

SCHOOLS WEEK

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

Schools halt redundancy plans over coronavirus

Page 10

What next for awarding exam grades?



P23

Heads in a vice over key worker rules



P24

Why community boosts immunity



P25

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Week 1 on lockdown



Manor Park School and Nursery in Knutsford, Cheshire

- School staff going to 'exceptional lengths' in coronavirus fight ...
- ... but government slammed for 'inadequate' safety guidance
- Pupil numbers 'manageable', as firms jump on key-worker bandwagon
- Tech companies urged to help out as pupils' digital divide exposed

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Coaching colleagues key to coronavirus resilience



PAGE 26

Emergency SEND plans bound to end up in court

PAGE 11

Caterers under fire for 'shameful' free school meals

PAGE 12



Feature: making the difference on exclusions

PAGE 20



Review: Has Christodoulou resolved the edtech debate?

PAGE 25

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Staff going to 'exceptional lengths', but guidance 'inadequate'

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Government guidance to help keep school leaders safe during the coronavirus outbreak has been branded "inadequate", as the education secretary admits he's asking staff to go to "exceptional lengths".

Gavin Williamson wrote to schools on Wednesday to thank them for the "incredible resilience and flexibility they have shown in the face of unprecedented challenges".

Schools have now been operating with emergency measures to look after vulnerable children and those of key workers for almost a week.

Williamson said he recognises with the "extraordinary measures, I am asking you to go to exceptional lengths to rise to the challenge we face", adding leaders will be "anxious about the wellbeing of your staff".

But leaders remain critical of the government's response, particularly after the Department for Education failed to include information on personal protective equipment in its guidance on implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings.

Writing in Headteacher Update magazine, Paul Whiteman, the general secretary of the NAHT leaders' union, said: "Our view is that current government guidance to schools remains inadequate and we know our members need clearer and more specific advice on how to keep pupils and staff safe, and that they need it urgently."

The guidance stated schools should also ensure class sizes "reflect the numbers of teaching staff available and are kept as small as possible", while also calling for staggered lunch and break times, and the movement of pupils around the school.

Parents should also be discouraged from gathering at the school gates, it states, before going on to repeat existing PHE guidance reminding staff to wash their



Gavin Williamson

hands thoroughly and "increase cleaning of surfaces in classrooms, including desks and handles".

Meanwhile, the National Education Union, Britain's largest teaching union, has demanded coronavirus testing of all staff working in schools.

They also insisted staff who are vulnerable themselves or have vulnerable family members at home should not have to attend school.

Dr Mary Bousted, the union's joint general secretary, said government advice for schools was "not currently strong enough... We have got to get on the front foot if we are to slow transmission and flatten the curve."

Schools are also still waiting to hear how GCSE and A-level grades will be awarded this summer, and may have to wait until Easter to find out some of the finer details.

Williamson announced last Wednesday that exams this summer would be cancelled. On Friday, the government said pupils would instead be assessed by their teachers.

In an update yesterday (Thursday), the exams regulator Ofqual said it would publish "detailed information" about the process and timetable which will apply this summer "next week".

The release will cover the steps teachers will have to follow and "more detailed

guidance on how to consider the full range of evidence they will have available when submitting their assessment grades".

Ofqual has also pledged to outline "by Easter" the process it will follow to make sure grades are fair across schools, as well as its proposals for appeals.

The government has, however, finally confirmed the measures it is putting in place to support self-employed workers, such as supply teachers and other school contractors.

Rishi Sunak, the chancellor of the exchequer, announced on Thursday that self-employed workers who earn under £50,000 a year will be able to apply for a grant worth 80 per cent of their average monthly profits over the last three years, up to a maximum of £2,500 a month.

However, the money will not start to arrive in workers' bank accounts until the start of June at the earliest.

The government had previously told self-employed people who lost their work due to coronavirus to sign up for universal credit.

Elsewhere, the education select committee is to probe the DfE's response to the coronavirus outbreak. The committee will look at the implementation of the critical workers policy, the effect of cancelling exams, and the support offered for pupils and families during school closures.

Fears lockdown will lead to 'exam apartheid system'

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH INVESTIGATES

School leaders are worried about a widening inequality gap as state schools fall behind their private counterparts in using online teaching platforms to educate housebound pupils.

A survey by pollsters Teacher Tapp found three-quarters of private school teachers had set work through an online learning platform, compared to 65 per cent of state-funded schools.

Teachers in the state sector are far more likely to hand out physical workbooks or sheets – 36 per cent – compared to 17 per cent of private schools.

Also, it appears private schools are more likely to have direct interaction with pupils. When asked on Monday, a quarter said they had spoken to a student over an audio or video call – compared to just four per cent of state-funded schools.

Some are concerned the better facilities on hand for private schools will enable them to boost grades for pupils this year.

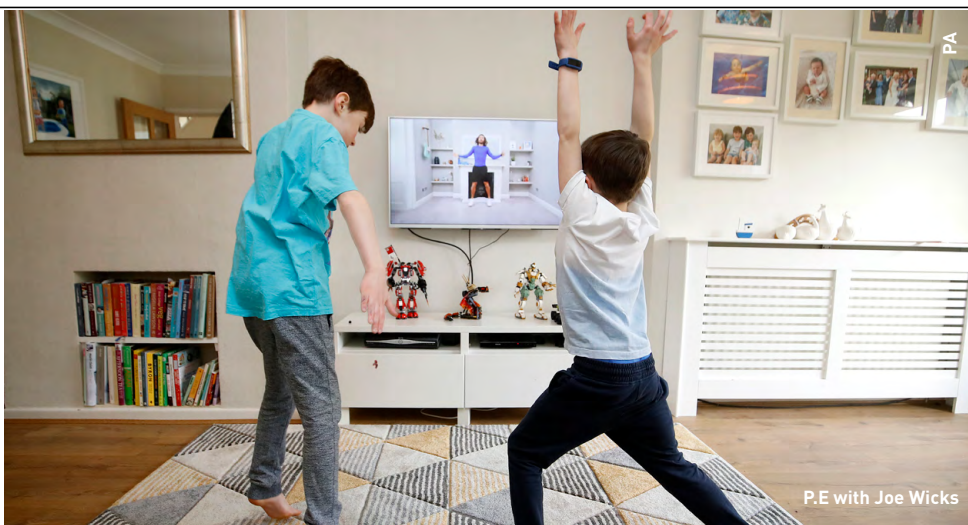
Exams regulator Ofqual has said it will award grades based on teacher assessment, but has not provided further details.

Brian Crosby, chief executive of the Hope Learning Trust, said: "We cannot allow the current crisis to degenerate into an exam apartheid system with the more affluent families in independent education or in middle-class families having greater access to resources and therefore getting better exam grades while the more disadvantaged are going to get lower grades in the summer."

"We need a steer from government on when grades should be collected. Any school continuing to bolster grades should stop."

However, the survey found the gap in online learning was at primary level. Just 52 per cent of teachers in state primary schools had set work via an online learning platform for classes they would have taught on Monday, compared to 66 per cent of private primaries.

In secondary schools, 82 per cent of state



P.E with Joe Wicks

teachers were using these online resources – which was actually more than the 80 per cent in private schools.

But differences began to show when comparing use of more expensive online platforms. For instance, 27 per cent of teachers in private secondary schools used online video conferencing, compared to just two per cent of state secondaries.

This was also mirrored in the use of "online chatting" platforms. But this may be because state schools have more pupils unable to access the internet.

Around 2.5 per cent of the cohort at Consilium Academies, which has eight secondaries in the north-east and north-west, do not have access to online resources. The trust instead has a system where pupils can drop off work and collect new packs, which the school is printing off, in line with lockdown rules. Consilium is also carrying out telephone checks during the week and hopes to do YouTube videos of teachers delivering lessons.

On the whole, it seems fewer than expected pupils turned up to schools this week. Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said this would "help schools manage staffing rotas in a way that delivers these [home-learning] requirements".

Schools are differing in the type of work they set. Some are offering more recreational activities, such as joining in on the daily exercises classes by the "body coach" Joe Wicks.

Stuart Lock, CEO of Advantage Schools, said they had implemented a timetable with resources uploaded every day on the Show My Homework platform – used by children both in and out of school. They are sticking as closely as they reasonably can to the curriculum.

The Sir Robert Woodard Academy, in West Sussex, is also using Google Classroom for teachers to run classes with pupils in and out of school at usual lesson times.

Out of 1,084 on the school roll, just 30 were on the premises on Monday and about 80 per cent of pupils logged on at home.

Schools are also using rotas to ensure staff get a break.

At Delta Academies Trust, staff are put into groups and each assigned to an eight-week rota containing two weeks' holiday, two weeks in the classroom and then four weeks working from home (two of which are classed as "first reserve").

However, Barton was particularly concerned that "some vulnerable young people who are at risk of abuse or neglect while they were out of school, may not be attending". He added ASCL would be trying to gain a better understanding of the situation.

Speaking on Monday, education secretary Gavin Williamson said the number of children attending school was low and thanked parents for "making the right choice".

News

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Call for free WiFi and devices to combat pupils' digital divide

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Tech firms and internet providers have been called on to step up and help poor children to get online so they don't get "left behind" while schools are closed.

It comes after a survey of 6,000 teachers by Teacher Tapp found just two per cent who are working in the poorest communities believe all their pupils can access the internet at home.

Teach First, the education charity that commissioned the research, has now issued a plea for internet providers to offer free access to WiFi hotspots, lift data caps and install broadband in homes without it.

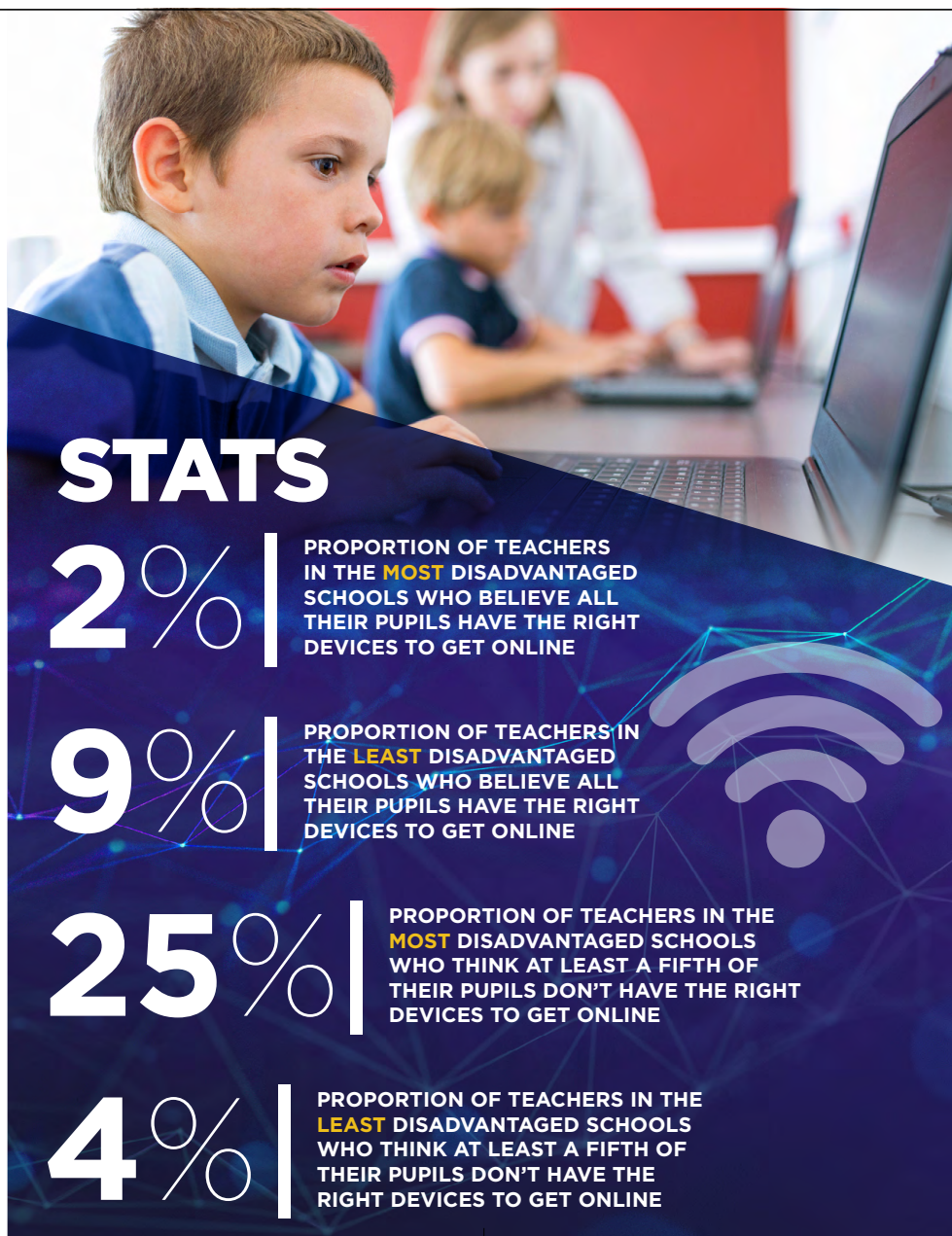
Tech companies should also donate or offer free leasing of internet-enabled devices until students can return to the classroom, the charity added.

