

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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

Revealed: the DfE's key coronavirus advisers



P9

'Ofsted will play its part in the recovery'



P20

'Phased return is vital to make up what children have lost'



P21

'Recovery calls for a new way of doing policy'

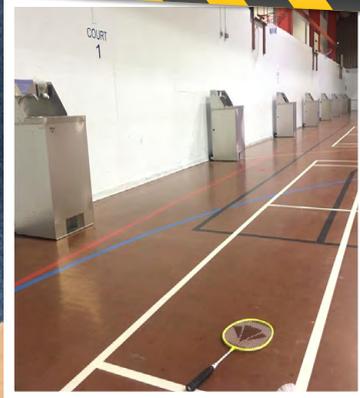
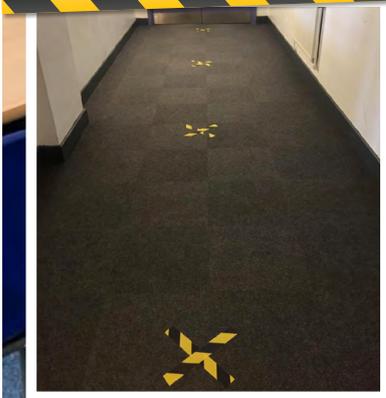


P22

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FRIDAY, MAY 22 2020 | EDITION 215

## MIND THE GAP: welcome to covid-19 secure schools



PAGES 5-6

## Demands for BBC to remove lockdown lessons by summer

- Supplier concerns that broadcaster is breaching competition laws
- Social mobility champions warn poor would be hit hardest
- National broadcaster's lessons get 5.2 million weekly views

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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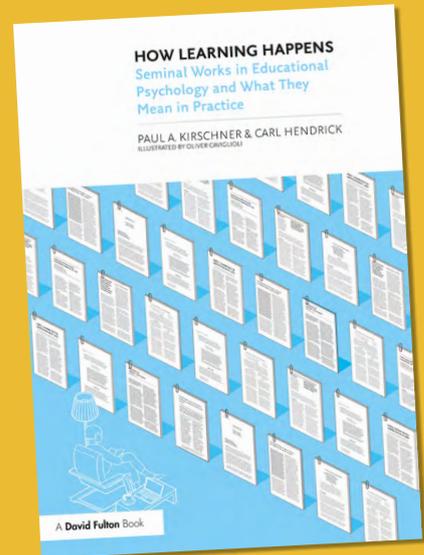
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### Myatt: Don't rewrite your curriculum. Rethink your values



Pages 23



### Review: Is this the book to end all edu-myths?

Pages 25



### Lockdown diaries. After the PM's announcement

Page 24



### Research: Can we educate teachers remotely?

Page 27

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News

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# SAGE advice imminent, but track and trace concerns

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

Scientific advice that informed the government's decision to push for the reopening of schools from June 1 is set to be published today.

School leaders have been asking to see the advice provided to the Department for Education by the government's Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies (SAGE) for weeks, following Boris Johnson's announcement earlier this month.

Headteachers have previously warned that without the full advice, they cannot be expected to make important decisions about how to bring pupils back safely.

It comes after unions left a briefing with government scientific and medical advisers last week with questions still unanswered.

The publication follows a tumultuous week for the government's reopening plans.

Johnson insisted the government's test, track and trace programme will be in place before some pupils start returning to schools on June 1, despite apparent delays to the NHS's contact-tracing app, which has been trialled on the Isle of Wight.

The importance of the scheme being in place before schools reopen was laid bare by the government's deputy chief scientific adviser, Dame Angela McLean.

McLean told Tuesday's Downing Street briefing that scientists had been "clear in our advice that changes to lockdown as we modelled them need a highly effective track, trace and isolate system to be in place".

More than 25 councils have now also expressed serious reservations about the reopening proposal.

More than half a dozen councils have even gone as far as advising schools in their areas not to open at the beginning of next month. Some areas are proposing start dates later in June, with others saying headteachers would make different decisions based on their own circumstances (see feature on page 17-19).

There are also signs of a growing schism between school leaders and other school staff, as unions representing teachers and support staff warned heads of the "potential liability you are exposing yourself to by following the current



Dame Angela McLean

deeply flawed guidance".

A joint letter, seen by Schools Week, from the National Education Union, Unite, Unison and GMB was sent on Wednesday night to headteachers to make clear that the DfE has placed the wider reopening from June "on the shoulder of the employer and on you".

It reminds them that the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, as well as four other pieces of legislation, "places a duty on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare" of their staff. It goes on to state that the unions will be advising members of their "legal rights, should any member contract Covid-19 upon returning to school".

