to the 2018 school workforce census, male headteachers were paid on average £75,492 and women heads got £67,364.

It's also not just in education. An analysis by *Inside Housing* found women chief executives of housing associations were paid £165,630 in 2018-19, 2.21 per cent lower than the £178,505 male chief executives took home.

Meanwhile the *Health Service Journal* found women health trust bosses were paid around £176,000 compared to £183,000 for their male counterparts.

A DfE spokesperson added: "It is essential that we have the best people to lead our schools if we are to raise standards, but academy trust salaries should be justifiable and reflect the individual responsibility - particularly in cases of significant increases. We will be making further challenges in the coming months."

NERD BOX:



A few words on how we handled all the data. Pay refers to total remuneration as shown in the academy trust's accounts, which can include things like bonuses and severance pay.

It's often presented as a salary bracket, so we have used the minimum pay level (unless we know the actual amount).

To work out per-pupil pay, we divided their minimum remuneration by the total number of pupils on roll, as published in accounts.

If this figure wasn't in accounts, we used the census figure or stats from the trust's website.

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Investigation

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SEND deficits to soar as Williamson rejects high needs pleas

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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EXCLUSIVE

Councils have warned of soaring deficits and diminishing support for vulnerable pupils after ministers rejected nine in 10 bids to shore up high needs budgets with general school funds.

The local councils of both education secretary Gavin Williamson and schools minister Nick Gibb are among 22 local authorities denied permission by Williamson to move cash between different funding pots.

Since 2018, councils have had to seek government approval if they want to move more than 0.5 per cent from the schools block of their dedicated schools grant to the high needs block. They also need the agreement of their schools forum, which includes local heads.

Town halls also have to get permission if they want to move less than 0.5 per cent without the permission of their local schools forum.

For 2020-21, 25 councils applied for permission to move cash, but just three – Kent, Rotherham and South Gloucestershire – were given leave to do so.

Last year, 22 of 38 councils were approved to move funding, and in 2018-19 13 of 27 councils were given permission.

As a result, councils say they will have less money to spend on provision for SEND pupils, and warned their worsening financial positions would have a knock-on effect for schools.

Mike Kane, the shadow schools minister, said it was a "tragedy that the government have rejected so many more applications" which "paints a bleak picture of the shortfall in overall schools funding across the country".

He added: "Ministers must look again at the criteria to raise high needs funding; the DfE must also now reverse school funding cuts, especially for SEND children."

Staffordshire county council, which is responsible for SEND provision for children in Williamson's South Staffordshire constituency, said they had emphasised the "issue of a fully funded special needs block is of crucial importance to large counties like Staffordshire, which

are seeing huge increases in the numbers of children drawing on that funding".

West Sussex County Council, which covers Gibb's constituency, also had its application to move 0.7 per cent turned down. The council will now set a deficit on its DSG budget for the first time next year and recoup any overspend from future DSG allocations. They said this could "impact on all West Sussex schools, which are already some of the lowest funded per pupil in the country."

In Barnsley, a request for a 2 per cent transfer was also refused. The council needed £3.2 million, but will now only be able to transfer £800,000, following the permission of its schools forum to move 0.5 per cent.

Margaret Bruff, the council's cabinet spokesperson for children's services, said it will "increase the already considerable pressure on the high-needs budget". The authority will write to Williamson to "express our disappointment and to better understand the rationale behind the decision".

The dispute comes at a time of crisis for SEND support, following years of rising demand and flatlining funding. According to think tank IPPR North, SEND budgets have been cut by 17 per cent in real terms in just three years.

During a hearing of the parliamentary public accounts committee earlier this week, Jonathan Slater, the DfE's permanent secretary, admitted that failures of support for SEND pupils have in part been driven by "stresses and strains" caused by government reforms and funding pressures.

In Cambridgeshire, the council is to consult with schools over reducing its financial commitment for SEND provision after its request to move funding was thrown out by Williamson and its own schools forum.

The authority is

Council	Decision	Transfer
Barnsley	rejected	2.00%
BCP*	rejected	1.91%
Cambridgeshire	rejected	1.80%
Cheshire East	rejected	0.50%
Enfield	rejected	0.56%
Hammersmith and Fulham	rejected	1.00%
Hartlepool	rejected	0.84%
Hillingdon	rejected	3.14%
Isle of Wight	rejected	1.50%
Kent	approved	1.00%
Newham	rejected	1.06%
North Somerset	rejected	0.70%
North Yorkshire	rejected	0.50%
Richmond upon Thames	rejected	0.67%
Rotherham	approved	1.50%
Somerset	rejected	0.08%
South Gloucestershire	partial approval	1.34%**
Southwark	rejected	1.81%
Staffordshire	rejected	0.50%
Surrey	rejected	0.50%
Swindon	rejected	0.50%
Tameside	rejected	1.00%
Warwickshire	rejected	0.50%
West Sussex	rejected	0.50%
Wiltshire	rejected	0.70%

* Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

** 3.02% requested

expecting a cumulative DSG deficit of £18 million by the end of the year "due to ongoing demand" for education, health and care plans from schools.

The council asked the DfE for permission to move 1.8 per cent, or around £6.6 million to the high needs block, but was turned down. Its subsequent request to the schools forum to move 0.5 per cent, around £1.85 million, was also refused.

Asked why it had approved so few requests this year, the DfE did not respond, and simply highlighted its plans to boost high needs funding by £780 million next year.

But West Sussex said the extra funding "will not be enough to cover the cost of the continued growth in demand for our high needs services".

South Gloucestershire, which was given permission to move 1.34 per cent, said it was forced to request the transfer despite the upcoming funding increase.



Gavin Williamson

News

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Head: I had to beg for my school to be nationalised

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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A leader who converted his prestigious private school into a state school has said the government should set up a dedicated unit to help others to follow suit.

Hans Broekman, the principal of Liverpool College, told an event in London this week that it was "actually very difficult for an independent school to join the state school sector", and called on the Department for Education to help.

A number of private schools have become academies over the past decade, enticed by the freedoms that academy status can offer and the idea that they can extend their education offer to a broader range of pupils.

But Broekman, whose school converted in 2013, told the event, organised by the Private School Policy Reform think-tank on Monday, that he had to "beg to be nationalised", and questioned why the government wasn't more supportive.



Hans Broekman

"The free school route, for all sorts of economic, technical and government reasons, is a terrible route for a thriving independent school to become a state school," he said.

"With a little imagination and a little will, the government could create a unit or group which was empowered to transfer independent schools to the state sector."

He added: "It is surely a sign of the perverse politicisation of the whole private school issue that this is not already being done."

The future of the independent school sector has been the subject of increasing debate in recent years, amid calls for private schools to lose their charitable status and do more for their local communities.

In its election manifesto, Labour pledged to end tax breaks for the independent sector. This was seen as a compromise on a motion that passed at the party's conference last September, which called for their assets to be redistributed.

The government has tried to encourage the independent school sector to become more involved in running state schools.

The Independent Schools Council, which represents some of the country's most prestigious private schools, agreed in 2018 to report annually on its members' partnerships with state schools.

And last year, a new £200,000 fund was announced to help state schools, private schools and universities create or expand partnerships – though recipients have to stump up some of their own cash.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Academy boss joins Williamson's team of advisers

An academy trust boss has been appointed as an adviser to the education secretary.

Dr Jo Saxton, the founder and chief executive of Turner Schools, will advise Gavin Williamson and Baroness Berridge, the academies minister, on policy issues.

Her appointment comes after the recent appointment of Iain Mansfield, former head of education, skills, science and innovation at the Policy Exchange think tank. He is leading on policy, but is a political appointee who answers to Downing Street.

Saxton will be employed as a civil servant, not a special adviser.

Before she established Turner Schools, which now runs four schools in Kent, in 2016, Saxton was chief executive of Future Academies, the trust set up by former academies minister Lord Nash.

She was also appointed to the advisory group of pro-academy lobbying group Parents and Teachers for Excellence in 2016 and a director of exams regulator Ofqual in 2018.



Schools Week understands Saxton has already parted ways with PTE, and will resign from her Ofqual role before taking up her DfE role.

Saxton said it was a "huge wrench to be leaving Turner Schools".

"It has been an honour and privilege to set up an education trust that can and will continue to help young people gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed and have choices in their futures.

"I am proud of what we have achieved so far, and have absolutely every confidence that Turner Schools is going to go from strength to strength in the coming years."

Saxton recently spoke to *Schools Week* about Turner's experience in taking on schools run by the collapsed Lilac Sky academy trust, which shut in 2017 amid a probe into allegations of financial malpractice.

And writing for this paper in 2017, Saxton also argued in favour of the government's new GCSEs and wider education reform programme.

"In primary classrooms I meet more children able to read thanks to the systematic teaching and testing of synthetic phonics, and younger pupils who know their times tables inside out and upside down.

"At secondary level I see more pupils learning three discrete sciences and keeping up with a foreign language. The new English and maths specifications, studied by teenagers these past two years, build on these curriculum reforms."

According to LinkedIn, Saxton studied at St Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith. She has a master's degree from the University of Cambridge and a Ph.D. in philosophy from New York University.

Politics

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Labour leadership hustings: where do the final three stand on education issues?