Russell Hobby, Teach First's chief executive, said: "These figures show we need to stand behind disadvantaged young people now, or else the gap in achievement and opportunity between the rich and poor will rapidly widen."

Teachers in the poorest areas are four times less likely to believe their pupils all have access to the right devices for home learning than those in the most affluent schools (nine per cent) and three times less than the national average (seven per cent).

The survey also found a quarter of teachers in the poorest communities believe that at least one-fifth of their pupils did not have adequate access to a device for online learning at home, compared to just four per cent of teachers in the most affluent schools and seven per cent of all teachers.

Seb Chapleau, a former primary school headteacher and now director of the Big Education Conversation, told *Schools Week* internet providers should offer free vouchers to schools. Providers such as BT should make services like Openzone free for



non-customers for the time being, he added.

Chapleau pointed to a scheme in New York, where Apple and T-Mobile have joined forces to provide discounted tablets to thousands of children. Such a scheme could be replicated with a government-coordinated approach to tech companies, he added.

The Department for Education said it welcomed "these types of gestures", but would not say whether it was actively encouraging tech firms to take action. Both

BT and Apple did not respond to a request for comment about the suggestions.

Hobby said teachers and parents need "society's help to make sure the most vulnerable children don't get left behind... That's why we're calling for telecommunication providers and technology companies to play their part and think creatively and swiftly about what can be done to ensure all children receive a fair education through this unprecedented challenge."

Health shop and pet store claim 'critical' worker status

JAMES CARR

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A pet shop and cycle store are among businesses under fire for insisting that their staff are "key workers" – meaning their employees' children would be entitled to a school place.

However, it seems the majority of school leaders have avoided "difficult conversations" with parents over whether or not their child should be admitted into school.

According to government guidance, schools should only remain open to the children of key workers – those considered critical to the country's response – and to vulnerable pupils.

But education leaders have criticised some businesses for claiming their staff are key workers and asking employees to continue attending work during the coronavirus pandemic.

Pets at Home, the country's largest pet supplies retailer, was branded the "worst type of irresponsible" after distributing a letter for headteachers asserting its staff qualified as a key worker as "their role is necessary for the continuation of essential services".

Matthew Hood, chair of the Bay Leadership Academy, in Lancashire, added: "Every pupil who goes to school when they could be at home puts lives at risk.

"We are not asking teachers to be in harm's way so that Pets at Home can sell more chew toys for poodles."



The pet store has since explained that staff have been asked to apply for key-worker status only if "absolutely necessary" and to be "respectful of the needs of others and difficult decisions schools are having to take".

But the retailer added that six million people were relying on its services to feed and care for pets, adding: "While supermarkets focus on feeding our people, we and other pet stores and vets can look after the health and welfare of the nation's pets."

According to a survey conducted by Teacher Tapp, just over half of schools had less than five per cent of its normal student body attend this week.

Julie McCulloch, director of policy at the Association of Schools and College Leaders, said: "Most parents have absolutely taken the government advice in the spirit it was

intended and kept pupils at home where possible."

She said there had been "a few incidents heard anecdotally" from union members over breaches of the rules, which she said were "difficult for leaders to police", but this was very much the minority.

McCulloch said in situations where a child was in school unnecessarily, school leaders were having to have "difficult conversations with parents", but overall the issue "is proving manageable".

Tony Buffin, boss of health food shop chain Holland and Barrett, sent a letter to staff advising "your children should be able to attend [school] as usual" as the business provides "delivery and sale of a number of foods" and therefore qualifies as "essential".

Retailers Halfords and motor insurance firm Adrian Flux are among other firms criticised.

A spokesperson for Halfords said it was "fundamentally changing" the way its stores operate by providing services and collection from the front of store, but as garages and bicycle shops are considered essential services, staff would continue report to work.

A spokesperson from Adrian Flux said motor insurance is "an essential service and it is a legal requirement" and "vital for key workers to be able to get to and from their jobs".

Schools minister Nick Gibb warned companies had to "be realistic... Your job has got to be critical [in our fight against the virus] – not just critical in your opinion."

Ofsted halts publishing reports to 'do right thing'

Ofsted has paused the publication of all inspection reports during the coronavirus crisis and promised that it will have "do the right thing" as its mantra going forward.

Deputy director for further education and skills Paul Joyce told a webinar on Saturday run by sister title FE Week that the inspectorate had taken the decision because they are "well aware providers have enough to deal with".

"We will continue to send the report to providers but they won't be published until further notice and we'll obviously let

providers know when that will be at some point in the future," he said.

Pressed on whether this meant schools ought to ignore the watchdog, Joyce said that was "very good advice".

This decision was part of the inspectorate's mantra to "do the right thing" going forward, he added.

Ofsted announced last week that it would suspend routine inspections until further notice. The watchdog had come under fire for not halting inspections sooner.

Joyce told the webinar a visit could now

only be triggered if the inspectorate learns of safeguarding concerns or incidents which need "really urgent action". The threshold to trigger an inspection would be "really high", he stressed.

Ofsted is also working "very closely" with the Department for Education about "potential redeployment of our staff if that's required", which might "include to support providers to deal with that situation".

It has also been decided Ofsted will pause all its work around handling complaints related to inspection reports.

News

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Schools 'pay early' invoicing may help shore up small businesses

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Schools across England are stepping up to save small businesses in their supply chains by speeding up payments – with one trust asking some suppliers to invoice early for next year's services.

But although there is broad support for the move – following instructions from the government for schools to help keep their suppliers going – business leaders have warned about potentially losing cash from any businesses they have paid and which then go on to collapse.

The government released new guidance for public bodies last week, telling them to continue to pay suppliers "as normal", even if their service delivery is disrupted or suspended by coronavirus.

It follows confirmation from the Department for Education that schools will continue to get their normal budgets throughout the period of closure, and that they will be able to claim back money to cover additional costs because of the coronavirus outbreak.

Jonny Uttley, chief executive of The Education Alliance academy trust, said his chain had tried to introduce next-day payments "as much as possible", and said he was having daily check-ins with finance teams to sign off payments that would usually take weeks.

He also said the trust was working "to see if there are any organisations we can ask to invoice upfront".

One organisation asked to do so is education technology company U-Explore. The trust uses their "Start" online careers advice platform, and Uttley said he was particularly worried about small ed tech firms.

"One of the things I have asked them to do is invoice us for next year," he told *Schools Week*. "Companies like that are really crucial for schools. If they couldn't function, we would lose

an amazing product."

The trust also uses local butchers for some of its schools. They have been assured they will be paid quickly.

"Unlike many other organisations, we have a secure income, so there's absolutely no reason why we shouldn't be using that income now to pay early for the things we were always going to have to down the line," Uttley added.

In Norwich, local taxi firm Enterprise, which normally ferries children to and from school, has been enlisted by the Inspiration Trust to deliver free school meals to children at home.

"Their work has reduced and this is a way to help the drivers," said Micon Metcalfe, the trust's acting chief operating officer.

Elsewhere, the Northern Education Trust and Delta Academies Trust have both pledged to pay all invoices within ten days and some within five, rather than the usual 30-day period.

"It is clearly vital, if small businesses are to continue to operate successfully and protect their workforce's livelihoods, that they are paid not only time, but ahead of time, through this period," said Delta CEO Paul Tarn.

But Matthew Clements-Wheeler, the chair of the Institute of School Business Leadership, warned that schools were "considerably smaller business operations" than many public bodies and that they "may well be nervous making payments in advance to suppliers they deem at risk financially".

Clements-Wheeler also warned that the "lamentable practice" in some schools of employing finance staff on term-time only contracts could affect their ability to place forward orders over Easter "or to offer fiscal comfort to their suppliers of the sort envisaged by this government guidance".

Metcalfe said the government's approach was a "good idea", but said some schools "will still use cheque payments and some may have limited staff able to do it".

Trainee teachers to be judged on 'trajectory of progress'

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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EXCLUSIVE

Trainee teachers due to qualify this year will be judged on their completed assessments and progress towards the teachers' standards if they cannot complete their courses due to coronavirus disruption.

The Department for Education has advised providers to continue to deliver courses online "where possible", but said it recognised there "will be disruption".

As a result, the DfE will enable providers to make judgments on trainees "based on assessments already completed and each trainee's current trajectory of progress towards meeting the teachers' standards".

Those making progress towards the standards should be recommended for qualified teacher status "where the ITT provider judges that the trainee would have completed their ITT course successfully".

Arrangements for assessments of academic awards such as PGCEs "should be agreed with the awarding body", the DfE said.

Emma Hollis, executive director of the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers, said this is the "most pragmatic and sensible way forward, recognising the hard work and progress already made by the trainees, whilst simultaneously protecting the flow of new entrants into the profession for September".

However, the guidance does not state how those judged to be making "adequate progress", and who were "unlikely to have met the teachers' standards by the end of their ITT course", will proceed.

Further guidance is expected "as soon as possible", the DfE said.

But David Spendlove, strategic director of initial teacher education at Manchester Institute of Education, said details are needed now.

"A fundamental question is why did it take so long for this holding position to be announced. This has caused unnecessary anxiety and concern for trainees and providers," he added.

The government is proposing amendments to legislation, including the removal of the requirement for each trainee teacher to have taught in two schools.

Despite the nationwide lockdown, ITT providers are being encouraged by the DfE to continue recruiting to courses due to start next academic year. They are asked to consider "remote interviews and the removal of any classroom exercises".

But Hollis said some providers are concerned about being able to recruit enough trainees for next year. She said similar financial support as that offered to businesses should be "given to ITT providers to help them survive, should this become necessary".