Reports earlier this week stated more than 50 schools in France, where education settings have only recently started to reopen in areas with low infection rates, have had to close because of suspected or confirmed Covid-19 cases.

French TV channel BFM reported that cases among parents and pupils had prompted the closures.

However, France's education minister, Jean-Michel Blanquer, told EU leaders this

week that keeping children at home presented a greater risk than sending them back to school.

Then yesterday, Scotland moved to put further distance between its policy and the UK government's, announcing its schools will not return until August.

Dr Patrick Roach, general secretary of the NASUWT teaching union, this week called on ministers to "engage in urgent and detailed discussions" with his union in order to achieve the aim of returning pupils to school "as quickly as possible", but only once it is safe for staff and children themselves.

"These discussions will rely on all the scientific evidence from SAGE being made available to us and to employers," he warned.

Yesterday, the government bowed to pressure, with the prime minister's spokesperson agreeing to publish the SAGE guidance today.



Boris Johnson

PA

# Investigation

## It may be back to school, but not as we know it

**SAMANTHA BOOTH**

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Many school leaders regard the government's guidance on reopening schools as vague at best. So what are their plans as the June 1 deadline looms...

Schools are planning to make pupils walk through trays filled with disinfectant and check their temperatures with infra-red thermometers to ensure they can safely reopen from June 1.

Leaders tell of their preparations as the government's plans come under more pressure with councils rebelling, unions issuing legal warnings and doubts over whether a national track and trace system will be up and running in time.

### Pupils could be washing their hands eight times a day

The government admits it's not possible for younger children to socially distance in the classroom, so schools are instead focusing on strict hygiene measures.

Huntington School, in York, has converted its sports hall into a hand-washing zone, while Steve Kenning, the chief executive of the Aspirations Academies Trust in the south of England, believes pupils could be washing their hands up to eight times a day at school.

At Park Schools Federation, in Nottinghamshire, children will have to walk through "shallow trays" filled with disinfectant.

Steve Hewitt-Richards, the federation's executive principal, said it was a "simple way" to ensure the virus was not transferred into school property.

Pupils should also come in clean clothes every day, with uniform requirements relaxed. The school is running a four-day week, allowing it to close every Wednesday for a deep clean.

Government guidance says schools should "frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly", with soft furnishings and toys removed from classrooms.

A checklist issued by the National Education Union (NEU) even suggests library books be "regularly sanitised".

Meanwhile, the Harris Federation has bought 20 infra-red thermometers for each of its secondary schools and ten for each primary. The thermometers, which cost about £65 each, allow "quick and accurate" checks on pupils' temperatures.

Sir Dan Moynihan, the federation's chief



A classroom at Dashwood Primary in Banbury which has been rearranged to follow Govt guidelines for wider opening June 1st.

executive, said they would "ensure no one is in school if they pose any avoidable risk to others".

However, government guidance says schools do not have to take children's temperatures as routine testing is not a "reliable method" for identifying coronavirus.

The NEU has also advised members to ask how social distancing will be managed if they are expected to take temperatures, for instance if "queues build up". But Kevin Courtney, the union's joint general secretary, said contactless thermometers "will assist" keeping people safe.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, praised schools for doing an "enormous" amount of preparation for wider opening.

### How do you manage the logistics?

Guidance suggests primary classes be cut in half and capped at 15 pupils. However, schools say this figure is unworkable.

Greenwood Academies Trust, which undertook risk assessments at its 35 schools, many in central England, found it "highly unlikely" 15 pupils could be "safely accommodated".

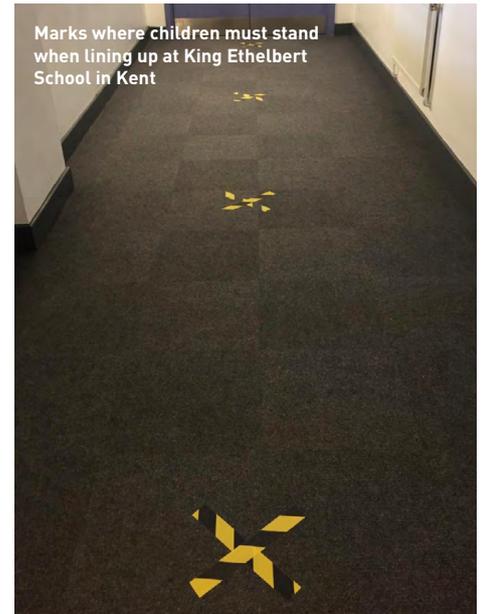
Instead, it said that a maximum of eight pupils was more likely, but could be less in some academies. Each academy would decide whether it would reopen.

Statistics show the average size for one-teacher primary classes is 27.1, leaving some schools unable to cope should all pupils in reception, year 1 and 6 return.