Less than a month remains until the end of the Labour leadership contest, with party members across the country currently voting on who they want to replace Jeremy Corbyn. We asked each of the three candidates the same six questions on education policy issues that have dominated Labour politics in recent years.



Rebecca Long-Bailey

What's your position on academies?

I believe we need to end the fragmentation and marketisation of our schools. There is no evidence that academies are better for children. They are over-centralised, inefficient and undemocratic, with parents, local communities and teachers locked out of decision-making.

I believe local authorities should be responsible for delivering education to their local communities.

Do you support the Labour conference motion to redistribute private schools' assets and remove their charitable status?

I support the manifesto commitment to close the tax loopholes private schools enjoy with their charitable status. This would generate revenues that we could use for, for example, funding free school meals.

Do you agree with Labour's current policy of replacing Ofsted?

Yes. We need a democratically accountable inspectorate designed to drive genuine improvements in our schools. This new system must see local authorities and inspectors working hand in hand with teachers, doing away with the current system, which is punitive, fixated on league tables at the expense of meaningful standards.

Are you committed to Labour's current plan to scrap all primary school tests?

Yes – alongside our policy to have maximum class size of 30 and to ensure every child is taught by a qualified teacher to ensure improving standards in primary schools.

Do you support headteachers in their right to exclude pupils, and what reforms are needed on off-rolling?

The practices of off-rolling need to be addressed. Black children, children on free school meals, and disabled children are all disproportionately affected and it harms their later life chances.

Headteachers should be made accountable for the wellbeing and educational outcomes of excluded children.



Keir Starmer

What's your position on academies?

All schools should be under local democratic control. The academisation of our schools fundamentally takes power away from parents, pupils and communities and we need to put that right.

That's why I want all schools to be democratically accountable to their local communities, not to politicians in London.

Do you support the Labour conference motion to redistribute private schools' assets and remove their charitable status?

I want every child in the state sector to have [a brilliant state education], so that we can make private schools irrelevant and family wealth immaterial to educational opportunities.

We also need to close the tax loopholes enjoyed by private schools.

Do you agree with Labour's current policy of replacing Ofsted?

Any inspection system has to help schools to improve and help teachers to support children – Ofsted has failed to do that.

To maintain high standards across all our schools there needs to be an independent inspection approach that helps all of our schools be the very best they can be. I'd want to work with teachers, parents and teaching unions on this.

Are you committed to Labour's current plan to scrap all primary school tests?

I would work with teachers to shape an assessment process that trusts their professional judgment. We need a process that makes much more careful use of national tests and uses assessment data to support learners and keep parents informed.

Do you support headteachers in their right to exclude pupils, and what reforms are needed on off-rolling?

Yes, I support the right to exclude pupils, but this must always be a last resort. The scourge of off-rolling needs to be tackled. I fully support Labour's plans on this.



Lisa Nandy

What's your position on academies?

The reality is that we cannot turn the clock back to before 2010, but there is a real need to extend and clarify local authorities' role.

We need a new role for local authority oversight that covers all schools and that's the agenda I'll look to develop in consultation with parents, education professionals and local authorities.

Do you support the Labour conference motion to redistribute private schools' assets and remove their charitable status?

I support the position set out in the 2019 Labour manifesto which committed to ending the VAT exemption for private schools.

At the same time, I have said throughout this contest that we need to avoid simplistic arguments around ownership across a whole range of industries.

Do you agree with Labour's current policy of replacing Ofsted?

I think we have to recognise that Ofsted's reputation in schools has become tainted over many years. We have a recruitment and retention crisis and Ofsted is part of the problem.

Local authorities can do more to support and co-ordinate schools but I think there will still need to be a role for HMIs.

Are you committed to Labour's current plan to scrap all primary school tests?

As I understand it, Labour's policy was to end key stage 1 and 2 SATs and baseline assessments, rather than ending all forms of testing, which I would not be in favour of.

Teachers know that tests are useful for measuring pupil learning. I want to make this the role of testing, not high-stakes league tables.

Do you support headteachers in their right to exclude pupils, and what reforms are needed on off-rolling?

Exclusions – both permanent and fixed term – can be justified but they must be a measure of the last resort.

In all cases, it is vital that a formal process is followed and I want to make it clear there can be no room for illegal or "informal" off-rolling under any circumstances.

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Interview

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Barton: defy ministers to help 'forgotten third'

EXCLUSIVE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools leaders should defy the government and snub GCSE English to help the "forgotten third" of pupils destined to fail, the leader of the ASCL union has said.

Geoff Barton (pictured), once a maverick headteacher who railed against Ofsted and said he would have to be dragged "kicking and screaming" into running an academy, has been criticised recently by leaders who believe he has grown too close to the establishment.

But Barton said his reputation as a "ranty man in the pub" remained intact, as he criticised the "crushing weight of accountability" placed on heads, and issued a rallying call to academy trusts to take reforming the exams system into their own hands.

In an interview with *Schools Week* ahead of ASCL's annual conference today (Friday), the general secretary insisted he still spoke up when necessary.

"I think there's sometimes a bit of a caricature that all ASCL does is kowtow to what governments are doing, and there will undoubtedly be some people who remember old Mr Maverick Geoff, the ranty man in the pub and say, where is he now?" he said.

"Similarly, you'll have people within the DfE and elsewhere, who will say the ranty man continues to rant about stuff, but usually on the basis of evidence."

Barton admits that during his time as an ASCL council member, he too was "critical of all of this talk of us working with the government, particularly in the early days of the Govian era".

"It was difficult to see how we were, you know, enhancing policy, so I was one of those critics at that time," he told *Schools Week*.

But the school system looks very different now to how it was in the early-2010s, and Barton believes leaders "should think less that government provides us with the solutions".

"I think it isn't really about whether you work constructively or not with government, it's about the confidence of leaders to really reaffirm that we will take



decisions in the interest of our children, consulting with parents about it, and doing it on behalf of parents."

The plight of pupils who are "set up to fail" by the current exams system is one area where Barton believes school leaders can seek to enact change themselves.

An ASCL survey of its members, published today, reveals that around 40 per cent want to see GCSEs scrapped and assessment at 16 reviewed, while a further 47 per cent want to see them reformed.

Last year, an ASCL commission recommended that GCSE English language be replaced with a "passport to English" qualification, to help ease the suffering of the "forgotten third" of pupils doomed to fail because of the current system of comparable outcomes.

Barton said there was a "squeamishness" in government about efforts to address the issue, but exam boards were "hugely interested" in the passport to English idea.

Even if ministers won't fund the qualification "there's nothing to stop a group of trusts building a coalition with whoever can help to do that".

"I think what's happening on my watch is we're not looking to just have conversations with government, but actually to talk about how you can get the system to step up and provide some solutions for itself. I think that's

interesting because it's less passive, less dependent on assuming that Whitehall has all the solutions."

ASCL has also recently faced criticism for its refusal to back #PauseOfsted, a campaign by the Headteachers' Roundtable calling on school staff to stop working as jobbing inspectors.

Barton told *Schools Week* it had been a "very easy call" for ASCL's leadership to reject the campaign, which "runs in the contradictory direction to where ASCL has been, and is, going".

"We've argued for a long time that inspection should be done with us rather than to us. Even if it doesn't feel like that, the fact that 70 per cent of inspectors come from schools – we think that's a good thing.

"It also runs counter to where we are, which is unlike many of the other unions. We agree that the new framework is better than the old framework because at least it starts to take the obsession with data out of it. We don't think it's in any way perfect yet, but we do think it's better."

Barton said the orchestrators of the campaign were doing "a principled thing for principled reasons", but said the risk is "you alienate politicians and parents by appearing not to care about standards. Just think about the way it would resonate with some people, even though I know that's not the way it's intended to."

Speed read

Budget 2020: what schools need to know

The chancellor Rishi Sunak has delivered his budget address in parliament. It was something of a damp squib for schools – but here's what you need to know.

1 Freelance workers affected by coronavirus can claim benefits more easily

Supply teachers and other freelancers in the education sector will be able to access benefits more easily if they cannot work due to coronavirus.

Sunak, who dedicated the first 20 minutes of his speech to the issue, warned that up to one-fifth of the working-age population could need to be off work "at any one time".

To help freelance workers, who do not qualify for statutory sick pay, they will be able to access benefits from day one of their absence, and will be able to sign up online rather than by going to a job centre. The government will also temporarily remove the minimum salary requirement under universal credit.

2 No big new announcements...

The chancellor rattled off a list of spending pledges during his speech, including funding for specialist 16-19 maths schools in every region, £25,000 on average for each secondary school to invest in arts activities and £29 million a year to improve PE teaching.

However, the maths schools pledge was made last year, and the funding for arts and PE were in the Conservatives' manifesto.

The budget documents do give updated funding figures for the initiatives though. Pledges in the manifesto included funding that would go to the devolved nations under the so-called Barnett Formula (which is why, for instance, the money for arts premium appears less than was previously announced).

The PE investment amounts to £29 million for England by 2023-24, and the arts premium will be £90 million a year from September 2021.

The government reaffirmed its commitment to give schools a slice of a large capital-funding pot, but the documents do not say how much schools will receive.

3...but some further detail on maths schools

According to the budget documents, the government will provide "an additional £7 million to support a total of 11 maths schools in England, covering every region".

This is on top of £18 million funding for maths schools announced in 2017.