Tributes paid to 'incredible' head after Covid-19-related death

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Tributes have been paid to an "incredible" primary school headteacher who died after being diagnosed with coronavirus.

Wendy Jacobs (pictured), head of Roose Community Primary School, in Cumbria, passed away on Sunday. She had tested positive for coronavirus and had been in intensive care in hospital.

In a statement, Jacobs' family said: "Our mum passed away from pneumonia complicated by Covid-19. It's possible she would have passed from the pneumonia alone.

"She was an incredible woman and her last act as headmistress was to ensure the school she cared so much about was closed the day after she started showing symptoms and only reopened once she was sure it was safe and her staff and pupils were protected."

Roose Community Primary School temporarily closed its doors as a precaution earlier this month after Jacobs, reportedly aged 58, was showing symptoms "associated with the coronavirus" and became unwell, according to the school's website. She was advised to self-isolate and the school was cleaned.

After reopening for two days, the school announced it would close fully last Tuesday because of staffing levels.

Roose school asked people to share their memories or draw an angel and post it on their Facebook site to remember Jacobs, who was described as a "very special head teacher and we know she cared about each and every one of you.



"Mrs Jacobs loved angels and every Christmas, she had a special Christmas tree in her living room just for her angels, which she had collected from around the world.

"If you would like to do something to remember her,

is a "huge loss to our school, nursery and our community".

On the school's Facebook post, Lisa Higginson said Jacobs' "gentle voice" will never be forgotten. Leanne Richardson said she went "completely out of her way to

defend and protect when we needed it".

The death toll in the UK has jumped by more than 100 in a day for the first time. As of yesterday, 578 people had died with the virus in the UK, up from 475 on Wednesday.

Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary for the National Education Union, called for protection for school staff, including virus testing in schools, adding: "If we are to help the community, which we should, we need maximum protection to be provided by the government."

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Furness General Hospital where Jacobs was reported to have been treated, could not confirm details of the death.

"She was a very special head teacher who cared about each and every pupil"

please draw a picture of an angel and add it under this post. It would be lovely for her family to see them."

The school staff added they were "all feeling sad too and we are sorry we can't all get together to remember her and help you feel better.

"We send hugs and love to you and your families and we are looking forward to a time when we can all be together again."

The school's chair of governors, Fred Chatfield, said the "devastating" news

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Schools halt redundancy plans amid coronavirus outbreak

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

Schools are halting redundancy plans as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to cause unprecedented disruption across the nation.

Harris Federation – one of the country's largest trusts – is among those calling off crunch talks with employees.

A spokesperson for the trust said its restructuring consultations had only placed a possible seven of its 6,000 staff at risk.

National Education Union campaign manager Henry Fowler had broken the news about plans being postponed, which he said was “due to representations” by the union.

However, a spokesperson for the trust has denied the NEU had any say in the decision and criticised it for “spreading rumours and unsettling our staff”.

Harris added: “Our decision to postpone restructuring consultations is a common-sense response to the current situation with coronavirus, and has absolutely nothing to do with representations made by the NEU.

“The reality is that there would only have been a tiny number of redundancies, if any, across our 48 schools, so it was an easy decision to postpone.”

The trust said it will lodge a complaint “formally with the NEU”.

An NEU spokesperson said Harris's restructuring consultation involved staff across six schools. But Harris said the potentially affected staff were employed across just two schools.

Pauline Buchanan, the NEU's London regional secretary, said postponement was the right decision, adding: “At a time when the country is experiencing a health crisis of existential proportions, it is evident to anyone that this is not business as usual.”

Earlier this month *Schools Week* reported that Harris Federation's chief executive Sir Dan Moynihan once again topped the tables of the highest paid academy bosses. His total pay rose from at least £440,000 in 2017-18 to at least £450,000 last year.

Elsewhere, The Bay CE School in the Isle of Wight, part of the Cornerstone Federation, has

EXCLUSIVE



postponed staffing restructure talks which were expected to lead to redundancies for SEN support staff at the school.

In a statement sent to *Schools Week* on behalf of executive headteacher Duncan Mills, a spokesperson confirmed “due to the current Covid-19 circumstances and with regard to staff well-being at this difficult time, the governing board has decided to suspend the consultation regarding the restructure at The Bay CE School until the autumn term.”

It is understood the potential restructuring could impact four teachers, five learning support assistants and a number of technicians and site staff.

Mark Chiverton, Unison branch secretary for the Isle of Wight, called the decision “very welcome” and said the union is looking forward “to engaging in meaningful dialogue over the next few months with a view to exploring alternative solutions”.

He added: “In these circumstances, Unison and other trade unions are calling for a revision of the previously outlined timescales and a pause to enable governors, school managers, staff and their representatives to consider alternatives in the light of the rapidly developing emergency circumstances.”

Earlier this week Chris Keates, acting general secretary of teacher's union NASUWT, hit

out at members of the sector after the union's local representatives reported some schools are continuing with redundancy meetings.

Keates said: “It beggars belief that at a time of a national crisis, when the future for everyone is so uncertain, that some schools are refusing to withdraw their plans to make teachers redundant and are insisting on ploughing ahead with redundancy meetings and hearings.

“What kind of employers, in the face of such an unprecedented situation, consider it acceptable or appropriate to add to this stressful situation by seeking to remove them from their jobs?”

When asked by *Schools Week*, the union could not provide any examples of schools that were continuing redundancy talks.

Keates called on the government to “insist” employers “do the right thing and stand by their workforce”.



Dan Moynihan

Legal challenge 'certain' over SEND rule changes

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

INVESTIGATES

New emergency powers that "relax" requirements on councils to provide support for SEND pupils will "most certainly" lead to legal challenges, lawyers have warned.

The proposed coronavirus bill states councils won't be penalised for failing to provide support outlined in pupils' education, health and care plans (EHCPs) as long as they show "reasonable endeavours" to fulfil their duty.

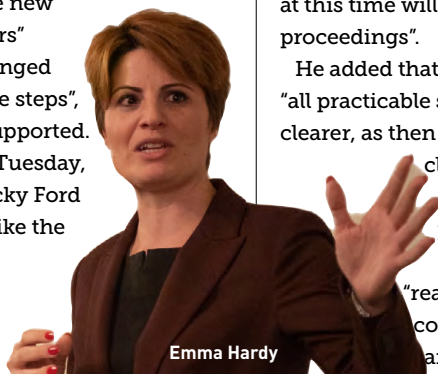
Education secretary Gavin Williamson would have to issue a notice to effectively switch on this part of the law, and the government has said any decision to do so would "not be taken lightly".

But Labour MP Emma Hardy, chair of the all-party parliamentary group for special educational needs and disabilities, wrote to the government expressing "nervousness" that the changes could erode "hard-fought-for-rights" for disabled children.

She has called for the new "reasonable endeavours" requirement to be changed to "taken all practicable steps", which lawyers have supported.

In an open letter on Tuesday, children's minister Vicky Ford said the proposals "strike the right balance in these difficult times".

She said the "overwhelming aim"



Emma Hardy

of the changes is to "balance the needs of this vulnerable group to receive the support they need with managing the demands on local authorities and health bodies".

However, Holly Blacklaws, from HCB Solicitors, said the letter did "little to actually clarify the position or calm the fears of families with vulnerable children and young people with special educational needs".

She said there are fears that "reasonable endeavours" would equate "in reality to no endeavours".

"This leaves families in a hugely precarious situation where they have no recourse should the LA fail to provide even the lowest level of special educational provision.

"This will most certainly result in numerous judicial reviews being launched to test where 'reasonable endeavours' will fall and will add strain to an already overburdened judicial system."

Barrister Stephen Broach, from 39 Essex Chambers, said "reasonable endeavours" is "so unclear that it is very likely that families who are able to access a solicitor at this time will try to bring judicial review proceedings".

He added that replacing the term with "all practicable steps" would be "much clearer, as then the local authority would clearly have to do anything practicable to secure the provision".

The government said the "reasonable endeavours" term is commonly used in "legislation and other legal documents".

However, the bill is currently in the House of Lords – so can be amended – but it is expected to become law today (Friday).

Hardy said many parents of children with SEND understand the need for flexibility during the current time. But she added their children will "still be in urgent need of specialist support and they deserve a clear understanding of why it is necessary to relax this statutory provisions.

"Parents are also extremely nervous that they could see the erosion of the hard-fought-for rights of disabled children and young people."

Ford claimed the emergency powers will "only be exercised for shortest period and where necessary and will be regularly reviewed". She added any decisions to enact the powers will "not be taken lightly".

The government will also be seeking to amend regulations on the timescales for EHCP processes.

But Blacklaws added this "does little to reassure families that Local Authorities who were, even before this crisis began, failing to meet their statutory duties and timeframes, won't push these relaxed regulations to their furthest".

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said the temporary flexibility on EHCPs is to "make sure front-line workers can focus on direct support for those with the most complex needs, including those with disabilities, and on the response to COVID-19".

The powers cannot be used for longer than one month, although this can be "renewed by further notice".

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOTH

Leaders 'hopeful' of holidays for special school staff

Fewer than anticipated pupils attending special schools has left leaders optimistic they will be able to give staff some "well-earned" time off over the coming months.

The government wants to keep the "majority" of special schools open, and will move staff into those with shortages if necessary, to avoid closure.

They are also asking all schools to stay open during the Easter holidays for vulnerable pupils and those of key workers.

As nearly all pupils in special schools will be classed as vulnerable – there were fears special schools would have to run on full-capacity staffing levels.

But research by TeacherTapp found that 36 per cent of special schools and alternative provision had 10 per cent or fewer of students in attendance on Monday. A total of 29 per cent were closed all together.

Graham Quinn, chairman of Special Schools' Voice, said: "Leaders in schools are in daily contact with staff teams about developing rotas, and with their full co-operation, appear to be drawing up models that cover 'holiday periods'. All are also ensuring that staff members receive a well-earned rest/break."

The survey stats do show, though, that one in ten teachers in alternative provision and special

schools said their school had more than 20 per cent of students in attendance.

But Quinn, chief executive of the New Bridge Group MAT, added school leaders were "well aware of the tricky balancing act of continuing to provide an essential service and maintaining the health and well-being of the staff teams".

Dominic Wall, executive principal at Co-op Academy Southfield in Bradford, had a three-week rota for staff, with the third week a complete break.

He said teachers working at home will have the two-week Easter holidays off, but will continue safeguarding calls to pupils.

Free school meals: £3 a day supermarket vouchers will substitute

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

EXCLUSIVE

Pupils are set to get weekly supermarket vouchers totalling £15 to replace their free school meal entitlements under a new national scheme, but the government is dragging its heels over the announcement.

The voucher payments work out at £3 per day – an increase of 70p on the current £2.30 schools are paid to provide meals, Schools Week understands.

All the major supermarkets are believed to be on board. The government will hire one company to provide the vouchers nationally.

However, it is still not known whether schools will be expected to provide meals for pupils over the Easter holidays.

The government is also under fire for dragging its feet on the voucher scheme announcement. It has now been a week since schools were told the scheme was being developed.

Some schools and local authorities have now gone ahead with their own schemes amid the delay. Birmingham City Council is looking at placing a bulk order for its 57,000 pupils to send to parents via schools. The £30 vouchers will cover the next two weeks.

Meanwhile, other heads have just paid money straight into parents' bank accounts.

Seb Chapleau, a former primary school headteacher and now director of the Big Education Conversation, part of the 250-plus school network Whole Education, said "schools are doing an incredible job ensuring that many vulnerable families are not left out".