The number of pupils has also been rising. An average state-funded primary school has 282 pupils, an increase of 43 pupils – or more than 1.5 extra classes per school – since 2009.

Park Schools told parents they might have to

Marks where children must stand when lining up at King Ethelbert School in Kent



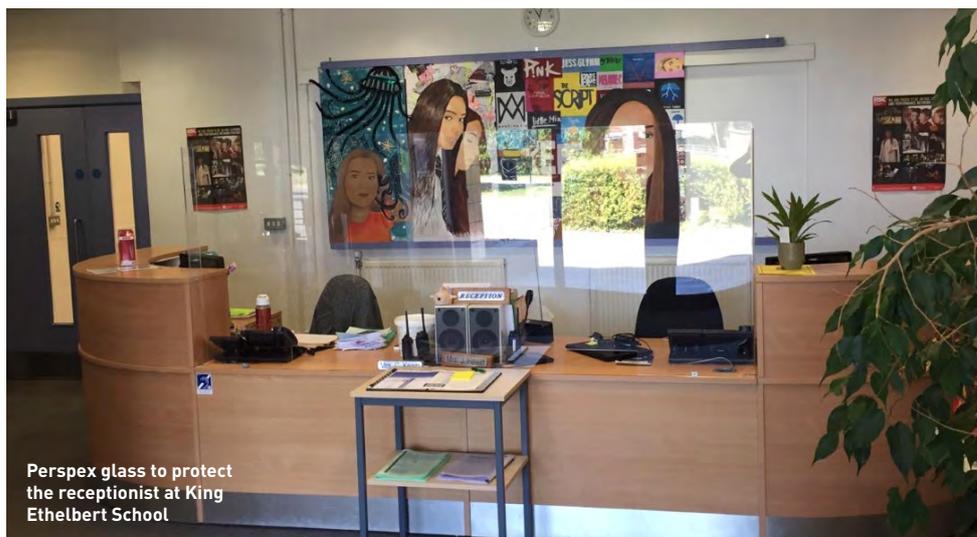
reduce the number of days each child came into school to ensure social distancing plans were not breached. Children should also be dressed for outside learning, highlighting that the virus was less likely to spread outdoors.

Problems over space will be felt most in some of the newer free schools. Schools Week reported last year that almost half of those opened in the past three years were in temporary accommodation, with most still not in a permanent home.

Wootton Park School, a free school still based in modular buildings in Northampton, is considering pupils eat lunch outside. But Dan Rosser, its principal, said: "We are very fortunate [compared to other schools] to have an all-through school, so we get that additional space.

Continued on next page

# Investigation



Perspex glass to protect the receptionist at King Ethelbert School

For a temporary space, we've got a very good footprint."

The school is expecting 80 pupils to return. The field will be sectioned off to ensure pupils remain in their "bubbles" of small groups.

Schools are also coming up with plans for toilet breaks. At Fleetwood High School, in Lancashire, only two sets of toilets will be used when it reopens to year 10s on June 4. Teachers will use radios to let the duty senior leader know that a child is going to use a toilet, which will be cleaned hourly.

## But what will schools be teaching?

Guidance is vague on what primary schools should be teaching, although it's clear that it won't be a full curriculum. Instead it suggests reteaching material if children have fallen behind.

Harris has drawn up a "recovery curriculum" to map and address any lost skills and knowledge.

However, a spokesperson said its approach focused on mental wellbeing. "Everything we have seen in the past few months has shown us that too many pupils have had an awful experience of lockdown.

"We have fielded daily cries for help from families unable to cope financially or mentally, with the resilience of children sorely tested by a sea of adult anxiety."

At Cliftonville Primary School, in Margate, year 6 pupils will start their day with a wellbeing activity before focusing on a project to build on skills in preparation for secondary school. The afternoon will be more creative, such as art, drama or PE.

Meanwhile, the Department for Education has yet to publish any detailed guidance for secondary schools, which are expected to give year 10 and 12 pupils some "face-to-face learning" from June 1.

At Coastal Academies Trust in Kent, Kate Greig,

its executive headteacher, said it was planning a rota with each year 10 set attending for one morning a week. Each set would be split into two groups and initial lessons would concentrate on English, maths and science.

Consilium Academies, which has eight schools in the north of England, will run one-to-one appointments for each pupil with up to three teachers. The weekly, one-hour appointments will start from June 8.

But David Clayton, the trust's chief executive, said plans were "fluid" as "what we are asked to do could change".

Meanwhile, in guidance to its schools this week, Liverpool council said a "quick return" to the full curriculum was unlikely. Instead, schools should prioritise subjects for a "slimmed-down" curriculum across in-school and distance-learning.