It is not known how much of the £18 million has been spent so far, but it's unlikely to be much, given there are only a handful of maths schools in operation, and they only receive £350,000 a year from the pot.

In 2018, a *Schools Week* investigation revealed how the government was struggling to recruit universities to set up

maths schools, with several leading institutions declining the invitation. However, ministers have had more success recently, announcing last year that two more maths schools had been approved, taking the total number of approved schools to six.

4 The 'reading tax' is being abolished

Sunak told MPs he will axe VAT currently charged on digital publications. Currently, VAT is charged on things like digital fiction and textbooks, and education resources, so this move may well prove helpful to schools.

The government will introduce legislation to apply a zero rate of VAT to e-publications from December 1, and expects the publishing industry "to pass on the benefit of this relief to consumers".

"It should benefit all who read digitally, including children from poorer backgrounds: nearly 1 in 4 pupils on free school meals read fiction digitally, compared to 1 in 6 of their peers who are not eligible for free school meals."

5 Sector leaders aren't best pleased

Heads, teachers and their representatives reacted to the budget with dismay, criticising the chancellor for failing to provide additional funding for things like high needs and early years.

"None of these commitments are enough to reverse the devastating cuts to courses, extra-curricular provision and student support which have taken place over the past few years because of the inadequacy of government funding," warned Geoff Barton, general secretary of the ASCL leaders' union.

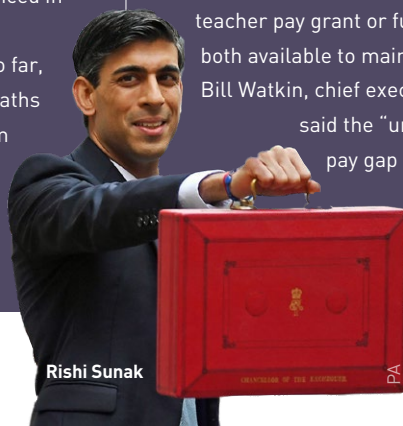
Dr Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the budget "does not support a long-term plan for the millions of young people being educated within a chronically underfunded system".

6 Sixth-form colleges left disappointed

Sixth-form colleges had been lobbying for a change in the rules to give them access to extra funding for teacher pay rises and retention incentives, but were left disappointed by the budget.

Currently, more than half of sixth-form colleges do not receive the DfE's teacher pay grant or funding for early-career payments, which are both available to mainstream schools and 16-to-19 academies.

Bill Watkin, chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, said the "uneven treatment has created an unhelpful pay gap and has been identified as a cause of some targeted industrial unrest".



Rishi Sunak

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EDITORIAL

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Time to show leadership on SEND funding crisis

The prevailing view in education is clear: there is a SEND funding crisis, and it's not just going to go away with a £780 million funding boost.

We're sure the government had its reasons for rejecting 22 of 25 requests from councils for permission to use general school funding to shore up high needs budgets.

We imagine one of these is to ensure councils pass on the Conservative's manifesto commitment for minimum per-pupil pay levels.

It is a shame, therefore, that when given a chance to tell us what those reasons were, the Department for Education complacently referred to its bland talking points.

Some of the most vulnerable children in society are being failed by the current system. The government must show leadership on this issue. Ministers could start by expediting their response to the much-needed SEND review, and listening when councils tell them they can no longer cope.

Government can't paper over wild west of CEO pay

Our figures are pretty conclusive – the government's attempted "crackdown" on CEO pay, led by former academies minister Lord Agnew, hasn't really worked.

The government has admitted it has few powers to intervene, so has taken to writing strongly-worded letters asking trusts to justify their pay.

While some have reduced salaries, we found half of trusts written to actually increased remuneration for top bosses.

But what's the solution? The national governance association believes an NHS-style pay system where trusts have to get government approval for salaries over a certain threshold should be introduced.

Meanwhile, the Confederation of School Trusts wants better benchmarking from the government – meaning trusts are more informed when making pay decisions.

Both are solid suggestions that have the potential to better control salaries – especially among the trusts upping pay despite having just a few schools. Over to you, Baroness Berridge.

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Ministers dodge questions about future of universal infant free school meals

Jane Wright

Hello –ten years of austerity punishing the poor the disabled and the vulnerable of society whilst the rich who caused the financial crash get rewarded and richer! The clues were there already as to how this unethical Tory government works. Why would you expect any different?

'No frills' private school founder eyes seven more north-east sites

Janet Downs

The reason the state became involved in education was to ensure every child received an education. In a universal state-funded education system, no child is denied an education because of poverty. Even low-cost provision shuts out the very poor or children whose needs are expensive to meet (eg SEND). Education is a public as well as a private good. It should not be left to the private sector.

Framework criticism is just 'small and vocal minority', claims Spielman

Terry Pearson

There is a major problem with many assertions that are made by Ofsted and that is that they cannot be verified. While Amanda Spielman makes claims such as "feedback from many directions is telling Ofsted that the inspections are nearly always working well", it is impossible to check the veracity of these claims because the data/evidence to support claims such as these are not openly available to the public in a raw form.

As for the sweeping claim that "Ofsted takes all feedback very seriously and works fast to address issues", I have personal experience to the contrary. In August 2018, I produced a review of Ofsted's test of the reliability of short inspections. The report was sent directly to HMCI in the first instance, with a letter explaining that it had been produced in the spirit of critical feedback and included a list of recommendations that could be used to help Ofsted progress effectively. This feedback was not taken seriously and the inspectorate made it clear that it did not intend to address any of the issues raised.

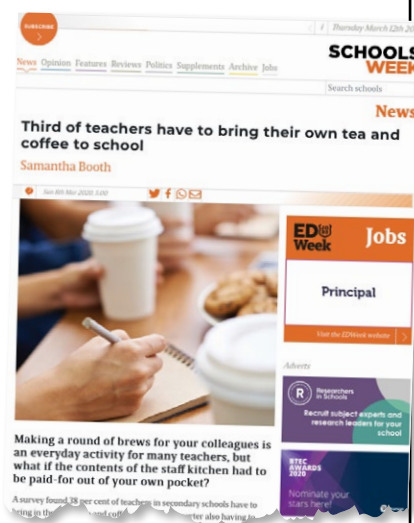
Maybe the time has come for an independent point of contact for concerns about inspection. I am not convinced that the current system works as well as it should.

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Keely Howard

One-third of teachers have to bring their own tea and coffee to school

At a school I no longer work at, we used to have free tea and coffee but a new head arrived and told us that we could not justify spending any public money on staff in such a way and therefore removed it. I have worked in two schools since then, both of which provide free refreshments for staff. It shows how valued, or not, staff are, if they are at least given refreshments.



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

Government behaviour tsar calls out 'contradictory' Ofsted report

John Mountford

It's wonderful that Ofsted declares, "We want to see that a school's policy is implemented consistently, that it's well understood and ultimately, that it works." The problem is, it has to work for everyone in the school environment where most people, including the students themselves, understand that the balance of "power" always operates in favour of the school. This is why those who observe or comment on school behaviour need to draw on robust data which details how a school's discipline policy actually impacts on students as well as staff.

In this context, I question Tom Bennett's observation. He declares, "A few students thinking the school is a little strict is not a secure platform of evidence." Is he making a general observation, or is it a specific comment about the school under review? Assuming the latter, then my question to him would be, how robust is the evidence collected by the school in question to support his assessment?

In this instance, on balance, I would suggest that inspectors had some such evidence at their disposal. If that was the case, then we would assume the evidence available supported the conclusions they arrived at.

FRESH START FOR #FULLYFUNCTIONAL – YOUR PLEDGE OF SUPPORT COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE



DAVID GALLAGHER
Chief Executive Officer, NCFE

The start of a new year always seems like the best time to make resolutions and plans.

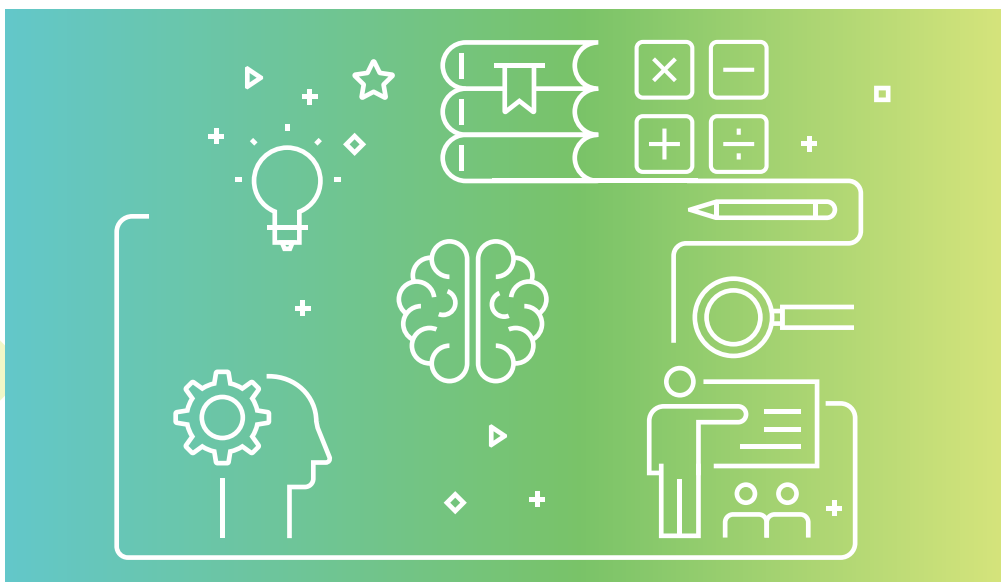
For NCFE, 2020 sees us approach one year since launching our #FullyFunctional campaign, as part of our ongoing commitment to promote and advance learning for all.