But he added "we now need to see this treated with more urgency" by the government.

According to government guidance, schools' first step should be contacting their in-house catering team or catering provider "to see if they can prepare meals or food parcels that could be delivered to, or collected by, families".

Those unable to do so should offer meals using "other local initiatives", such as a community hub or charity, or provide families with supermarket vouchers.

A survey by Teacher Tapp found a quarter of teachers' schools are delivering meals to pupils, while another 23 per cent are providing vouchers. Over one-third of teachers did not know how the



school was providing food.

An email from a council sent to school leaders, seen by Schools Week, states the government's national voucher scheme should be available from next week.

It is expected that weekly funding will be upped from £11.50 to £15 per pupil, with all the major supermarkets involved. This has also been confirmed by a second source.

However, there has still been no official announcement, with the council warning that things are changing from "day to day" so they can't guarantee that this will not change further.

A letter sent to Gavin Williamson on Friday by the School Food Matters charity urged the education secretary to ensure cash is instead spent on caterers.

The letter warned that if cash is handed to supermarkets over "prioritising investment of funds in existing school-meal services, catering teams will lose their jobs".

"This will allow for better purchasing in terms of food quality and quantity, and enable schools to continue to

provide food and other support for the most vulnerable children," the letter said.

But heads are unhappy with recent provisions.

Peter Overton, head at Easton Church of England

Academy, in Bristol, said the food being provided to his school by Chartwells caterers – which included a pack of cooking butter, along with a loaf of bread and a block of cheese and snacks – was "shameful".

Meanwhile, Julia Hinchliffe said her north Bristol secondary school was provided with ten slices of bread, five processed cheese slices, five biscuits and five pieces of fruit per pupil, which "falls far below school food standards".

"Some providers have made a real effort sourcing vegetables, quality protein and enough calories for growing teenagers," she added. "I am horrified by the provision, but can do nothing about it."

The food is provided through the school's PFI contract, by Caterlink, who apologised, stating that the service "did not meet our usual high standards" and that it will be revising its provision with the school.

A spokesperson for Chartwells said the company has apologised to Bristol families for the issues providing lunch. They were "forced to use contingency suppliers" amid the short turnaround from closure announcements and difficulties in the food supply chain.

Meanwhile, Sally Tyson, key client director at caterer Alliance in Partnership, said hampers are popular because there is "minimum contact between children and the school catering team".

Children's minister Vicky Ford said the voucher scheme is a "major undertaking and I thank schools for the work they are doing to help support families while it is being set up. We have already said we will reimburse schools for any additional costs incurred.



Julia Hinchliffe
@JHinchliffe_1

Replying to @overton66

And this is what a secondary school student has for the week. 5 processed cheese slices, 10 slices of bread, 5 biscuits and 5 pieces of fruit. Yes, for 5 days.

12:35 PM · Mar 25, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

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Schools stuck requiring improvement under new framework

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools rated 'requires improvement' are less likely to improve under Ofsted's new inspection framework, new data shows.

Just 56 per cent of 'requires improvement' schools inspected in the first term of the new framework improved to 'good' or 'outstanding', down from 64 per cent in 2018-19 and 61 per cent in 2017-18.

Statistics published by the watchdog yesterday also show the proportion of schools keeping their RI grade between September and December last year was 38 per cent. That figure is the highest it has been in at least five years, and 11 percentage points higher than those inspected in the last academic year.

However, the proportion of RI schools downgraded to 'inadequate' during those three months was six per cent, down from nine per cent the year before, but the same level as in 2017-18.

More 'outstanding' schools retain top grade

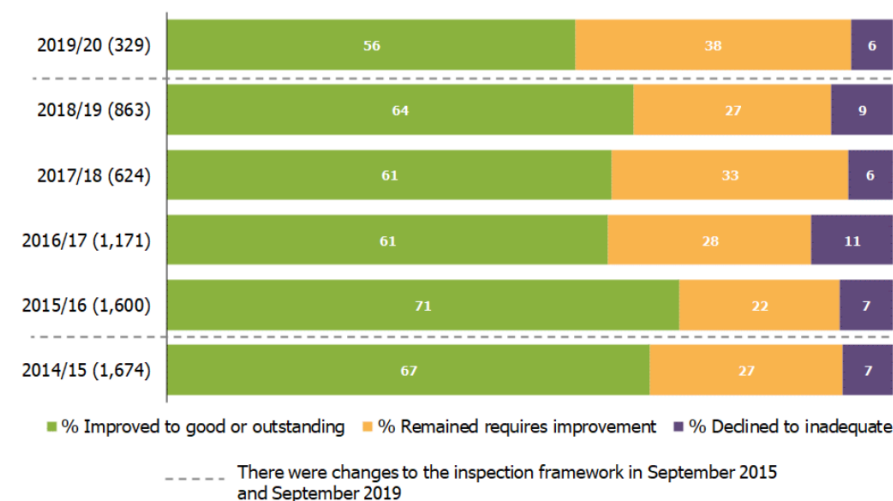
The statistics also show the proportion of previously 'outstanding' schools keeping their grades has more than doubled.

Between September and December last year, Ofsted inspected 152 previously 'outstanding' schools, 34 per cent of which kept their grade. In 2018-19, just 16 per cent kept their grade.

However, Ofsted said the increase "may be partly due to changes in the way exempt schools are selected for inspection".

'Outstanding' schools used only to receive re-

Figure 5: Grade movement for schools previously judged to require improvement, by year



visits if Ofsted picked up on safeguarding concerns or issues in published data. The watchdog has recently been inspecting more schools in the category following concerns that some had gone more than a decade without inspection.

Data shows deprived schools face uphill battle

Ofsted's statistics show that although schools in the most deprived neighbourhoods are just as likely as those in the least deprived to be rated 'outstanding' under the new framework, there is an 18 percentage point gap when it comes to the proportion that are rated 'good'.

Eighty-four per cent of schools in the least

deprived areas inspected between September and December were rated 'good', compared with 66 per cent in the most deprived.

Schools in the most deprived areas are also far more likely to be rated 'requires improvement' (27 per cent) than those in the least deprived (11 per cent).

Sean Harford, Ofsted's national director of education, admitted last December that schools with more pupils from deprived backgrounds were still less likely to be judged 'good'.

This came despite claims the new framework would "reward schools in challenging circumstances".

Prison sentences for founders of unregistered school

The first custodial sentences for running an illegal school have been issued to two people found running unregistered provision in north-west London.

Suleyman Folami, 59, and Mujanet Daniah, 41, were handed four-week custodial sentences – to be suspended for a year – and 120 hours' unpaid work on Wednesday.

They had been found guilty of running an illegal school at Westminster Magistrates Court earlier this month. A custodial sentence is one given by a court that involves a term of imprisonment.

The pair ran a private primary school, in Abbey Road, Park Royal, which had an illegal secondary for 66 children on the floor above.

They were both ordered to pay a £115 victim surcharge and £775 in costs.

Advance Education Centre, the trust responsible for the setting, was also ordered to pay a £1,000 fine on top of a £115 victim surcharge and £775 in costs.

This is the fourth set of convictions for running an unregistered school after an investigation by Ofsted's illegal schools taskforce.

The taskforce, which receives around £1 million a year in funding, had opened 618 investigations as of August last year. Of these, 293 have been inspected and 83 have been issued with warning notices. Such notices are issued when inspectors believe a setting is operating as an illegal school.

Of the 83 issued with warning notices, 50 have changed their operations to comply with the law, 12 have closed, 10 have registered, seven are still under investigation and four faced no further action.

News

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School absence fines continue to soar

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

The number of fines issued for poor school attendance has continued to increase sharply following a landmark Supreme Court ruling on the matter.

Government figures published yesterday (Thursday) show the number of fines issued to parents increased by 28 per cent to 333,400, up from 260,900 in 2017-18.

It follows a 74 per cent rise in the previous year.

The Department for Education said the most common reason for them being issued was unauthorised family holiday absence – 86 per cent in 2018-19.

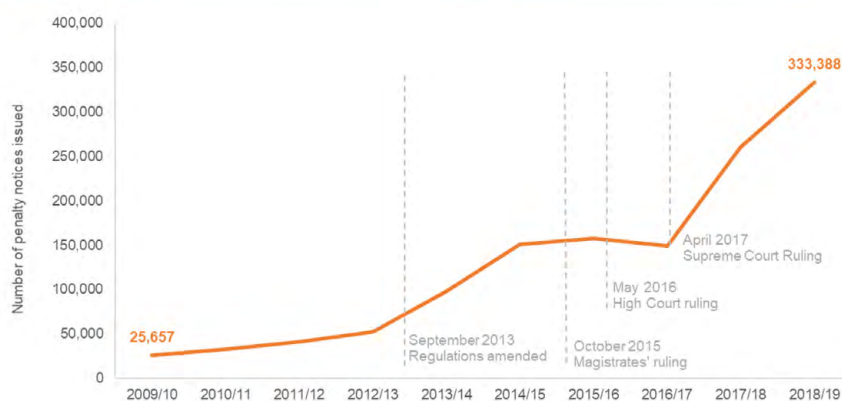
It says amendments to regulations and high-profile court cases are behind the rise, such as the Isle of Wight Council v Jon Platt case.

Platt, who took his daughter to Disneyland during term time, initially won his bid to have a fine overturned in magistrates' court and the High Court. But the Supreme Court ruled against him in April 2017.

In their ruling, judges unanimously agreed pupils should not be taken out of school without good reason, and clarified that "regular" attendance means "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

26 March 2020

The number of penalty notices issued to address poor attendance has increased from last year



The DfE said in the new data councils with large increases were asked to provide reasons and many cited the Supreme Court judgement, "either as a result of returning to pre-court case levels following a slowdown or from a change in behaviour since the ruling".

The fines are £60, but double to £120 if they are paid after 21 days. If not paid within 28 days, the local authority must either prosecute for the original offence or withdraw the notice.

In total, 76 per cent of penalty notices issued in 2018-19 were paid within 28 days, while 10 per cent were withdrawn, seven per cent led to prosecutions and eight per cent

were unresolved.

The DfE says there is a considerable variability in the number of penalty notices issued by local authorities, from zero in some areas, to 24.4 per cent of enrolments in others.

The region with the greatest rate of penalty notices issued – as a percentage of pupil enrolments – was Yorkshire and the Humber, at 7.2 per cent, while the region with the lowest rate of penalty notices issued was Inner London at 2.3 per cent.

The DfE said local authorities may show a large rise or fall in the number of penalty notices issued from year to year due to changes in local policy.

Noughties baby boom starting to fill up secondaries

The proportion of secondary schools that were full or over-capacity increased last year as a population bulge moves through from primaries, new data reveals.

Department for Education statistics released this morning show 17 per cent of secondary schools were full or over-capacity in 2019, up from 15 per cent in 2017.

In contrast, the proportion of full or over-capacity primary schools continued to decrease to 20 per cent in 2019, from 21 per cent the year before.

A population bulge brought on by a baby boom in the early 2000s is in the process of making its way from primary to secondary level.

In 2018, DfE forecasts predicted the number

of pupils in English secondary schools would rise by 418,000 by 2027.

And the new data supports this trend, with the DfE warning: "Local authority forecasts submitted to DfE suggest primary numbers may peak in 2021-22 and then level off.

"Local authorities expect secondary pupil numbers to continue to rise as the increase previously seen in primary numbers continues to move through the secondary phase."