Behaviour policies are also being amended. In a letter to parents Park Schools said "failure to comply" with safety measures would lead to the "temporary" withdrawal of a child's place.

Hewitt-Richards said: "The likelihood of this is very small, but we wanted to make sure our position was clear. This would not be a period of exclusion."

At Fleetwood, any pupil that persistently and consistently "flouted the rules" would be excluded after all other steps were taken.

Tom Bennett, the government's behaviour tsar, wrote in a blog that during "times of heightened risk to our health, it is important that students (and staff) are made aware that unhygienic behaviour has to be reclassified from a misdemeanour to something much more serious".

## Legally, where do schools stand?

Unions have fired a Covid-19 "liability" warning shot to school leaders, quoting health and safety laws that "you are exposing yourself by following



The handwashing zone at Huntington School in York

the current deeply flawed guidance".

The letter, signed by the NEU, Unite, Unison and GMB, said their members would be advised of their "legal rights should any member contract Covid-19 upon returning to school".

But leaders have shown little confidence in the government's guidance.

A caveat added last week to the DfE's "Guidance for educational settings" said it should only be treated "as a guide".

"In the event of any conflict between any applicable legislation (including the health and safety legislation) and this guidance, the applicable legislation shall prevail."

The DfE said it was not "overriding any existing legal obligations with our guidance, health and safety legislation still applies within work settings, and employers are responsible for consulting their employees on this".

Andrew Banks, a partner at the law firm Stone King, told *Schools Week* that it was "difficult to see" how prosecution would follow if someone associated with a school contracted coronavirus if it "ensures that its [health and safety] guidance is followed and its risk assessments are suitable and sufficient".

This remained the case, despite the new caveat.

But if a school did not follow the guidance or there were "other shortcomings", it was more likely the Health and Safety Executive would "engage to ensure they tighten their processes rather than move straight towards an investigation with a view to prosecution".

"It is important to emphasise that the priority and primary purpose in all of this is the safety of all children and staff."

## News

## Kitchens feel the heat of June 1 return



FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

School kitchens face a planning “nightmare” for the return of pupils, with uncertainty and concern over numbers, food availability, rising prices and a lack of government guidance.

The Department for Education has said school kitchens should provide meals for all pupils returning on June 1.

Official guidance, however, is brief. Following the partial closure of schools in March, the government urged schools to continue paying their suppliers “as normal” to keep the supply chain moving and to protect jobs.

However, data from LACA, the body that represents the school catering industry, shows that 57 per cent of its members’ employees have continued working, while 24 per cent have been furloughed.

This is despite the “majority of schools” continuing to pay their food suppliers. LACA said about 5 per cent had not – “something that we are concerned by”.

Smaller catering organisations told *Schools Week* of uncertainty over plans to reopen schools.

Caroline Morgan, the chief executive of Local Food Links, a social enterprise that provides meals to 56 Dorset schools from its four kitchens, said that planning for phased return from June 1 was “a bit of a nightmare”.

“It is going to be complex. Although overall numbers will be smaller, some schools want packed lunches only, some want hot meals and some want both, [including] packed meals for vulnerable families to collect.”

She said the government “should be very clear with schools about plans for feeding pupils”.

Guidance states that schools should provide meals for “all children in school”, with food “available free of charge” for pupils who meet the criteria for free school meals (FSM).

“To ensure food is available for pupils who attend, educational settings are expected to reopen their kitchens and ensure that meals are able to be prepared and served safely,” it says.

No further details have been provided. The Department for Education was approached for comment.

Sam Ward, a school food consultant who manages five in-house catering services across an academy trust and supports three other in-house operations in the south west, said her team had been providing weekly food parcels for FSM families.

She said the plan for schools to reopen presented “so many uncertainties”, including how caterers would provide onsite meals and food for FSM pupils not in school.

“It will be really tricky for caterers with economies of scale, providing for lower pupil numbers.

“We are working on tight budgets as it is, with food costs being 90p to £1 per pupil, so rely on volume of numbers. We have in-house operations across our trust and staffing levels, as in all settings, are based on average daily meal numbers.” She also feared price rises.

Ward said caterers desperately needed planning time before June 1 “as our local wholesalers have had to change to a retail model to survive, so we will need to liaise with them re stock”.

“Hopefully after all this planning, organising and potential ordering of stock they will give us ample notice if it’s not happening, and not an announcement on a Sunday evening for a Monday.”

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## Cleaners need safety reassurance too, says union

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools have been told to ensure their cleaners are safe and protected as pupils return.

Unite, which represents thousands of school support staff including cleaners, has reminded its members of their right to leave or refuse to return to work if they feel they are in danger. The union said it would back members who suffer any “detriment or dismissal” for doing so.