Originally launched in April 2019, #FullyFunctional is our ask to the government to change the current GCSE funding legislation to help create a level playing field for English and maths qualifications.

At present, funding rules dictate that any young person who achieves a grade 3 (grade D in the old system) in their GCSE English or maths exam has to resit the same exam until they pass. Research has shown however that of those who resit, only one in every four will achieve a higher grade. For young people looking to progress in their lives and careers, this leads to a repetitive cycle of failure which is damaging to their confidence and in some cases, mental health, at what is a critical time in their professional and personal development.

Learners who achieve a grade 1 or 2 at GCSE by comparison are offered alternative routes to achieve these qualifications through programmes such as Functional Skills, offering a more skills-led, practical approach to learning which might better suit a learner's individual learning style, as well as the needs of future employers.

NCFE has always been a firm believer that there is no 'one size fits all' approach when it comes to education, which is why we believe that opening



up these alternative options to all learners and creating a greater parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning will help more young people to achieve their full potential on their chosen career paths.

As part of the campaign launch, we conducted a survey which asked the opinion of more than 2,000 members of the general public for their views on the current legislation. Nearly 70% agreed that young people should be given alternative options other than GCSEs with 71% also agreeing that students should be allowed to learn in a style that suits them. Additionally, over half of respondents (53%) who were studying for their GCSEs at the time the survey was conducted said that this was the most stressful time of their teenage years.

This sentiment has been echoed across the sector, with a number of school teachers, FE colleges, employers and MPs voicing their support for the campaign, which is why, in line with the recent general election with a new cabinet in place, as well as it being one year on since the initial campaign launch, we feel like this is the perfect time for us to re-centre our focus in order to take #FullyFunctional to the next level.

So, how do we plan to do this? We're looking for as many people as possible, from learners to teachers, and educational institutions to employers to get behind the campaign and make as much noise as possible about this

critical issue so we can encourage the necessary changes in resettlement policy which will impact so many young people for years to come.

To make this easier to do, we have created a digital pledge for people to sign, hosted on the NCFE website, which will be curated into a petition document for us to send to government on behalf of the entire sector.

Functional Skills qualifications cover the essential elements of English and maths to provide and reinforce the relevant and usable skills that learners need in areas such as communication, problem solving, listening, time management and team working in order to enable them to engage successfully as citizens and progress to further learning or employment.

At NCFE, we believe that by working together collaboratively to address the educational needs of young people from all walks of life, we can equip the workforce of the future with the right skills to progress and achieve. People are the most important resource we have and by levelling the playing field between 'alternative' qualifications and GCSEs, we can successfully unlock potential and help to make a positive difference to people's lives and the success of our economy.

For more information and to join the #FullyFunctional movement, visit www.ncfe.org.uk/fully-functional.

Feature

JL DUTAUT | @DUTAUT



COVID-19 school closures: the disaster that will put edtech to the test

The global pandemic is forcing us all to improvise. Edtech firms have been quick off the mark to suggest their systems as palliatives for worldwide school closures. JL Dutaut explores the pros and cons of online home-based lessons

In moments of crisis, people are willing to hand over a great deal of power to anyone who claims to have a magic cure." So says Naomi Klein in her book *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, which theorises that what for many is a disaster is to some an opportunity, and that the wheels of our economic system are well oiled to profit from these situations.

After years of worrying about Brexit and budgets, headteachers could be forgiven for thinking both that the shock is finally upon us, and that Klein's theory has merit. As well as government and agency updates on the spread of coronavirus, their inboxes are swelling with a plethora of offers of help from education technology companies – a marketing onslaught likely to sow confusion and worsen panic. Unequal knowledge and skills across the school system could very well show up a lack of herd immunity to online harms.

In fact, exposing and worsening our system's inequalities may be the greatest threat posed by coronavirus and schools' dependence on technology to mitigate its effects.

Priyah Lakhani is dismissive of the idea. "We have Syrian refugees in Lebanon and children in rural Africa using our technology," says the CEO of UK-based social enterprise Century Tech, the first company to offer its services free to closed schools in China and Hong Kong. "You and me get frustrated when things don't load quickly, but they

haven't quite got impatient yet."

The global crisis caused by COVID-19 is morphing into a proving ground for the claims that have been made for decades by the self-styled edtech "disruptors". Schools in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea and Italy have already been forced to replace their provision with online learning. International schools, too. Day by day, it seems more and more likely UK schools will have to follow, and when it comes to business, the early bird gets the worm.

Online study platform Quizlet is reporting an increase in usage in affected areas globally and

software (free to schools since 2006) has a page dedicated to COVID-19 Resources. These resources add up to instructions on how to use the G-suite For Education tools to support distance learning.

For Lakhani, who has extended the free offer to UK schools, it's not about profit. Her investors see the company as "a philanthropic part of their portfolio", and the decision to offer free access was led by motivated members of her team. But social enterprises are an exception, and it would be churlish to suppose any company – especially start-ups in a high-risk sector like technology – would not be driven by profit. The data collected

"Computers get viruses too and rapid implementations can cause problems"

has issued guidance to support teachers to use its tools. Sector leader Twinkl is offering its services for free for one month to all teachers and parents of children in UK schools "which are closed, or facing closure". "Our mission," its statement reads, "is to help those who teach".

An even bigger beast in the edtech world, Google's microsite for its suite of education

by tech companies alone is likely more valuable than any revenue from service charges. School leaders must be aware of that and ensure GDPR compliance to the best of their ability, but compliance is no guarantee of safety.

Nevertheless, the profit motive is the same forward-looking drive that leads businesses to invest in capacity, and it's precisely why, on the

COVID-19 school closures

supply side at least, things are looking good for tech solutions to the looming potential crisis. It's capacity on the demand side that's in a more questionable state.

First, for all its promise of workload reduction, edtech does create extra workload in the short term in the same way that any policy implementation does. There's the time to set up the resources and their allocation, to learn new practices and streamline new workflows and, as principal and CEO of Hong Kong's Kellett School, Mark Steed says: "It is very difficult for teachers to sustain prolonged teaching from home without the support and camaraderie of colleagues." While companies like Google can set up training in the form of web pages and online videos with little pull on resources, putting these into practice is no mean feat, and is worsened by working in isolation. And if that's the case for teachers receiving tuition from tech companies, the challenge is doubled when it comes to passing that on to pupils.

An international school teacher who has recently returned from China because of coronavirus confirms the challenge. "There's an optimism born of necessity," he says, "but you can't sit at a computer for hours just planning and marking. We weren't set up for it, and just sharing resources through Dropbox folders is not going to enthuse children for long. The novelty wears off after a day."

There's another difficulty: "I'm not getting work back from about 30 per cent of my students. Chasing them up is difficult. They might have lost a grandparent or something."

Supporting trauma and bereavement and sustaining attendance are hard enough, but Mark Steed adds that "young children find it very difficult to access home learning even with parental support", suggesting that the level of challenge is likely to be very unequal between primaries and secondaries, and much the harder for the former.

This hypothesis is strongly backed by a recent Teacher Tapp investigation that found that, while almost all secondary teachers would know how to set and receive a submission of online work, one-third of primary teachers would not. Teacher Tapp also found that 12 per cent of secondaries already had a platform for creating video lessons, and 43 per cent of secondary teachers felt confident they could figure it out. For primaries, the percentages respectively were 8 and 24. For special schools, they were 6 and 14.

Certainly, some schools and trusts have a head start. Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), which



Priyah Lakhani, CEO and founder of Century Tech

"Investors see it as a philanthropic part of their portfolio"

runs 58 schools serving 31,500 students, has already invested heavily in embedding Google's G-Suite. In a statement this week, the trust says that "the concerns around the coronavirus have focused our efforts even more". While others have no such systems, AET has a network of edtech specialist teachers they call "innovators", whose efforts are currently focused on training staff to better use the tools already at their disposal.

Nevertheless, even given AET's large capacity, the same statement says that they "are focusing in particular on our Year 6 children and older pupils in Years 11 and 13 who are taking public examinations in the summer". So while AET's lead is symbolic of the inequality that exists between schools and trusts, internally there already seems to be an acceptance that there will be an inequality of provision between year groups, at least in the short term.

A spokesperson for the trust told me: "Edtech can go a long way to help in situations such as these, but clearly there remain sector-wide challenges around issues such as the number of devices, home and school broadband capacity, and the availability of teachers to deliver content through these platforms."

And many other inequalities continue to dog edtech besides, which the Office for National Statistics categorises under the header of "digital exclusion": 5.3 million adults (parents and carers) are classed as internet non-users, with substantial regional variation in their distribution disfavours the north-east. By far the largest proportion of them is among those classed as "economically inactive" – which includes those

looking after a home or family.