Overall, between 2018 and 2019, 83,000 school places were added to the schools estate – 33,000 primary places and 49,000 secondary places.

The report explains "secondary places have increased at a faster

rate than actual secondary pupil numbers over recent years, in preparation for this large birth cohort".

Elsewhere, the report found the total number of unfilled places in the school system has increased to 1.1 million places in 2019 – 13 per cent of total school places available.

In 2019, there were 482,000 unfilled places in primary schools – a three per cent increase from 2018.

In secondary schools there were 621,000 unfilled places in 2019, a decrease of three per cent from 2018, although still significantly higher than the number of unfilled places in 2010, which was 355,000.



England's teachers can't get no satisfaction

JAMES CARR
@JAMESCARR_93

The OECD has this week published the second volume of results from its latest teaching and learning international survey (TALIS).

The organisation surveyed thousands of teachers from 48 countries, addressing such matters as prestige, career opportunities, collaboration and autonomy.

Here are the four most interesting findings:

Under one-third of teachers feel that the profession is valued

The survey found that 29 per cent of secondary teachers in England either "agree" or "strongly agree" that their profession is valued in society.

This perceived value places England's teachers far below the likes of Vietnam – which topped the survey, at over 90 per cent – but above teachers in France and the Slovak Republic, which both reported below 10 per cent.

The new figures also indicate that England's teachers' perceived societal value fell by 6.6 percentage points between 2013 and 2018.

Professor Dame Alison Peacock, chief executive of the Chartered College of Teaching, has called for teachers to be celebrated "for their work and dedication to the education of young people".

She said: "In these challenging times, our teachers deserve to be lauded even more than before."

England's teachers can't get no ... satisfaction

The OECD reported 77 per cent of England's teachers "all in all are satisfied with their job".

While in isolation this may appear



positive, it is actually the lowest among the 48 countries in the report – with no other nation scoring below 80 per cent.

Italy and Colombia topped the table, at 96 per cent, while the closest score to England's was Japan's, at 82 per cent.

The report explains that teachers' job satisfaction has "strong implications" for other factors, such as retention, attrition, burnout and job performance.

Elsewhere, England was among just six other countries where most secondary teachers "wonder whether it would have been better to choose another profession".

England also saw a 12 percentage point drop between 2013 and 2018 in overall satisfaction with the profession – the second largest of any country.

England's teachers are also more stressed

The survey found 38.2 per cent of secondary teachers in England reported being stressed "a lot" – the highest proportion of any of the other 47 countries taking part in the survey.

Overall, the nation's teachers were the second most stressed of those surveyed – with 70.1 per cent of teachers stating they felt stressed "a lot" or "quite a bit". Portugal took the top spot with 87.2 per cent.

This is the first time TALIS has asked teachers about the stress of the profession. Further analysis shows

that in England "the share of teachers experiencing stress a lot is lower in primary education than in secondary education".

Last year's Teacher Wellbeing Index found almost three-quarters of teachers say they are stressed out, while more than half consider leaving due to mental health and wellbeing pressures.

Almost one-third of teachers are planning an exit from profession

The report found 30 per cent of teachers in England want to "leave teaching within the next five years".

The OECD found attrition has become a "severe problem". Unlike turnover, which refers to teachers permanently leaving their school, attrition refers to those leaving the profession altogether.

The report said: "Attrition can have a detrimental impact on student learning" and "can affect having a negative impact on the school climate and on the implementation of the curriculum".

Additionally, 22.4 per cent of the teachers in England who said they wanted to leave the profession were teachers aged "50 or younger".

The OECD added: "A high proportion of young teachers wishing to leave their work within the next five years can be problematic as it may present countries and economies with unexpected teacher shortages."

EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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School staff need more than just kind words

"By maintaining school provision for those who need it most, leaders of our schools – and your staff – rightly take their place next to our NHS staff and other critical workers as central to our country's efforts in battling this virus."

So said education secretary Gavin Williamson in a heartfelt letter to schools this week, in which he thanked staff for putting themselves in the firing line.

Williamson acknowledged he's asking school staff to go to "exceptional lengths to rise to the challenge we face", adding the challenge "sits alongside considerations about your own health and that of your families".

But, in the end, words are just that – words.

What teachers need now is action. A good place to start is issuing some proper guidance for staff on how to stay safe while in school.

The "initial" guidance put out this week was an insult to those on the frontline (see page 4).

We know everyone in government will also

be doing their all in these unprecedented times, so we don't want to be overly critical.

In that spirit, delays on details on how the new grading system will work and the promised national free school meal voucher scheme are understandable.

But, for those staff being asked to go to "extraordinary lengths", the least that can be done is providing them with a document, put together by experts, explaining the best ways they can stay safe while at work.

Another easy win for the government would be to get the tech giants on board to assist those school pupils who need help to learn from home. It's been done in other countries (in New York, Apple and T-Mobile are providing discounted tablets to thousands of children).

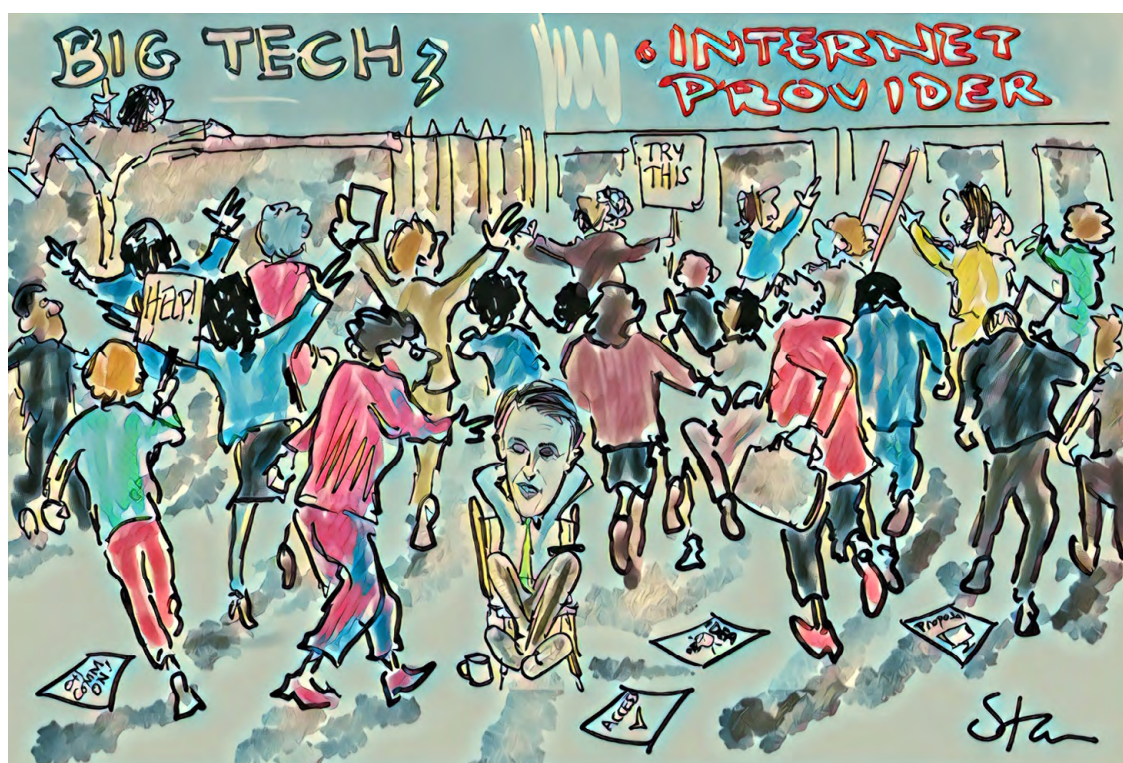
Williamson has admitted he's asking a lot from teachers. They're really not asking for a lot back: just some action to match the kind words.

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Exams have been cancelled – so what happens now?

Michelle

This is sensible for those at GCSE, A-level or other exam points. However, this doesn't consider the year R, year 1 or other year groups, who have only been taught half of the curriculum and will then move up a year group with massive gaps in knowledge. This will affect end results for years (unless we get rid of exams for ever, which would be a positive).

My preferred option would be, extend the academic year to December if we are back to normal by then. Exams could happen in November, results for December, start new school year in January. Once this is over we need families to get out and spend money to get the economy moving again. This would mean kids could go back to their original teacher Sept-Dec. This also supports vocational learners, who still have a lot of practical elements to catch up with.

Julie Howarth

I'm an examinations officer and although I am very concerned for all of our students, I am even more concerned for all the external candidates who use centres to resit exams. Has anybody thought about these candidates?

Unfortunately, they will not have the benefit of predicted grades as they have all been out of education for a period of time. It really will be worst case scenario for these candidates who will probably now have to wait yet another year before they can take the exams that will allow them to move onto the next step of their education.

Andrew Pesterfield

A balanced viewpoint that reflects the level of professional trust we should have in teachers.

In my view, given the long-standing issues with predicted grades (especially for university admissions), these shouldn't be used. Instead, I would suggest that the exam boards go back to schools with the following: using your own internal data and professional judgment, rank the students in your subject cohorts. Exam boards then award grades to the cohort in proportion to those achieved at the centre over a three-year average.

Schools could then appeal individual grades if they feel that they are widely at variance; but the onus will be on them to provide sufficient evidence to justify a grade change.

Leaders slam 'irresponsible' Pets At Home key workers' letter

Annie, comment

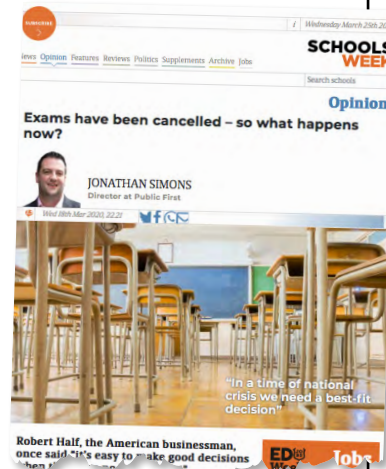
"Chew toys for Poodles"? This comment sickens me. There

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Teacher Toolkit

Exams have been cancelled – so what happens now?

Now is the time for teachers and their professional judgments to be trusted. For all pupils (SATs, GCSEs and levels) where teacher assessment is submitted; externally moderated (without standardisation), given the short space of time available. This has to be the best option...



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

are more pets that enrich our lives other than cats and dogs that supermarkets do not cater for, whereas Pet At Home do. Our pets are our family and require food and medical supplies as do people.

G Stack

I agree that pets are very important, being a pet parent myself. But I'm also a front-line public sector worker, and I'm realistic. You can buy pet food from supermarkets that remain open. You can order it online. Pets At Home staff are not key workers.

Much Agnew about nothing? No savings possible at one in 10 schools

Paul Tarn

Is that the same as "Savings identified at 90 per cent of schools"? Seems a slightly odd way of expressing stats. One would normally lead with key findings.

Janet Downs

GCSEs and A-levels will be based on a 'moderated assessment', says CST leader

A mini-session of exams in the autumn should be firmly ruled out. It is neither logically possible nor considerate. Expecting pupils to be on top of their subjects after months away is expecting too much. It would not just be stressful for young people, parents and teachers, but would delay decisions about post-16 progression which is, after all, the main purpose of these exams.

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Feature

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Delegates at The Difference's IncludEd South conference



The programme making all the difference to behaviour and exclusions

As education charity The Difference prepares to expand its inclusive leadership training programme, *Schools Week* met members of this year's cohort to find out how new ways of looking at inclusion are helping their schools – and reducing exclusions.