It follows reports in the national media that workers have been asked by cleaning firms to return to work without proper personal protective equipment, and that some cleaners have even faced the sack for questioning the lack of PPE or refusing to work without it.

Government guidance on plans for the phased return of pupils states that schools will be asked to implement “a range of protective measures”, including “increased cleaning” to facilitate the safe return of children.

Jim Kennedy, Unite’s national officer for local government, told *Schools Week* cleaners had an “absolutely essential role to play in reopening schools” and were “no different” from any other staff in terms of the protection needed.

He said cleaning contractors “should be required to maintain exactly the same standards” as schools themselves, and said responsibility to ensure all cleaning staff are protected by their employers “rests with schools”.

“Every person who walks through those doors, whether they’re catering staff, cleaners, pupils, parents or teachers, must be absolutely assured that the workplace and the environment is safe.”

The union’s guidance reminds members that section 44 of the Employment Rights Act protects employees from detriment or dismissal if they leave or refuse to return to their place of work because they believe they are in “serious and imminent danger” which they cannot “reasonably be expected to have averted”.

Section 100 of the act also states that employees have the same protection if they “took (or proposed to take) appropriate steps to protect themselves or other persons in danger”.

# Lay off criticising teachers, says Spielman

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER  
@SCHOOLSWEEK

Ofsted's chief inspector has said it is "profoundly disappointing" to see commentators trying to "polarise" the back-to-school debate by "portraying teachers in a negative light".

Teachers' safety concerns about returning to the classroom have prompted criticism from national newspaper columnists and some politicians.

Writing for *Schools Week*, Amanda Spielman said it was "very clear to me that teachers want to teach and the current situation is as professionally frustrating as it is personally concerning".

She also said that criticism of the level of home learning provision was "unhelpful".

Lord Adonis, a former Labour schools minister, recently called on Ofsted to name and shame schools not providing adequate online learning.

Spielman said: "Many schools have made a tremendous effort from a standing start, and

EXCLUSIVE



they are doing what they can in the absence of clear guidelines.

"When calls have been made for Ofsted to inspect home learning, I have been very clear that there are no standards to judge against and little clarity over what schools are required to do in these extraordinary circumstances."

She reiterated calls for the government to set "clear expectations" for schools and parents about what could be expected as "some children [will] need to be educated remotely for some time to come".

"That needs to be part of the government plan if not this term then certainly next, so that schools, parents and children know what is

expected of them."

Inspections have been paused this term to allow schools to concentrate on the pandemic. But Ofsted has started to consult parents on when they think they should start again (see story below).

Spielman said that Ofsted would "play its part" in the "period of recovery" when schools started to readmit pupils.

"When we do pick inspection back up, we will need to meet schools where they are, focus on building confidence in parents and supporting the process of recovery," she said. "To help us, we will be working with government, unions, professional representatives and parent groups to gather views."

The road to reopening was a "difficult balancing act", but that as the crisis abated it would be "schools once again in the forefront – helping a unique generation of young people regain the confidence, resilience and optimism that a great education provides".

[Read Spielman's full piece, page 20](#)

## Ofsted's questionnaire for parents' panel goes viral

SAMANTHA BOOTH  
@SAMANTHAJBOTH



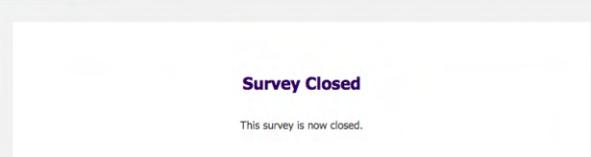
Ofsted has closed applications for new members to its parents' panel after a survey on when inspections should restart was shared on social media.

The inspectorate asked the panel, which helps to shape its work, for its views on whether inspections should restart as soon as pupils go back to school - or wait for up to a year.

It also asked parents what impact restarting inspections would have on their confidence in sending children back to school, and what inspectors should prioritise.

However, the survey closed on Monday – three days early – after the watchdog was "inundated with thousands of unsolicited responses".

The survey asked for the email used to register with the panel, but it appears any address could be used to reply to the questions.



Ofsted said it would focus on the responses from panel members. The others would be disregarded.

The option to join the panel disappeared from the government's website on Monday afternoon, although it was shown on a cached page of the site from earlier in the day.

Ofsted said it was "not accepting new members" of the panel "at this time", but did not confirm why.

The Education Policy Institute think tank wants Ofsted inspections suspended until next year to help disadvantaged pupils "catch up" when schools reopen.

When Ofsted asked parents how soon it

should start inspecting, answers ranged from straight away to a full academic year.