Predictably, the likelihood of a household having an internet connection is almost directly correlated with income. And nearly twice as many disabled people (29 per cent) report a lack of skill as their main reason for not using the internet compared with non-disabled people. The "digital divide" of the 90s has been rebranded, and all of the markers have improved, but it hasn't entirely gone away.

There is no getting away from the fact that COVID-19 is a threat to the continuity of education for the current cohort of students. But computers get viruses too, and sector leaders would do well to remember that rapid implementations could cause problems for workload, wellbeing, cost, safety and a number of disadvantage gaps. In the longer term, the cumulative impact of many implementations could also rewire our education system in ways the sector has fairly consistently resisted until now, and changing it back could prove difficult.

Ty Goddard, EdTech UK executive chair and member of the ISC's Digital Strategy Group, says: "Our advice stresses caution: use what you have, audit your communication channels and think through what could be safely possible."

Goddard states that further guidance is on the way for UK schools, and there is evidence that sharing knowledge is already having impact. However, his advice probably ought to have been followed at system level when the sun was shining. Instead, our just-in-time education system is likely to be robustly tested, and there's no magic cure for the damage that may ensue.

FORMULA 1 LINKED STEM CHALLENGE KICKSTARTS ENGINEERING CAREERS

Three boys from deep in the Kent countryside stood on a stage on turn 1 of the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi just days before Formula 1 cars skidded and smoked around the corner at the last race of the F1 season. The boys, 'Evolve UK' were crowned F1 in Schools World Champions in front of an audience that was not just the other 53 teams competing, but also personalities, luminaries and drivers from the world of motor racing. The three 17 and 18 year olds were rewarded for years of hard work with university scholarships, the F1 in Schools World Champions trophy, VIP paddock access at the Grand Prix, F1 garage tours and a life-changing experience.

George Stonor, Freddie Bull and Lewis Fowler started doing F1 in Schools in an after-school STEM club. All three were interested in engineering and thought the challenge of creating a miniature Formula 1 car would be good fun and an opportunity to combine an interest in motorsport with applying some of their classroom learning in a practical project. With the support of their D & T teacher, Phil Harvey, the boys set to work and were quickly hooked on the challenge. After competing successfully at regional finals, then reaching the national finals, at their fourth attempt the boys reached the World Finals and beat the rest of the world to take the World Champions title.

George, Freddie and Lewis collected awards for winning the Knockout Racing competition, Pit Display Award and Enterprise Portfolio Awards, before jumping on to the top step of the podium to claim the World Champions trophy, as fireworks lit up the sky to celebrate their success. Two of the three boys applied for and won places in the Unilever Williams Engineering Academy, a mentoring scheme operated by Williams F1 team that is only open to F1 in Schools World Finalists. Academy students from previous years have secured placements and full-time employment with the team as a direct result of their success in F1 in Schools and the Academy, just another opportunity opened up to the boys from their achievements.



Along with the World Champions title the boys have won scholarships to City, University of London, UCL Mechanical Engineering and University of Huddersfield. All three are taking up these opportunities to assist with the costs of their further education.

George Stonor said of the F1 in Schools experience, "We went to the World Finals hoping for a top ten finish and possibly an award, so to have won three awards was amazing, but to be World Champions is just so much more than we could have imagined. We really didn't think we could do it, especially with so many good teams, it's just incredible. We've been devoted to this competition for so many years, it's taken over our lives, but it's been so worth it."

The trio's achievements were recognised by Formula 1, with an invitation for the boys to visit the company's headquarters in central London. They gave key F1 personnel including Ellie Norman, Director of Marketing & Communications and Liam Parker, Head of Corporate and Consumer Communications a presentation of their work, showed their car and their portfolios, to Pat Symonds, Chief Technical Officer, Formula 1, who took a keen interest in their engineering knowledge.

Since competing the boys have been mentoring younger students at their school who are hoping to follow in the footsteps of the World Champions and joined the judging panel at this year's South East Regional Final.

For more information www.F1inSchools.co.uk

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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A recent experience with Ofsted has convinced Dan Wright that we should be working to strengthen, not to undermine, the watchdog

I've been a headteacher for six months, and I'm learning at pace. I had imagined myself, two days after "the call", standing Russell Crowe-like, bloodied but unbowed, shouting "Are you not entertained?" at inspectors across the conference table. In truth, it was more *Good Will Hunting* than *Gladiator*.

Leading a newly defined "stuck" school that was heading for "special measures", I had my hand almost literally held on a regular basis by one of the most understanding human beings (let alone Ofsted inspectors) that I have ever encountered. I have great staff, but a curriculum needing an overhaul. At each feedback session the inspectors almost winced as they delivered their verdicts. There was a sense of compassion in the way they went about their work.

The lead inspector changed the entire inspection schedule on the second day to add in a one-hour context session with me. In order to understand the school, she said, she had to understand the context of how it had arrived at this point so that we could "get all the drains up" and give us a decent shot at finally moving it towards 'good' over the next three years – something the school has never achieved. When the local authority failed to show up, either for the inspection or for the final judgement, she did not hold back in showing the level of her disappointment.

Throughout the whole experience, I saw an Ofsted team who genuinely had children's best interests at heart – critical when needed, supportive where



DAN
WRIGHT

Headteacher, St Anne's RC
High School, Stockport

Pause Ofsted? We need to accelerate it!

they could be, and above all fully human.

So while the Headteachers' Roundtable were launching their

Imagine all headteachers in my position doing what I'm doing – opening lines of communication with the lead inspector over email in

“Throughout, I saw an Ofsted team who had children's best interests at heart

campaign to pause Ofsted, I was coming to the opposite conclusion.

Ofsted's inconsistency is its biggest weakness, and my own experience will only add to this argument because for every one of me, there will be another with an opposite story to tell. But if other headteachers could have encounters with Ofsted like mine, then they wouldn't be asking to pause it. Surely we should be working towards that, rather than throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

genuine dialogue. Imagine wanting to tell all and sundry about the long-overdue revolution in the way school leaders are treated. Imagine the catharsis for those in retirement or in other careers as a consequence of Ofsted judgments.

Yes, the report was positive about me and my role. And of course, I am biased by my experience. But so is everyone who's had a negative experience. This isn't about us. For our school, it's about an academy order that hasn't been enacted in

five years – a full generation of schoolchildren. It is about our year 7s who need help now.

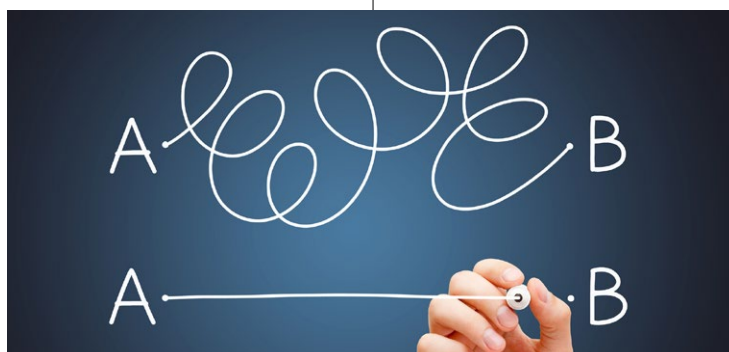
Ofsted isn't perfect. At times it can be downright destructive. So can HMRC, and I still have to pay my taxes. So can governments, and they aren't going anywhere because we live in a parliamentary democracy. We don't improve things through knee-jerk actions but through ongoing engagement as active citizens.

Ofsted isn't perfect. But an accountability Wild West would be worse. I've been known to rail against the inspectorate at times, but some good has come from every inspection I've been through over the years, and that's why I won't join my voice with those wanting to stop the organisation.

In fact, I want to accelerate it. How can any organisation that has seen its budget cut by 52 per cent between 2010-11 and 2017-18, according to the Public Accounts Committee, be expected to perform consistently if it wasn't even doing it before? With a new framework in place that values wellbeing, workload and curriculum, how much would it cost to provide inspectors with the training to provide consistency of personal touch?

My HMI emailed on day two to say that as a lifelong Leeds fan, she could take no enjoyment from my beloved Manchester United losing that night because she knew what I was going through.

I've seen what Ofsted can be, and it gets a thumbs-up from me.



Opinion

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DR SAM
PARRETT OBE

CEO of London & South East
Education Group

Alternative Provision needs an alternative perception

A dramatic rise in pupils being diagnosed with special educational needs means many schools are facing significant challenges. We have to rethink our systems and assumptions accordingly, writes Sam Parrett

London South East Academies Trust consists of seven schools, only one of which is mainstream. The others – two alternative provision (AP) academies and four special schools – look after children whose needs can't be met in the mainstream system at particular points in time.

Young people between the ages of five and 18 arrive at our schools for a wide range of reasons. For some, it's the culmination of various difficult behaviours. For others, the result of a one-off incident. Some pupils are with us for a short time while others will stay on a longer-term basis, particularly in the latter two years of compulsory schooling. Others still are assessed as having specific educational needs, get an ECHP and move into specialist provision where their needs can be best met.

This may sound straightforward, yet it's anything but. Many who come to our AP schools are more than capable of achieving qualifications

and progressing into further/higher education and ultimately into a fulfilling career. But two things conspire that limit their opportunities.

“The young people in our schools deserve for the perception of AP to change

First, against a backdrop of limited budgets, the default is to move “difficult” children on, and ultimately make them someone else's problem. It's a truism to say that permanently excluding a “difficult” child can release pressure on staff and indeed, other pupils, but consideration is rarely given to the needs and entitlements of the excluded children.