I think classrooms are calmer," says Neelam Maru, who has worked at Morpeth School in east London for 25 years.

"I think one of the things is about allowing teachers to say 'it's OK'. It's OK to give them a pen. It doesn't have to be a battle. Let's not do that. Let's think about what it is that we are picking our battles on. I think there's been a lot about that."

Maru, an assistant headteacher, is part of the first cohort of The Difference's inclusive leadership training programme, which aims to help leaders who want to improve their schools' ability to meet the needs of their most vulnerable pupils and reduce exclusions.

For one day each half-term, 12 mainstream leaders have been trained alongside alternative provision leaders from the charity's Difference leaders programme. From next year, the course will quadruple its capacity to 60 leaders, and will expand to the north-west and Yorkshire and the Humber.

The expansion comes at a time of concern. Rates of fixed-term and permanent exclusions have been rising steadily since 2013

and ministers have expressed concerns about the disproportionate rates of exclusion among particular minority groups.

The Difference's founder and chief executive, Kiran Gill, also believes that with schools expected to remain closed to most pupils for months as a

philanthropic trusts and foundations. The course covers topics including trauma-informed practice, contextualised safeguarding, parent coaching, inclusive pedagogy, teaching assistant deployment and inclusive curriculum, and leaders are given assignments to complete in their own

"Now more than ever we are feeling so concerned about our most vulnerable learners"

result of the coronavirus outbreak, the timing of the wider rollout is crucial.

"Now more than ever we are feeling so concerned as a profession about our most vulnerable learners," she says. "We know they're going to be most affected by missing months of learning and spending months outside the space of safety and belonging that is school. There has never been a more important time for leaders to develop the capacity to respond to their learning needs, their mental health needs and their safeguarding needs."

Schools pay £3,000 to send a staff member on the inclusive leaders' course, with the rest of the costs subsidised by the charity from its own funding, which is drawn primarily from

schools between sessions.

The aim is not just to train leaders in these fields, but to give them a deeper understanding, through their work alongside AP leaders, of how the world looks from the point of view of someone in one of those settings, which many mainstream leaders will never have experienced.

For Jemima Reilly, Morpeth's headteacher and Maru's boss, the decision to seek out ways to make her school more inclusive came during a period of self-reflection. "We've always badged ourselves as an inclusive school. We have high numbers of pupils with

Neelam Maru

Jemima Reilly

The programme making all the difference to behaviour and exclusions

EHC plans, all that sort of thing,” she says. “But actually I’m not sure we were practising inclusion in its very broadest sense, in that there were pupils who weren’t finishing their time at Morpeth, and I think I probably hadn’t really stepped back and reflected on that as much as I should have done.”

Reilly drew inspiration from the work of Thomas Tallis School, just a few miles away in south-east London. In 2014, the school recruited Shaun Brown, a geography teacher who had left mainstream education to work in the alternative provision sector in London. His job was to change the school’s systems for managing behaviour and train all staff in trauma-informed practice. He now runs The Difference’s training programmes.

Brown’s work at Thomas Tallis came at a time when more traditional, no-excuses behaviour policies were growing in popularity, cheered on by ministers who favour a more traditional approach. Reilly remembers visiting the school and discovering a “really thoughtful, informed alternative to the kind of zero-tolerance model that was also being touted at the time. It just chimed with our thinking, and was an area I really knew we needed to develop in. But one that I also felt incredibly uninformed about.

“My route has always been teaching and learning, pedagogy, and I’m passionate about that. And I felt very underequipped for being able to lead on this other area, and I think it was becoming increasingly apparent that we needed to be thinking about it much more carefully.”

Self-reflection is a common theme among those



Shaun Brown delivering a workshop at IncludEd South

to make sure that we get the best out of the most vulnerable students.”

As part of McQuaid’s efforts to make George Green’s more inclusive, the school changed its policy on suspensions last year to make it less “black and white”. Leaders have already seen results: fixed-term exclusions between September and Christmas last year were a quarter of what they were the year before.

“When you’re aware of what [pupils are] going through in their personal lives, how poverty affects them – how different challenges, with domestic violence, or drug abuse, all these things that are going on daily in their lives – it’s remarkable that they’re doing as well as they are and they are so resilient. It’s absolutely crucial we’re aware of that and we support them through that in the best possible way, crucially without lowering our expectations of them.”

McQuaid believes leaders must maintain “an open mind about your own way of dealing with

including action to improve AP, holding schools accountable for the pupils who leave their rolls. The government accepted the recommendations in principle but has not said how it will put them into action.

Ministers have also recently announced the formation of a behaviour taskforce, led by Department for Education adviser Tom Bennett. The appointment of Marie Gentles to the taskforce – the former head of a pupil-referral unit and an employee of The Difference – has led to hope in the AP sector that it will be central to the government’s plans, whenever they may surface.

For participants in The Difference’s inclusive leaders programme, exposure to colleagues working in AP seems to be having a profound impact. Will Whitehouse, assistant principal for inclusion and special educational needs co-ordinator at Ark Globe Academy, said his perception of what goes on in AP had “completely changed”. “It’s an opportunity to speak to different professionals who, from my experience, don’t historically manage to get together very often,” he said.

For Jemima Reilly, moving to a more inclusive approach is a matter of personal and professional responsibility. She believes levels of need among pupils arriving at schools, and the impact of austerity will only “keep on growing”, and leaders must step up in response to that.

“Everything around us is disappearing,” she says. “We need to be self-sufficient as far as possible in terms of addressing the needs of our pupils. It’s not going to be a problem that’s easily solved. You can’t just ship it out somewhere else. It’s our responsibility.

“And I think that it’s that recognition – which, you could argue, has come way too late. It’s that sort of recognition and understanding in its entirety that we’re dealing with, and that’s the challenge.”

“I’m not sure we were practising inclusion in its very broadest sense”

involved in the inclusive leaders programme.

Aidan McQuaid, deputy headteacher of George Green’s School on the Isle of Dogs, east London, came into the scheme with an acceptance that exclusion rates at his school were too high. “I said right from the outset: ‘I am responsible for some of those statistics.’ The response in the room made me feel really comfortable talking about those things.

“My school, for example, has 25 per cent SEND, 76 per cent pupil premium, so that presents itself with lots of challenges. It’s about doing things differently and doing things better

things... It’s OK to get it wrong, because we’re always learning all the time, no matter how much experience you’ve got. I’ve got nearly 20 years’ experience in inner-city London, but I recognise that my approach wasn’t quite right, actually. It had some success but not as much as it’s going to have now.”

The heightened focus on behaviour management and exclusions in schools comes at a time when both issues have also moved up the priority list for government. Last year, the landmark Timpson review of exclusions made sweeping recommendations,



Will Whitehouse



Aidan McQuaid



Kiran Gill

HOW TO IMPROVE THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF STAFF



By Paul Matthias,
National Director of
Hays Education

Mental health and wellbeing is becoming an increasing priority for schools, and now more than ever staff workload and wellbeing must be prioritised and reported upon by school leaders.

There are number of reasons why improving mental health and wellbeing of staff is important. Put simply, you can't expect your staff to remain motivated to stay and give their role 100% if you don't support them in their position and wellbeing.

With funding a major challenge, I wanted to share with you some simple low-cost actions your school can take to enhance mental wellbeing for staff.

1. Encourage staff to share their stories

Whether it's through an informal staff room chat or an agenda point on a staff meeting, provide the means for your staff to share their stories. It will help an individual to not feel isolated and most importantly allow others to understand that other people have had similar experiences, be it a work-related or personal challenge they are facing.

2. Consider wellbeing training

Wellbeing-focused training for staff can really help in making sure staff wellbeing is at the heart of every school. Wellbeing First, our free service available for school staff across the UK, provides a selection of free courses to help staff manage their stress levels, reduce their anxiety and discover how to foster positive mental health.



3. Communication is key

Some schools have taken steps such as designed posters with 'Top Tips for Wellbeing' or with signposts to get help if needed, such as Employee Assistance Programmes, to drive awareness and help. Think about how often do you talk about it with staff, School Leadership Teams or in Governors' meetings – could this be improved?

4. Promote mindfulness

There are lots of ways you can promote mindfulness within your school, starting with simple options such as introducing mindfulness books into the staff room or school library. You can also promote free apps to download to encourage mindfulness or take up our mindfulness module as part of our Wellbeing First service.

5. A staff charter

Do you have a staff charter? Staff charters encourage a positive work-life balance and help towards taking steps to address some of the underlying reasons staff feel stressed. Some of the actions include:

- After school meetings to have an agreed finishing time
- A minimum of one evening per week where staff don't take work home

For more information on the free Wellbeing First or other training courses, visit: <https://educationtraining.hays.co.uk/>

HAYS Recruiting experts
in Education

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Understanding the limitations of the data we hold, and the inferences we will have to draw, is crucial to a GCSE and A-level awards system based on trust, writes Ben White

Teacher assessment is not as accurate as some of us think. If you're not convinced, feel free to have a go at this competition. You will be provided with mock grades, two years of modular assessment data, an AS grade and a brief pupil biography. All you have to do is predict each pupil's final outcome. With over 2,000 entries, the modal score is 4 out of 15. The top score is 9.

However, as Prof Becky Allen shared again last week, this limited agreement between exam grades and teacher predictions is rooted not just in our limited capacity to predict the future but the limited reliability of exams themselves. Ofqual research explored the likelihood of a second trained examiner awarding the same whole grade as the first marker across A-levels and GCSEs in a range of subjects. It's not reassuring reading, even in normal times, but nor is it surprising for those of us who teach or manage subjects at the less reliable end (English, history, sociology, for example).

Given the above, perhaps students have the same chances of a fair grade as in normal years. The cohort will be awarded a similar proportion of grades as any year. This will be linked to school assessments instead of external exams. Our efforts must be aimed at ensuring a fair relationship between these and their final grades.

The salient difference for us as teachers is how it feels to us. We have been pushed from our familiar role of striving to give our students the best chance of success into one in which we have to make a definitive judgment



BEN WHITE

Director of curriculum, Highworth Grammar School

Our make-do-and-mend exam system must be built on trust

for each of them. In the end, far as it might be from ideal, most will receive a reasonably fair grade, and most will proceed to the next step

meant nor received as threats to ourselves or our professionalism. When we do allocate grades therefore, it's important that we all

“Any new process can sidestep some of the more obvious pitfalls

in their education and lives as they always have done.

If we are aware of them, any new process can sidestep some of the more obvious pitfalls, and coherence will also make it easier to deal with appeals. The fact is that they are likely to be more numerous than ever, we must ensure that they are neither

be aware of certain factors that will influence the validity of the entire effort.

First, using vague teacher judgment is inherently unfair, likely to betray biases, and to be more easily swayed by students' needs, or pressure from parents. With regard to bias, it is also worth noting that setting



additional tasks now to evidence grades seems highly likely to disadvantage those with less access to tech, less self-confidence, or high honesty thresholds.

Second, for some of the same reasons, as well as the limited sample, the unreliability of previous grade boundaries, and the fact that not all students will have had the same regime, the grades we have in our mark-books do not have a high degree of precision. However, a range of quantitative assessment results is a sensible base on which to build.