When it asked what should be prioritised, answers included quality of education, teacher wellbeing, pupil behaviour and how well the school was supporting the most disadvantaged children get back in education.

An Ofsted spokesperson said it asked the panel a "few questions" to help understand how parents felt about what was happening in schools.

"As you would expect, we're listening to lots of groups – from teaching unions to parents – about how and when we might return to something approaching routine inspection.

"These are ongoing conversations. We're keeping our options open and no decisions have been made. The questionnaire was only ever intended for our parents' panel, but the link was shared on social media and we were inundated with thousands of unsolicited responses."

News

EXCLUSIVE

# Meet the DfE's key coronavirus advisers

Guidance for how primary schools can reopen safely was published by the Department for Education last week.

The guidance stated it was "designed by school leaders for school leaders". But who has a seat at the table?

The DfE provided a full list of its advisers, who were approached individually by the department to sit on the panel as they could offer a "variety of views". The department said they also consulted with a "wide range of channels", including unions, a wider group of educationalists and existing stakeholder groups.



### Ian Bauckham, CEO, Tenax Schools Trust

As well as running the eight-school Church of England academy trust, Bauckham is

a regular on DfE advisory panels, including on character education and the new sex and education guidance. He also sits on the boards of exams regulator Ofqual.



### Richard Gill, CEO, Arthur Terry Learning Partnership

Alongside running the Midlands-based 14-trust

school, Gill was last year appointed chair of the Teaching Schools Council, the national body representing all teaching schools in England.



### Martin Pratt, executive director of supporting people, Camden Council

Pratt joined Camden Council

in 2014 as director for children, schools and families, having worked in children's services departments at Luton, Central Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire councils. He is also chair for the Greater London region of the Association of Directors of Children's Services.



### Sir Jon Coles, CEO, United Learning Group

Coles leads United Learning, which is the largest academy trust in the country. He

previously worked for the DfE, including as director general for schools and then education standards, where he was responsible for areas including the national curriculum review and National Challenge.



### Becky Francis, CEO, Education Endowment Foundation

Francis is an academic who specialises in educational

inequalities. She has headed up the Education Endowment Foundation since January. Prior to that she was director of the UCL Institute of Education.



### Jonathan Simons, director at Public First

Simons heads up the education department at the policy and PR firm. He

previously worked as head of education at right-leaning think-tank Policy Exchange and was head of education in the prime minister's Strategy Unit, when Gordon Brown was PM.



### Angela Cox, director of education at Leeds Diocese

Cox has been at the diocese, which oversees the provision

of Catholic education across eight council areas, for nearly ten years. She previously worked in the education team at Leeds City Council.



### Rowena Hackwood, CEO, David Ross Education Trust

Hackwood joined DRET, one of the country's system-

leader trusts, with 35 schools across the country, in 2017. She was previously an education director at outsourcing giant Capita. She is set to join the Astrea academy trust this summer as its new CEO.



### Mrunal Sisodia, co-chair of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums

Sisodia joined NNPCF, which represents over 150 parent carer forums, in 2016. Prior to that he was a director at the Leonard Cheshire Disability charity.



### Susan Douglas, CEO, Eden Academy Trust

Douglas has led the six-school trust since 2012.

She is also a senior schools advisor at the British

Council, providing expertise on education programmes involving ministries of education, school leaders and teachers across approximately 40 countries.



### Martyn Oliver, CEO, Outwood Grange Academy Trust

Oliver has led OGAT, which runs 32 academies in the

north of England, since 2016. The trust has been praised by ministers for its educational outcomes, and has also led the integrated curriculum and financial planning tool, favoured by ministers to help schools in trouble to balance the books.



### Ed Vainker, executive principal, Reach Academy

Vainker is co-founder of the 'outstanding' free school in

Feltham. He also helped set up the Reach Children's Hub, which offers cradle-to-career support for the area's youngsters, and was one of the team behind the Oak National Academy. He has also sat on numerous DfE expert groups.

# Calls to end BBC's lockdown lessons will hit poor hardest

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

EXCLUSIVE

The BBC is under pressure to axe access to its home-learning lessons – used by millions of children during the coronavirus crisis – over fears they will squeeze commercial curriculum providers out of the market.

The British Educational Suppliers Association is seeking written assurances that the national broadcaster will wind down its beefed-up education offerings amid claims they may breach competition laws.

One of the demands is for the BBC to remove lessons from its Bitesize website from the first day of the summer holidays.

But Lee Elliot Major, professor of social mobility at the University of Exeter, said: “Any move to withdraw the BBC’s online resources for home-learning would be a retrograde step as it is increasingly clear that children will be continuing to learn online for an extended period, stretching into the new academic year.”