Second, often able young people are seen as too much of a liability for a mainstream school's performance measures. This is especially the case for pupils who are unlikely to make the grade at GCSE. With accountability measures as they are, the bar for exclusion is certain to remain low.

This isn't a criticism: schools simply don't have the time, expertise or resources to support young people at risk of exclusion. Nor is it to say that the majority of young people



within our APs should not be there. All our pupils have varying needs that cannot be dealt with adequately in the mainstream

system as it currently is. But while the talk is of difficult children, there needs to be more recognition that it is classrooms that have become difficult places for many.

The government's recent suggestion that MATs should run APs would cut down the number of exclusions on paper, but it would only simplify the process of shifting “underperforming” pupils rather than focusing on raising standards across the board. Cash-strapped trusts may also look on the higher level of AP funding as an advantage, without fully understanding the huge investment that is essential to running successful AP.

Ultimately it's impossible to cut permanent exclusions without dealing with the root of the problem. Mainstream schools are under pressure to use dwindling resources to reach prescribed

government targets in order to be deemed ‘good’ and maintain their reputations. Inevitably, this means excluding children who present too much of a challenge to these objectives. This is even the case where systems for local outreach and preventative support exist, simply due to the scale of need emerging nationally.

Structural reform can only create more perverse incentives. What the system needs is an overhaul in terms of what constitutes progress, achievement and success, and fairer national funding to ensure the calibre of AP is always high.

But the young people in our schools who have been failed by the system also deserve for the perception of AP to change. Imagine that our respective settings were labelled “generic” and “specialist” instead of “mainstream” and “alternative”. AP is not a dumping ground, but a place of opportunity, and as the number of children who need specialist education increases, recognising that every child deserves the chance to learn is going to require us to rethink our assumptions.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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The government must reconsider how it targets resources in order to support our most vulnerable pupils, says Natalie Perera

Somewhere along the road, we have ended up with an education system that is alienating the children that need it most. Over the past year, some of our research findings, combined with the government's narrative on education, have raised serious questions about whether things are getting better for the most vulnerable children and whether recent policies are at risk of actually widening the gap between disadvantaged pupils and the rest.

Indeed, our Annual Report published in July last year found that the gap at age 16 is no longer closing. Based on recent trends, it would now take around 500 years to close. But if this stagnation persists, we may reach an unprecedented stage where we can no longer expect it to do so at all. Given this troubling context, current school funding and accountability policies are of particular concern.

Although our progressive funding system directs more funding to disadvantaged pupils, real-terms cuts to school budgets have meant that schools need to do more with fewer resources. Disadvantaged schools have also had to contend with a freeze on the value of the pupil premium over the past five years alongside real-terms cuts to wider local authority children's services, potentially further stemming their ability to close the gap.

More recent government policies are unlikely to provide any significant improvement to this situation. While the increase of £7.1 billion over the next three years grabs headlines, over one-third of primary and over half of secondary schools serving our most disadvantaged communities go into



NATALIE PERERA
Executive director and head of research, Education Policy Institute

A perfect storm threatens disadvantaged schools and pupils

next year with only inflation-level increases to their budgets.
In addition, although the new starting salary of £30,000 is

about the state of funding for pupils with SEND. A combination of poorly targeted funding, growing pupil numbers and inflexible rules about

“Recent government policies are unlikely to provide any significant improvement

welcome, little attention has been paid to the policy's financial burden. Disadvantaged schools employ more new teachers and are therefore likely to be hit hardest. To meet this additional pressure, our recent report recommends that the new national funding formula be used to target a larger share of funding towards these schools.
There is also increasing disquiet

how money can be spent means that an increasing proportion of special schools is in deficit. While the proportion of mainstream schools in deficit fell slightly last year (after significant rises), we are not seeing the same pattern for special schools. Around one in eight are currently in the red.
Beyond funding, the accountability system also seems to be affecting



the stability of provision for disadvantaged pupils. We know from our research that around one in ten secondary pupils have experienced an unexplained school move, with around a quarter of those pupils never returning to the school system again. These figures become more alarming when we focus on the most vulnerable: around one-third of looked-after children experienced an unexplained exit alongside a quarter of children with identified mental health needs, one in six poor pupils and one in six pupils with SEND.

The government's narrative here is unlikely to help. A focus on “no excuses” and the promotion of policies such as “silent corridors” can undermine the empathy needed to support children with additional needs and limit our ability to understand the causes of poor behaviour. There is a lack of evidence of the impact (good or bad) of silent corridors, and in the meantime, the idea that bullying has gone away when it is neither seen nor heard seems highly questionable.

The government must reconsider how it targets resources and how it can use the best available evidence to implement policies that support, not stigmatise, our most vulnerable pupils. While some of its recent interventions to address the array of pressures facing the education system may be positive in isolation, its piecemeal approach is not working. Taken as a whole, the evidence suggests their wider policy programme continues to ignore the scale of educational disadvantage, and may even amplify it.

Research

This term the Chartered College of Teaching will regularly review the evidence on a school-related theme. Contact them on Twitter @CharteredColl if you have a topic you would like them to cover

Do teachers need to read original research papers?

Cat Scutt, director of education and research, Chartered College of Teaching

The idea that engaging with research leads us to become more effective and ultimately improve outcomes for our pupils is a compelling one. With increasing numbers of teachers joining the Chartered College of Teaching, attending ResearchEd events and browsing the EEF Toolkit to support their decision-making, there's certainly buy-in.

But there's also kick-back. Some question how anyone can expect overworked teachers to read lengthy research articles that may provide little practical insight. Others argue that teachers don't have the necessary grounding in research methods to judge the quality of studies.

Of course, research engagement should help us to be more efficient as well as more effective. Thus, time invested in reading research pays off as we reduce time spent on things that don't really make much difference to learning.

But the question of whether teachers really need to read 30-page original research papers remains. James Mannion estimates that two Shards' worth of education research is published every year (a Shard being a well-recognised measurement of research volume). There's also a risk in placing too much weight on the findings of one individual study. So while teachers should have access to original research papers, it's not clear that we should expect them all to use it.

Many sources provide summaries and syntheses of key research with a teacher audience in mind. This is the approach we take with our journal, *Impact*, which includes articles by both researchers and teachers. Meanwhile, *The Science of*



Learning and Kirschner and Hendrick's *How Learning Happens* summarise and reflect on key studies, providing concise, carefully selected collections. Many blogs do similar.

Sam Sims and colleagues' research around teacher journal clubs concluded that the articles teachers found most useful were comparatively short, focused and summarised evidence around a topic, then included more detail on a few key studies. We'll be trialling this approach with primary and secondary science teachers in a free online journal club project funded by the Wellcome Trust. The sustained, collaborative engagement with research encouraged in a journal club approach also has the advantage of tackling the challenge of moving from theory to practice, similar to Dylan Wiliam's Teacher Learning Community approach.

Reading summaries and syntheses rather than original research also potentially makes research more accessible – in terms of time, cost and interpretation. Research by Plavén-Sigra and colleagues suggests that the readability of scientific texts is decreasing over time, and while many teachers are comfortable with the difference between qualitative and quantitative methods, what an RCT

is, and the risk of confusing correlation with causation, not all would confidently claim to be able to judge whether the approach to sampling or statistical analysis in a given study is appropriate.

However, there is need for caution in "outsourcing" the judgment of research quality. First, the further removed one is from the original research, the more likely it is that misinterpretation creeps in. When building one's own understanding by reading a blog based on someone else's summary of yet another's research, it's likely something will have got lost along the way.

Second, some sources claim to be research-informed yet actually cite very little of it. Inevitably, interpretation of research and its findings may be coloured by someone's biases. Readers should therefore be suspicious of anything that doesn't link back to an original source, but equally wary of generous interpretations of research to support particular perspectives.

Both of these risks are precisely where access to the originals comes into its own, but is it enough? In our recent Teacher CPD publication, David Berliner wrote about a rather different approach to supporting teachers to engage with research articles that avoids unwitting misinterpretation creeping in through multiple layers of translation, while also recognising the challenges in reading research. In his model, teachers read original research articles but annotated by research specialists, building their research literacy and knowledge of effective practices simultaneously.

With researchers regularly bemoaning the (misplaced) approaches to which their studies sometimes give rise, perhaps the education research community could learn something from Berliner's "No Fear Shakespeare" approach. They and the teaching profession both stand to gain – and ultimately therefore, pupils will too.



Reviews



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

@THEHEADSOFFICE

Discover the practicalities of implementing 30 hours free childcare
@caroline_261

The government is giving schools money for early years (hurrah!). Unfortunately, delivering on its aims of providing free childcare for three- and four-year-olds is not as easy as one might imagine. In fact, having been a governor on the board of a nursery, I can tell you it is one of the most complicated financial balancing acts in education. So much so that the basis of this blog is the need for primary schools with nursery provision seriously to undertake feasibility studies. With its looming threat of closure and redundancies, this post is both a wake-up call and a really useful starting point for school business managers.