For these reasons, I will not predict individual outcomes based upon what I know of how they “would” have worked, and nor will I share any grades with students. Instead, my provisional model for allocating grades to our A-level students goes as follows:

- Sort students from strongest to weakest using assessment data, awarding 50 per cent for a recent mock exam, 25 per cent for last year's end-of-year exam, and 25 per cent for three other assessments completed in exam conditions by all classes since Christmas;
- Use a combination of prior cohort's results and this cohort's ALPs A-level targets to allocate grades from top to bottom.

Guidelines for how Ofqual will decide grades are not yet clear. The current guidance suggests the grades teachers allocate will be significant but not definitive. Whatever they decide, we have to trust them as much as they have to trust us for our make-do-and-mend system to work.

Opinion

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ESTHER
MAXWELL

Employment and education
specialist, Shakespeare Martineau

Schools urgently need more guidance around key worker status

Headteachers are ultimately in charge of who accesses their schools but better guidance is needed quickly, writes Esther Maxwell

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world on its head. Daily life has been significantly changed for almost every single person and businesses have had to close their doors temporarily. For schools however, the situation hasn't been as clear-cut. Closed to the majority of pupils, schools have been asked to continue providing support for vulnerable children and the children of key workers, as identified by the Government.

However, a lack of clarity over the official key worker classification has been putting additional strain on schools. A well-publicised letter from retailer Pets at Home which claimed the chain's staff were indeed key workers has received significant backlash from the education sector. Many schools claimed they were being placed under immense pressure from having to look after so many children, while endeavouring to keep necessary social distancing measures in place.

Despite additional guidance

released this week by the Department for Education, grey areas around key workers is leading to an increased number of disputes at the school gate. With so many institutions operating on skeleton staff and having to

provide both online and face-to-face education in tandem, an already difficult situation is being made even trickier.

Fundamentally, schools should remain open to provide care where one parent is a critical worker or the child is vulnerable. As it stands, schools cannot make a decision about who they believe to be a critical worker or not; their main aim is to stay open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children where they can, as instructed by government. In turn, government understands that some schools may be unable to stay open due to severe staff shortages and will work with local areas to use neighboring schools as necessary.

This has led to an undoubtedly sensitive situation, and it is understandable that disputes are



arising. On one hand, workers are being told by their employers that they are classed as critical and must continue to come into work to keep their jobs, and on the other there are the schools who are feeling the strain of having to look after more children than they can cope with.

Under normal circumstances,

“ Heads CAN refuse entry to children they believe should remain at home

any parent who wishes to raise a complaint against a school must go through a set formal procedure. This begins with raising an informal complaint, which, subject to whether it can be resolved or not, is escalated up through the governing body. However, circumstances are clearly not normal and the usual method of resolving parental complaints is likely to be too time- and resource-intensive to function as it should.

Ultimately, schools and headteachers have the ability to refuse entry to any children they believe should be remaining at home with their parents. At this time of uncertainty, taking such a draconian approach is unlikely to be productive. However, it is likely to be driven by necessity, and the safety of staff and young people on site remains a priority for school leaders. Safe

staff-to-pupil ratios still apply, and are made all the more important by the need to maintain adequate social distancing measures.

If social distancing measures are unable to be maintained, there is an issue over whether schools could be open to complaints from parents who feel their children may have caught COVID-19 due to inadequate safeguarding. This creates the potential for schools to be exposed to a claim. However, this is unexplored territory and, one would hope, unlikely to materialise.

Government guidelines as they stand are extremely difficult in a school setting. The new Coronavirus Act 2020 contains provision for the Secretary of State to temporarily close an educational institution if, on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer, it is a necessary and proportionate action in response to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus.

In the meantime, a drip feed of information continues, but the brief schools have been set doesn't get easier. As the days and weeks go by, parents and teachers are going to need much more and much better guidance if disputes are to be kept at a minimum during an already-turbulent period.

Opinion

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MIKE
ARMIGER

Independent education and
mental health adviser

In times of crisis it takes a village to raise a headteacher

Never has so much been asked of school leaders. Mike Armiger sets out how they can protect themselves now and for the long term

It is a time of great uncertainty and challenge for everyone in our community and across the public sector. The focus on the developing crisis that is required of us is intense, but if we allow it to become our only focus, we may be creating longer-lasting problems for ourselves.

My hope is to avoid patronising slogans about wellbeing. As educators, you will have asked dozens of people today how they are. It's likely someone has asked you too, and stuck around for the answer. We are uniquely caring as a profession, and we are also uniquely self-critical. Both are positive, but both also carry risks.

When I first started in leadership, the distance between how I thought I would react in a crisis and how I actually did was often vast. I dream of that unflappable day, always calm and 20 steps ahead, but the reality is that every minute, every hour, every day, a new challenge is presented that shifts the goalposts from

prevention to mitigation. Leading during these times requires us to reflect on our decisions, change course if needed, adapt where

“Building social capital and relational resource is vital for coping

required and always create.

People often misinterpret or simplify what resilience is. Rather than a predisposition of character or “grit”, resilience is more about “we” than it is about “me”. (So much for avoiding slogans!) Building coping resources within oneself or supporting someone else to do so is of course important, but building social capital and relational resource is vital for coping in the face of challenge. For those working in the public sector, that's harder than most. We can easily take for granted that people want to know about, or are able to support us with, the sometimes-momentous decisions we have to make. In truth, many have no idea and some regrettably just don't care.

The unsung heroes are those who support us. Some of course are

found in work, but for many, those that we come home to, speak to virtually, connect with and trust are the people who get us through. That is why identifying them is important, especially in times of

increased challenge like these.

Of course, there is some value in knowing the uniqueness of the challenge and of the role, but even those who can't fully empathise with the challenges of our role are vital to boosting our immunity.

We need time to rest, for cell renewal to take place, and so much more. This is where our supporters come into their own. They allow us time and space to decompress, and they allow us affection, care, hope and the opportunity to be reassured and understood. Identify and speak with those people where you can, they are invaluable.

In my role across health and education, I am often tasked with helping people find hope and safety in the most difficult of times. At first glance, these are situations where an individual has a distinct lack of both psychological and

physical safety. Building that sense of safety and hope is something we best do as a community. We mustn't inflict it, but we can provide the circumstances in which they show themselves.

I've lost count of the number of times that despite everything else happening in people's lives, they have found it in the most unexpected places. Kindness from a stranger, a pet, a joke, a loved one, nature, reminiscing, social media (#joinin) and so many more. The little things within our grasp are where we can find solace when our world feels like it's getting away from us. Just as our problems have cumulative effect, so too do our positive interactions.

Social distancing is for the body, not for the mind or soul. You'll often find me stargazing on the front step with a brew during times of contemplation. It's amazing the conversations you can have – and who you can have them with – if you make yourself open to them.

If you need help to get started, a simple safety planning format is available at www.stayingsafe.net. It is designed for people experiencing significant distress, but many choose to use it for stress, overwhelm and anxiety too.



Research

This week, our guest research reviewer is Rachel Lofthouse of Leeds Beckett University. Contact them on Twitter - @DrRLofthouse or @CollectivED1 - if you have a topic you would like them to cover

How can we build and sustain headteachers' capacity in difficult times?

Rachel Lofthouse, professor of teacher education, Leeds Beckett University

School leaders are managing the necessary radical adaptations caused by Covid-19 and later, they will have to deal with the long-term fallout. Finding ways to support those school leaders taking both the professional responsibility for, and personal brunt of, the pandemic in real time and in the recovery and reconstruction period will be essential.

Even before the current crisis we heard a lot of the difficulties faced by headteachers, but rarely heard of evidence-based solutions. Our research at CollectivED demonstrates that coaching can provide an effective approach to support headteachers' wellbeing and their capacity to manage the complexity of their roles. The mixed-methods research was a year-long study of headteacher coaching provided by Integrity Coaching and funded by the National Education Union (NEU). The NEU also funded the evaluation, which provides insights into how and why a specialist coaching offer for school leaders can have unique and positive impacts.

Headteachers give so much of themselves to support teachers and to make a positive impact on children and young people, and yet they experience some of the highest levels of stress in the system. This concern was made real by one headteacher in a focus group who said that he felt it was not always easy to think far enough ahead about the implications of any decision he had to make.

The research also confirmed that loneliness and isolation are felt by many. This loneliness is somewhat counter-intuitive, but as one headteacher said, "It is rarely recognised that during any day, headteachers have hundreds of interactions and that most often people want something or to tell you about a problem in their lives."



This is only likely to be more pronounced as the pandemic takes effect.

The same headteacher went on to describe how he felt relief when he left one school because he realised "how much of people's lives you carry". He expressed this as an "emotional weight, which unless you manage it, erodes your resilience over time". Asking this of headteachers at a time of national crisis could have a profound effect on retention.

But the research demonstrated that headteachers who had coaching felt that their ability to manage these significant demands and address the common feeling of isolation improved. They also reported a positive impact on their self-belief and confidence and that coaching helped them to place a greater priority on their physical and emotional health through gaining a better work-life balance.

The coaching model created a protected, confidential, sustained and supported space that gave headteachers the time to prioritise the issues that needed resolving. They stated that they had an improved

ability for developing staff within their schools, managing difficult issues and improving working relationships, and an enhanced capacity for problem-solving, strategic thinking and the need to cope with continuing

demands of the job, including emergency management.

One headteacher stated that "I am more emotionally resilient and can cope with the major decisions and issues that daily come my way". Another headteacher referred to the fact that coaching allowed him to stay more balanced and less reactive with his staff, with another stating that coaching "helped me come to terms with changes I had no choice in and therefore I am in a better mental place to begin to make the plans we need to".

As we move beyond the emergency into a new educational era it is interesting to note the role of coaching in reaffirming professional values. One headteacher indicated that coaching had enabled her to "recalibrate self and goals". Another headteacher suggested he felt he was "a more human and humane leader" through coaching as he had become better able to work with his staff to focus on the values of the school.

The current crisis has created huge disturbances in schools and the lives of their staff, children and young people. To rebuild, we need to think differently about what is asked of headteachers as civic leaders and how best to support them. Sustaining them through coaching may be a good start in rebuilding their capacity as well as our school communities.



Reviews



Our reviewer of the week is
**Rachel Paget, KS3 co-ordinator,
Penketh High School**

@MSPAGETENGLISH

Week 2 – Lockdown...my journey with technology

@fod3

We are currently in an unprecedented situation; more students than ever are having to access learning remotely and as educators we want to ensure that we provide them with the best resources we can. Yet many of us are lacking in confidence when it comes to technology and are flying blindly into a world of Google Classroom, Padlet, Screencast etc. Freya Odell provides an insight into her routine and successes during lockdown in Rome. She breaks down each program she uses explaining how she uses it and what for, offering useful tips along the way that she has learned the hard way, so you don't have to! It's honest and a really useful starting point for anyone feeling worried about how best to tackle the new technologies suddenly needed for teaching.

Online teaching: five things to consider before you start

@wheninclass

Before you start? If only we had the luxury! Despite the somewhat unfortunate title given current circumstances, Steve Farndon really gets to the heart of plenty of the issues

TOP BLOGS of the week

and concerns felt by many teachers. He acknowledges the valid concern many of us have that this move to remote, distance and online learning will serve to widen the disadvantage gap for our pupils. His five questions allow teachers to engage with what the best strategies and solutions will be for their students. He ends his piece with a combination of a rallying cry and reassurance that "you're doing a fantastic job!". Something we all need to hear at this moment in time.

Remote learning: why hasn't it worked before and what can we do to change that?