The BBC’s additional education content is a key part of the government’s offerings for pupils who are unable to attend school. BBC director general Tony Hall said it was the “biggest education effort the BBC has ever undertaken”.

Figures released by the BBC show its Bitesize website registered 5.2 million hits in the first week of lessons.

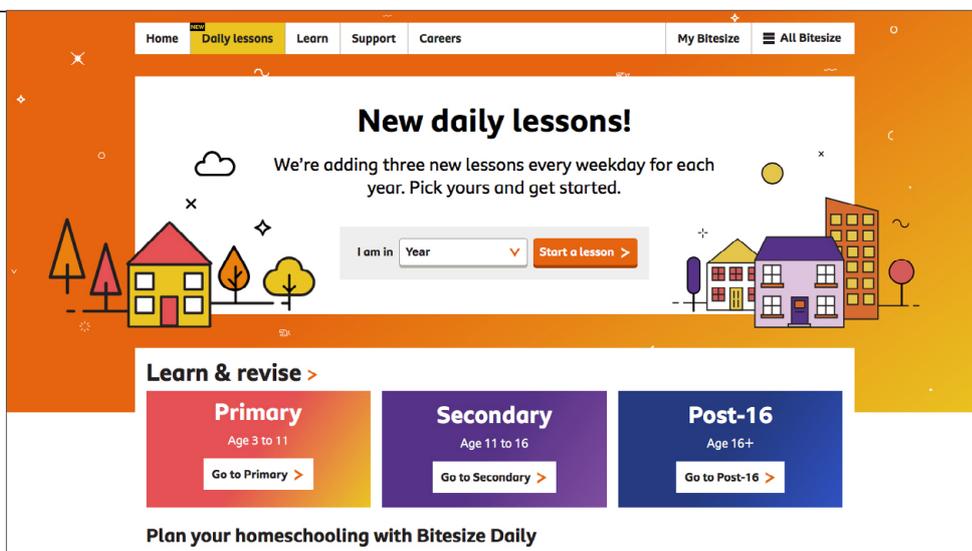
James Turner, chief executive of the Sutton Trust, said the BBC’s service was “especially important” for teaching the poorest pupils, particularly the lessons on TV for those without their own phone, laptop or internet connection.

“The impact of school closures will not be temporary, nor should the spirit of collective endeavour and national effort that has been so good to see over the last few weeks,” Turner added.

But BESA wants the BBC to put in writing its commitment to stepping away from the market when schools reopen.

The trade association, which represents 400 UK online curriculum content providers and education publishers, outlined five demands in a letter sent to Hall in April. It is understood the BBC has yet to officially respond.

BESA wants the BBC to start removing all additional home-learning content (known as



“tombstoning”) from the Bitesize webpage and app from the first day of the summer holidays (July 22). They also want a content lock on iPlayer to ensure that once schools reopen this can’t be used as a teaching aid in schools.

On the former, it’s understood the BBC has committed verbally to removing the content, but will wait for further information on when children will return to ensure they are not left without support.

BESA, along with education software firm RM, took legal action against the BBC in 2003 after the government awarded the broadcaster £150 million to provide free material to schools under the “digital curriculum”.

BESA reminded the BBC of its legal obligation, highlighted during that case by the European Commission, that it is “not exempt” from competition law and should set out how its education service will be “distinctive and complementary” to those provided by the commercial sector.

Caroline Wright, director general of BESA, said while they are supportive of the BBC’s work during the crisis, they want to see a “normal operating process” after the closure period to “reduce the risk of permanent market distortion”.

“This is important to help safeguard the UK’s strong history of quality educational content provision for schools and learners over the longer period. Teachers and learners in the UK benefit from a wide choice of content from many high-quality educational publishers because of the UK’s healthy and competitive commercial marketplace.”



When launching the new service in April, the BBC promised 14 weeks of educational programmes and lessons to “every household in the country”. As well as the online lessons, that included daily education programmes and content such as videos, quizzes, podcasts and articles.

In the letter, Wright stated while she understood such a move was necessary, the BBC should now “give serious consideration to the future of those educational suppliers whose main service offering consists of curriculum-mapped audio-visual content”.

The government has also funded the Oak National Academy, an online classroom providing lessons for homebound pupils.

When asked if BESA had similar views on that project, Wright said it was a “very helpful initiative” that the group would be “pleased to support”. But she pointed out that “when back to normal” any government funding for such initiatives should be “as clear and transparent as possible”.

The DfE did not want to comment. A spokesperson for the BBC they’ve had “very positive and open conversations with BESA... We are thankful of theirs and their members’ continued support, which underpins so many of our lessons, and look forward to continuing to work with them as the service rolls on.”