How to deal with negative teachers
@John_Dabell

On the subject of retention... One thing governors soon learn is that you can only work with what you have, be it a decrepit building, a shortage of pupils, argumentative parents or a lack of funding. We are a band of volunteers who do what we can to bring about improvements, often

TOP BLOGS of the week

in quite restrictive environments. One thing we do have some influence over is the ethos of the school, what it feels like to work there. This article highlights the effect negative teachers can have, not necessarily on children's learning but on the whole culture of a school. Throughout, Dabell keeps a positive outlook, reminding us that even the most jaded "had zing and buzz once and need help to get it back". It'll take more than biscuits in the staff room, but it's both possible and – in this age of recruitment and retention crisis – certainly worthwhile.

Ethical Leadership in Education: accountability is not enough – we have to do good
@CarolynCroberts

Do we want to retain staff for our own needs? Or are we doing it for them? It's the kind of question the Framework for Ethical Leadership will have you rightly pondering. The Pathfinder schools that have set out to fully embrace and evidence the 2017 framework are now around 200 in number, so things look promising. This piece from the chair of the commission explains that while things have started well, there is still a long way to go before an ethical approach to

education is part of the daily fabric of all our schools. It is an area governors should be looking at closely, as vision and values are a core purpose of their role.

Finding our way through the Educational Moral Maze

@vawells1

Another of my top picks this week reports from the ethical leadership summit. Vicci Wells, whose writing is always both passionate and sensible, begins by reminding us of the power of words to shape, and to help us reflect on, our actions. From personal anecdotes of her experiences as governor, she goes on to recount the day's major themes and how they are directly relevant to her school, MAT and governorship. It's a great reminder that the right training is invaluable for governors, and that ethics is central to our sense of purpose individually and as organisations.

Collaboration and peer review: a path for trusts
@onetomm

But how ethical can an organisation really be? This blog opens on the difference between an organisation and an institute, the former being primarily self-interested while the latter's purpose is outward-facing. Tom Glover points out that self-interest and competition don't sit well with education. He goes on to describe a growing trend of mutual support and challenge in the form of peer review.

I was disappointed to see no mention of governance in this push for collaboration and I felt it was an opportunity lost. As a volunteer group whose members are often working out of their comfort zones, governors and trustees arguably need the support of their peers more than school executives. Let's hope that as this approach is rolled out, school boards are included.

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +

Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



A Curriculum of Hope

Author: Debra Kidd

Publisher: Independent Thinking Press

Reviewer: Michael Fordham, vice principal (academic), Thetford Academy

Curriculum is in fashion at the moment, and debates on curriculum are very polarised. One of those debates concerns the extent to which traditional school subjects should be the principal organising structures of the curriculum, or whether these should be broken down in favour of an alternative framework. Debra Kidd and I come from very different positions in this debate, but I approached her latest offering, *A Curriculum of Hope*, with the attitude of trying to understand whether a reconciliation of these positions might be fruitful.

The main argumentative thrust of the book is that curriculum design needs to account for the 5Cs of coherence, credibility, creativity, compassion and community. There is little here that can be rejected on a superficial level, and the book picks up a star for its timely reminder that curriculum design cannot be reduced to a standardised tick-box approach. Given the current accountability emphasis, we are increasingly seeing this happen across our education system, and if this book makes headteachers stop and reconsider restructuring their leadership teams along the lines of "intent, implementation and impact" then it will have done some good in the world.

The book also offers some good thoughts on how a whole-school approach might be used to bring together threads from different subjects. I like the idea that schools might at times get pupils to take a step back and think

about wider questions and, although I find some of the examples in the book a bit clunky, the general principle is fairly sound.

It was also good to see plenty of emphasis on substantive breadth, with recommendations for pupils to study the history, geography and literature of societies and cultures that are not frequently found in school curricula.

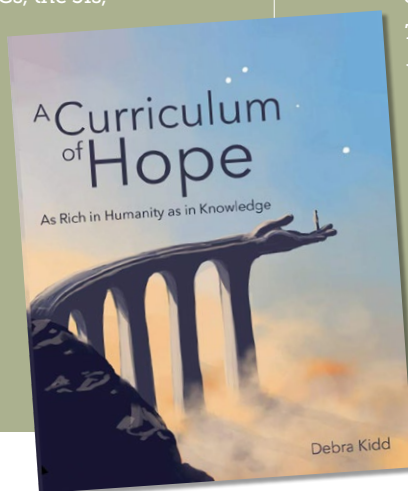
One concern I have is that the 5Cs could themselves too easily become a tick-list for schools to use in curriculum design. This potential is most evident in the appendices. I commend Kidd for including so much exemplification (too few books do this) but what these do reveal is how easy it is for generic frameworks to lead to the contrived insertion of content, practices and activities. Sadly, the very kind of superficial shoe-horning that Kidd herself lambasts can be found across the examples in *A Curriculum of Hope* (we need to tick the creativity box, so let's do a role-play). Perhaps the issue is not that we have the wrong top-level generic framework (the 5Cs, the 3Is, or whatever); perhaps it is the very idea of a top-level generic framework that is the problem.

What undermined Kidd's argument most for me,

however, were the history examples. The most important challenge to the idea of breaking down subject boundaries (e.g. by having cross-curricular questions) is that it results in the subject being taught poorly. As a history specialist, I zoomed in on those examples throughout the book and what I found concerned me. For example, the emphasis on spotting bias in one example runs counter to years of work by history teachers to challenge that very approach. I also have concerns about the primary school that teaches the Second World War every year from Reception to Year 6. One thing this country does not need is yet another generation raised to see everything through the lens of that conflict.

I also had concerns about the extent to which different periods of history, which felt in some cases parachuted in to serve the needs of the generic question, could be brought together in a coherent chronological, thematic or conceptual whole, an issue that has long been identified as a problem in primary history.

In the end, *A Curriculum of Hope* does for early-Noughties-Mick-Waters-esque curriculum theory what *Stranger Things* did for the 1980s. If you were a fan of these ideas back in the 2000s, then you will like this book and its attempt to resurrect them for a different age. Critics of that school of thought, however, will find little here to induce reflection or to make them think any of the lessons of that time have been learned.



WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

SATURDAY

There may be another calling for Amanda Spielman when she decides to leave Ofsted.

The chief inspector told ResearchED Birmingham at the weekend that there had been a "remarkable level of interest in our new framework, and especially the way it is built on a platform of research evidence".

"I think I could have turned football team manager and sold some of my team several times over. That would be one way to increase our income! Though perhaps a little hard to fit into the civil service employment model – I suspect the Treasury would instantly confiscate any transfer fees."

Best clean those footy boots and dust off your best tracksuit, Amanda.

MONDAY

It may be a new parliament, but the relationship between public accounts committee chair Meg Hillier and Department for Education permanent secretary Jonathan Slater remains as genial as ever.

The top civil servant appeared in front of Hillier's committee earlier this week to answer questions about SEND funding.

Faced with a difficult question, Slater said it was "my job as a permanent secretary to choose my words relatively carefully".

Hillier responded: "We expect this of you, Mr Slater", before addressing new members of the committee: "I should say that Mr Slater could have written episodes of Yes Minister. Carry on, Mr Slater."

For our younger readers, Yes Minister was a TV series that documented the plight of a British cabinet minister

struggling to enact policy with an obstructive civil service.

TUESDAY

Rapper Stormzy caused a stir last year when he told pupils at a primary school that Boris Johnson was a "a very, very bad man".

And it appears Conservative MP Marcus Fysh was particularly offended.

The MP for Yeovil is so worried about political neutrality in schools that he called a Westminster Hall debate on the issue, which was well-attended by about four MPs.

Fysh told the debate (if you can call a room full of people agreeing with each other a debate) that Stormzy's views "do not belong in a primary school". We wonder if Toby Young's "free speech union" would agree.

But was Fysh just using the Stormzy episode to have a pop at "lefty" teachers?

"I have seen rather colourful comments on social media by teachers, who should be mindful that their pupils may be on the same platforms," he said.

Schools minister Nick Gibb warned schools that they "remain responsible for what is taught and we expect them to have in place robust safeguarding policies that should set out clear protocols ensuring that visiting speakers are suitably supervised".

"The school should have a clear understanding of why the speaker was chosen and make guests aware of the school's expectations, such as: abiding by its equality commitments; there must be no statements that might cause offence to others or otherwise undermine tolerance of other faiths or beliefs; and there must be no extremist material."

Schools – consider yourselves warned!

WEDNESDAY

While the budget contained some important and welcome news about the government's response to coronavirus, schools were left feeling a bit neglected.

Instead of announcing anything new for schools, chancellor Rishi Sunak just listed a few policies from the Conservative Party manifesto, and repeated a pledge made by his colleague Gavin Williamson around six months ago.

How generous!

THURSDAY

We may not have any reason to put Lord Agnew, the former DfE cost-cutter-in-chief, on our front page any more, but other newspapers seem to be continuing with the tradition.

The Tory peer and former cabinet minister made the front page of The Times, even if he was a little blurry.

Now a minister of state at the Treasury and Cabinet Office, Agnew joined chancellor Sunak on the steps on Number 11 for the traditional pre-budget photo call.

Week in Westminster was, however, disappointed not to see an announcement of an army of cost-cutting consultants for the rest of the public sector!