@daisychristo

Teachers Vs Tech? author Christodoulou provides a nuanced and interesting analysis of the problems previously faced by remote learning in terms of the assumptions and mistakes made by those designing the platforms and ongoing issues with uptake. Most useful of all in our current climate of school closures, she provides a list of valuable links to what she considers to be the best online learning resources out there.

Schools closed, exams cancelled...

now what?

@MissMeeks14

Katie Ridgway's blog for #WomenEd is a reassuring insight into the fact that I am not the only educator filled with apprehension and anxiety right now. Don't get me wrong, this is not *schadenfreude*, this is comforting solidarity. It's good to know that you're not alone! And with her references to anxiety, breathing strategies learned during cognitive behavioural therapy, and worries about asthma, she could well be me! Her blog highlights the importance of challenging negative thoughts, a useful strategy at all times but especially in our current climate. It also reminds us that maybe sometimes the news is something to which we should limit our exposure.

Dear Y11

@bennewmark

This week our Y11 and Y13 students, who have been gearing up to sit exams that mark the threshold to their future, discovered that this wasn't going to happen. We were all shocked. Then we began to mourn. To mourn the lost opportunities to "prove" themselves. To mourn the lost rites of passage that come with leaving school or college. Ben Newmark provided a voice of sound reason and compassion in the chaos with this blog entry and summed up what many of us wanted to tell our exam classes... it's "see you later. Not goodbye."

Worry has never helped me yet

@SaysMiss

Amid the social distancing and panic buying, Kat Howard reminds us of the futility of worry. Posted on March 15 it feels strangely prescient, given the week we have just had; but it definitely helps as a reminder that worry is not a helpful emotion and can be dismissed in favour of more productive sentiments. Something to bookmark and read at regular intervals over the next 12 weeks!

Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



Teachers vs Tech?: The Case for an Ed Tech Revolution

Author: Daisy Christodoulou

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Reviewer: Stephen Turnbull, former lecturer in media and education

As teachers everywhere turn to online learning for solutions to the problems posed by the coronavirus crisis, this book is certainly timely. But does it deliver on its promise to provide a positive vision for educational technology?

The answer is a qualified yes.

You should never judge a book by its cover, but this one is strangely reminiscent of a Russian revolutionary poster. You can almost hear the rallying cry over the smartphone-clutching hand: "Children of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your teachers!" By contrast, its content is measured and academic, and it is firmly grounded in an evidence-based, teacher-led and knowledge-driven approach. The insurrection implied by its cover and title, it turns out, is more evolution than revolution.

Despite the irritatingly binary *Teachers vs Tech?* title, Christodoulou's third book is concerned with avoiding the utopian/dystopian polarisation that has dogged the edtech debate for generations. Hence, neither chalk-stained traditionalists nor gadget-obsessed techno-evangelists (among whose number I once counted) will find validation in its pages.

Given that Christodoulou's first book, *Seven Myths About Education*, sent shockwaves through the educational mainstream – alienating swathes of more progressive-minded teachers in the process – many might be sceptical of the book's intent. Yet it is a balanced piece of work that argues strongly for technology's potential to improve learning, as long as we get the pedagogy right. And there's no denying the author has done her homework. Drawing extensively on relevant studies, this is a well-researched book that makes excellent use of anecdotes, examples

and Oliver Caviglioli's always precise graphics to explain and summarise key points.

Rightly, Christodoulou questions from the outset the education sector's huge investments in yet minimal returns from learning technologies. Much of this, she argues, is down to faddish, pseudo-scientific thinking, which stems from a simple-yet-difficult-to-displace "bad idea": the notion that technology has intrinsic power. In reality, says Christodoulou, teachers have proven as susceptible to a baseless gimmick as the so-called digital-native children they teach.

So how should we guard against these tendencies and ensure our use of edtech is sound? The answer, the author contends, is cognitive science. In recent years, this discipline has begun to shine a powerful light on how the brain learns, illuminating in particular the key areas of short- and long-term memory and cognitive load, and undermining those who would have us "just Google it". Curiously, however, the book neglects the concept of schema when discussing cognitive architecture and knowledge building.

More significantly, it is questionable whether the science is as settled as Christodoulou claims, not least because the concepts of constructivism and cognitive load are difficult to define and test empirically. Furthermore, many practitioners (among whose numbers I also once counted), effectively blend inquiry-based

learning and direct instruction within a carefully scaffolded and differentiated framework. They will be hard-pushed to disbelieve their own experiences, and will find support in Paul Kirschner's foreword to this book, which includes project-based and collaborative learning in the teacher's skillset.

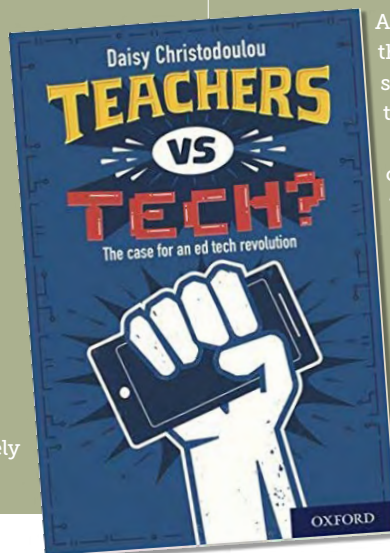
Having said that, the book actively makes the case that learning can and should be fun as well as challenging, and shows edtech's potential to diversify the teacher's toolbox well beyond quizzing apps and visualisers. Both aspects are refreshing.

The most interesting sections, bearing in mind the increasing influence of artificial intelligence in the educational landscape, are undoubtedly the chapters exploring personalisation (or "individualised instruction") and the use of adaptive/algorithmic learning systems for assessment. Christodoulou has clearly drawn fruitfully here on her background as a "disruptive" edtech entrepreneur herself, explaining different strategies and evaluating their potential.

However, for me, the author's strict stance on banning students' digital devices from classrooms undermines the book's otherwise balanced approach.

And on a purely practical level, the lack of index and very slight glossary make it harder to navigate.

Ultimately, as the conclusion makes clear, "what works" with technology as with everything else in education is relative to pedagogical purpose. It would be wise, then, to approach the book from a critical perspective and test its claims out rigorously. That's how evolution happens, after all.



WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

MONDAY

It's official – schools can ask parents for proof if they don't believe they're entitled to send their children to school.

When it was announced last week that schools would be open only to vulnerable pupils and the children of "key workers", some joked that schools would have to demand evidence from parents to find out if they met the profile.

But guidance from the government confirmed that "if it proves necessary, schools can ask for simple evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip".

TUESDAY

We suspect the DfE didn't quite think through the ramifications of asking all schools to fill in and submit a daily attendance return by 12pm every day.

On the first day of the new system, the website crashed (surprise surprise), and on the second day they were forced to release a video tutorial on how to submit it, presumably because many schools got it wrong.

Nothing to see here!

Gavin Williamson was caught red-handed in an image from a video cabinet meeting earlier this week.

A screenshot of the meeting appears to show the education secretary with his

hand to his mouth, as if stifling a sneeze or cough.

The thing is, those pesky experts over at Public Health England have said coughs and sneezes should be caught in a tissue or in the crook of your elbow.

It's reassuring to know our cabinet ministers are following the rules to the letter!

WEDNESDAY

It's not just the cabinet that's meeting over Skype.

Members of the parliamentary education committee were briefed on coronavirus issues by ministers via the software this week too.

And it appears they learned a bit about each other in the process!

Lucy Powell, the Labour MP, tweeted that the committee had discovered that Jonathan Gullis, a former teacher and new Tory MP, "is a fan of a certain left-

wing writer Owen Jones".

"Well, you say fan..." responded Gullis

"I was interested in a different perspective. I have also read Owen's book, *The Establishment*."

He also said he was "grateful" to Powell and fellow Labour member Ian Mearns for "giving me some lighthearted stick over grammar schools".

Oh to have been a fly on that wall...

THURSDAY

Given the government's current obsession with finding cost savings in schools, you'd think the DfE would also have found ways of being more frugal with its own cash.

But records released this week show senior DfE bod Andrew McCully flew "premium economy" class to Shanghai and Beijing last November as part of work on the maths teachers exchange programme.

Regular *Schools Week* readers will remember that in 2018, the DfE spent £9,000 to send Lord Agnew, the academies minister, and three advisers on a three-day trip to Argentina for the first G20 Education Ministerial Summit. Agnew flew business class.

That was the same Lord Agnew who described himself as being like a "pig hunting for truffles" when it came to financial waste in schools. The same Lord Agnew who is now a minister at the Treasury.





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**



St Augustine's Church of England (VA) Junior School - Headteacher

Dates: Closing date 9.00am 3rd April
Salary Range: L 12 - 21 depending on experience (£53,856 - £67,183)
Location: Woodston, Peterborough
No. of Children: 234
Contract type: Full time
Contract term: Permanent
Starting date: September 2020

The Governing Body of St. Augustine's Church of England (VA) Junior School, are seeking a committed, dynamic Headteacher to lead and inspire a professional and supportive teaching team.

The role is an outstanding opportunity for career progression in a supportive, Christian environment. St. Augustine's offers:

- a welcoming and friendly environment, including a team of highly committed and experienced staff
- established partnerships with parents, a supportive Governing Body and the local parish
- pupils who enjoy their school, work hard and come from a diverse community
- the opportunity to work in a caring Christian environment
- professional development opportunities to help us to build on our previous "Good" Ofsted inspection

Our ideal candidate will combine proven leadership and management skills with a desire to drive continuous improvement across the school. They will seek to enrich the school's broad curriculum and will be able to think strategically, developing approaches

to teaching and learning which maintain and develop already positive academic outcomes. They will share our Christian values, calling on strong interpersonal skills to work across the whole school community to ensure every child is supported and challenged to meet their full potential.

Offering Key stage 2 to Years 3 to 6, we were designated a "good" school on our last inspection and are now looking for the Headteacher who can lead our thriving school into its next stage of success.

How to apply:

If you have any queries or would like to arrange a visit to look around the school please contact the Chair of Governors by email at: 01733 563566 / office@st-augustines.peterborough.sch.uk

To request further details and an application pack and form please contact the school office using the email address above. All applications should be submitted on the application form with a covering letter explaining why you are suitable for the role, via email to office@st-augustines.peterborough.sch.uk

Recruitment Schedule:

The closing date for applications is Friday, April 3rd at 9.00am. Any applications received after this

date will not be accepted. Short listing is due to take place in the days following.

Candidates selected for the shortlist will be notified as soon as possible following that date, unsuccessful candidates will also be notified.

Interviews are scheduled to take place on Wednesday, April 22nd and Thursday, April 23rd and details of the selection process will be sent to you on application.

St Augustine's Church of England (VA) Junior School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Appointment to this post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check as well as other pre-appointment checks and references outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Applicants should note that written references will be taken up at shortlisting stage prior to interview.

Our school vision is to be guided by God's wisdom, to embrace challenge and strive to achieve our best, enjoying all that we do together



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.

SCHOOLS WEEK ED^{JOBS} Week

Recruitment advertising during the Coronavirus Pandemic

To assist organisations over the forthcoming weeks, Schools Week and EduWeek Jobs will be offering the following:

- **Free recruitment advertising for Coronavirus cover roles** at education settings remaining open to support key-workers
- **On all online listings**
 - A **free of charge** extension by up to 8 weeks after the closing date
- **On all adverts within the Schools Week digital edition**
 - A **free of charge** second insertion of your advert

For more information, contact
clare.halliday@schoolsweek.co.uk
or 020 3432 1397.