VACANCY: EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL (FULL-TIME ROLE)

Salary: Competitive and TBD in light of experience and qualifications

St Gregory's, Margate; St Joseph's, Broadstairs & St Mary's, Whitstable form a Catholic primary academy cluster as part of the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership (KCSP), a multi-academy trust (MAT) established by the Archdiocese of Southwark for Catholic education across Kent. Currently comprised of 24 academies (5 secondary and 19 primary), the Trust is seeking to appoint an inspirational and dedicated Executive Principal from August 2020 for this cluster due to the retirement of the current post-holder.

Reporting to the Chief Executive of the Trust and Executive Governing Body for the cluster, the Executive Principal will provide the strategic Catholic leadership and inspiration for the cluster, motivating staff and maximizing all available resources for the cluster's 'common good'. This includes the strategic planning and management of cluster finances, staff, buildings and other resources, with a special focus on professional development and training, cultivating collegiate responses and the sharing of specialist skills and resources across the cluster. The postholder will represent the academies to the Executive Governing Body, CEO and Trust Board, the Diocesan Education Commission, and to local and central government, and their agencies as necessary.

The successful applicant will be highly motivated and innovative, accountable for ensuring, maintaining and sustaining the Catholic identity of the academies they are assigned to lead, and for ensuring that this identity is reflected in every aspect of the academies' Catholic life, so that the learning and faith outcomes of all pupils improve continuously. Consequently, we are seeking to appoint a practising Catholic, with the necessary desire, experience, expertise and qualification, to this role.

St Gregory's, Margate; St Joseph's, Broadstairs & St Mary's, Whitstable are inclusive primary academies. Their dedicated staff, helpers and Governors work hard to ensure every student is supported and challenged to be their best.

St Gregory's, Margate; St Joseph's, Broadstairs & St Mary's, Whitstable are located to the east of Kent and are easily accessible via both road & rail. Each academy enjoys spacious classrooms, large grounds, excellent student facilities and benefits from recent and substantial investment.

St Gregory's, Margate was judged 'Good' at its most recent denominational inspection in 2016 and also judged 'Good' in all areas at its recent Ofsted inspection in September 2019. St Joseph's, Broadstairs was judged 'Outstanding' in their last denominational inspection in 2016 and was also judged 'Good' in all areas at its last Ofsted inspection in February 2017. St Mary's, Whitstable was judged 'Good' in their last denominational inspection in 2016 and was also judged 'Good' in all areas at their most recent Ofsted inspection in April 2018.

KCSP, as the largest, single Catholic MAT in the south of England, is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and requires all staff, helpers and Governors to share this commitment. Offers of employment are subject to an enhanced disclosure and barring service check and section 128 check.

Please click [here](#) to view the full job description and person specification, and to download an application form and all of the related documents. Please send your letter of application together with all supporting documents to the Chief Executive at: office@kcsp.org.uk

Your letter of application should outline why you feel you are suited to this role, what you believe you can bring to the academies and also detail your experience to date, skill set and qualifications.

Closing date for applications: Monday, 30th March 2020 @ 5pm

Shortlisted candidates to be notified: no later than **Friday, 3rd April 2020**

Interviews will be held during the week commencing: **Monday, 20th April 2020**



Are you an ambitious leader, who wants to have a transformative impact on education?

If you want to be a key leader in an energetic, inspiring team, and benefit from opportunities for rapid growth, development and challenge, we want to hear from you.

The Skills Builder Partnership is an award-winning social enterprise. Our mission is to ensure that one day, everyone builds the skills, experiences and aspirations to succeed – beyond just a set of qualifications.

The Partnership includes over 700 schools, colleges, skills-building organisations and top employers. We are backed by sector leading organisations including the CBI, the National Education Union and the Careers & Enterprise Company.

This role is a high-impact leadership position reporting to the CEO. The Director of Education Programmes will be able to have a systemic impact as we work to make our approach, underpinned by the Skills Builder Framework, the norm in the education system.



Department
for Education

Regional Schools Commissioner (x3)

Pay scale: up to £110k per annum

Location: Based in Manchester, Darlington, Watford with regular travel within the region, and attendance at meetings in London and other RSC regional offices

Dedicated to delivering first-class education to children and young people across England, the Department for Education is a stimulating and rewarding place to work.

With over 9000 open academies and free schools, we're looking for an outstanding leader with a track record of significant achievement and delivery, commitment to and passion for diversity and inclusion, and a good understanding of the education landscape both nationally and locally.

You will be part of a strong team of Commissioners, making important operational decisions on behalf of the Secretary of State for all academies, free schools and sponsors in your region. That means monitoring performance of all academies and free schools, identifying and driving improvements to schools that are underperforming, encouraging academies that are performing well to become sponsors or set up multi-academy trusts and leading on free school delivery. You will also play a key role in leading a Civil Service regional team that contributes to wider Department school improvement work. Engaging effectively with school leaders and stakeholders is key, commanding respect to support and challenge the wider sector.

For further information, including details of how to apply for this role, please visit the Civil Service Jobs website www.civilservice.gov.uk/jobs – search under Department for Education. The recruitment is regulated by the Civil Service Commission.

Closing date: 25th March 2020.

The Department for Education is an equal opportunities employer and we particularly welcome applicants from under-represented backgrounds.



The Rudheath
Senior Academy

Headteacher

At Rudheath Senior Academy, we think and do things differently to open children's eyes to a world of possibility.

In 2018 a fire started in our school roof and over £2.4 million of damage was done. This might have devastated some communities - it just made us stronger.

After a significant period of investment, which we called Project Phoenix, new buildings have taken shape, and progress has been made in enhancing teaching and learning. We want to accelerate this process – which is why the appointment of our new Headteacher is critical.

We want someone who sees opportunity. An individual who can think differently. A person who embodies what we are about; kindness and excellence for our students.

In the North West Academies Trust, you will also be joining a trust that believes that an aspirational and inspirational education is the right of every child.

So visit www.joinrudheath.co.uk to find out more.

The closing date for applications is 17th April 2020 at 9am.

Rudheath Senior School is committed to the safeguarding of children and young people.

An enhanced disclosure from the DBS will be required for this post.

anthem



Headteacher, Judith Kerr Primary School Location: Herne Hill, London SE4 Contract type: Permanent

Anthem Schools Trust is seeking a Headteacher for Judith Kerr Primary School to deliver inspirational and motivational leadership across the school that will sustain and develop the school's established secure foundations and develop further outstanding performance in all areas of its work. The school offer a bilingual education to all, and the successful candidate will be expected to lead and promote the unique and innovative curriculum of the school with its strong focus on the teaching and learning of German. The ability to speak German is not essential.

To request an application pack, please contact enquiries@anthemtrust.uk.

Prospective applicants are also welcome to have an informal discussion with the Education Director for London and the Thames Valley, Karen Walker. To do so, please contact us via the email address above.

Find out more about at www.jkps-cfbt.org
and www.anthemtrust.uk



NUTGROVE METHODIST

ACADEMY HEADTEACHER

**Salary: Group 2 ISR (L8-L21), £48,808 - £66,517
September 2020 | Full time | Permanent**

We are seeking to appoint a dedicated and inspiring Headteacher with a clear vision and the ambition to build on the success and religious character of our school. Are you an enthusiastic, child-centred and aspirational leader, committed to inspiring and supporting the whole school community to build on our success and drive the school forward? Applicants should be committed to enable children to thrive spiritually, physically, socially, emotionally and academically.

We are looking for someone who has:

- A record of developing teaching and learning for sustainable change.
- A proven track record of securing high student progress through excellent knowledge of engaging learning, assessment and intervention.
- A clear and demonstrable commitment to the Christian and Methodist ethos of the school
- The ability to support, develop, motivate and lead our committed staff through collaboration.

This unique opportunity offers you:

- An over-subscribed school in a welcoming community
- Pupils with positive attitudes to learning who are caring, hardworking and proud to come to Nutgrove
- Dedicated staff who are committed to delivering the very best for pupils
- The support of the Wesley Trust, MAST and the Methodist Church

Nutgrove is the founding school of The Wesley Trust, a multi-academy trust established by the Methodist Church.

The job pack is available via our recruitment website:
<https://leadnutgroveprimary.co.uk>

School visits are strongly encouraged. Please contact Mrs Louisa Chamberlain, School Business Manager on email at nutgrove@sthelens.org.uk or call **01744 678400** to arrange.



**Closing date: 12noon,
Monday 16th March 2020**

**Interviews: Wednesday and Thursday,
1st and 2nd April 2020**

Nutgrove Methodist Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. School strictly adheres to our Safer Recruitment Policy.

anthem



Headteacher, Abbey Woods Academy Location: Berinsfield, Oxfordshire Contract type: Permanent

Anthem Schools Trust is seeking an exceptional individual to lead Abbey Woods Academy to future success, building upon and sustaining recent whole-school improvements following its Ofsted inspection in September 2019. This is a unique opportunity for someone who is passionate about making a real difference to the children and the community the school serves. We are looking for a Headteacher with a proven track record at primary Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher level who can create a stimulating, nurturing, happy, safe and productive learning environment for all pupils and continue to build teaching capacity by working collaboratively within the school, with local partnerships and with other schools across the Trust.

Please contact enquiries@anthemtrust.uk for an application pack, or to arrange an informal discussion with the Education Director for London and the Thames Valley, Karen Walker

Find out more at www.abbeywoodsacademy.oxon.sch.uk
and www.anthemtrust.uk

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