News



EXCLUSIVE

Schools turn to community for laptops

FREDDIE WHITTAKER @FCDWHITTAKER

Schools and education charities are asking philanthropists and local businesses to provide devices for disadvantaged youngsters as the wait for Department for Education hardware continues.

The government has pledged "over 200,000" devices for disadvantaged year 10 pupils, care leavers and children who have a social worker.

But Schools Week revealed earlier this month that many schools' allocations have fallen well short of what is needed. Ministers have admitted some children may not get a device until well into next month.

The Beckmead Trust, which runs eight settings in south London for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, recently raised £144,000 from "charitable and philanthropic" sources to pay for Chromebooks and dongles. These will go to 800 children in its own settings, and in pupil referral units, special schools and local authority services for vulnerable children outside the trust.

Dr Jonty Clark, Beckmead's chief executive, said he understood why the government's scheme had been targeted at certain year groups, but his trust "needed to provide across all our students because of their specific needs".

"This wasn't just for academic reasons but because we needed to maintain our attachments to our students - they are incredibly vulnerable and, for most of them, school is the only place they are truly safe."

Last week, a senior DfE official warned that the

the coronavirus outbreak and associated school closures could widen the attainment gap by up to 75 per cent.

The Tutor Trust in the north of England, which trains university students as tutors, has secured £10,000 through the Northern Powerhouse Partnership to help about 20 disadvantaged pupils.

Nick Bent, the charity's chief executive, told Schools Week that most vulnerable young people had been "desperate to keep working with their tutors, but couldn't get online".

Private businesses and some individuals have also donated hardware to help pupils get online.

Cambois Primary School in Blyth, Northumberland, received 50 refurbished laptops from the National Grid, while four schools in West Sussex were given 40 laptops by Ferry Farm Community Solar, according to local news reports.

The Bohunt Education Trust received 111 devices and cash donations after it appealed for help.

And in Brixton, south London, Bell Ribeiro-Addy, a local MP, has collected spare laptops and tablets from the community to give to schools in the area.

Pressed this week on the progress of its own scheme, the DfE insisted there was "no delay". Deliveries "have started this month and will continue in June".

"The department is prioritising the delivery of devices to the most vulnerable children first - children with a social worker and care leavers. This will be followed by devices for disadvantaged year 10 children who do not have access to a device through other means."

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Government suspends free travel for London children

SAMANTHA BOOTH @SAMANTHAJBOTH

Free travel for children in London will be temporarily suspended as part of the government's bailout deal for Transport for London.

Of the six million journeys made each day by bus in the capital, around 1.5 million are for education purposes, and 200,000 tube journeys are made to school each day.

Children in London are entitled to Oyster cards offering free travel on different modes of transport, depending on their age.

Announcing the suspension, the Department for Transport said "special arrangements" will be made to ensure children eligible under the national legislation can still travel to school for free.

Details of this are yet to be announced but under government rules, local authorities are required to provide free school transport for certain groups of children.

Those eligible for free school transport under national rules include children aged eight and under whose nearest school is further than two miles away. This rises to a distance of three miles for pupils aged between eight and 16.

There is also an entitlement for other groups, such as SEND children and families on low incomes.

The DfT said these changes would take place "as soon as practicable". TfL is yet to confirm how long these would be in place.

The changes are one of several agreements TfL reached with the government as part of a £1.6 billion pay-out to help run public transport for the next four and half months.

Other conditions include suspension of free travel for over-60s in the morning peak, and requiring TfL to collect fares on buses while ensuring driver safety.

Grant Shapps, transport secretary, said: "These conditions are needed to avoid crowding and reduce the exposure of vulnerable groups."

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said coronavirus has had a "catastrophic impact" on TfL's finances, seeing fares income fall by 90 per cent in two months

## News: in brief

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### Ofsted 'outstanding' for Hull UTC

A 14 to 19 university technical college in Hull has been dubbed a "guiding light in the education sector" after being rated 'outstanding' in its first Ofsted inspection.

Ron Dearing UTC, which opened in September 2017, received grade ones across the board in a report published yesterday.

Inspectors said pupils received an "exceptional" quality of education and heaped praise on the college's 100 per cent positive progression, a result of its "considerable" links to industry.

According to the UTC's 2018-19 accounts, 94 of its 117 year 11 students progressed to its sixth form, 14 to an FE college, eight to an apprenticeship and one to employment.

And of the 86 year 13 pupils on roll last year, 28 started university, 22 went into employment with one of the UTC's partners, 29 to an apprenticeship and seven to other employment.

Ron Dearing, which had 506 students at the time of the inspection in March against a capacity for 600, is the first UTC to be given a grade one under Ofsted's new inspection framework. It becomes only the third 'outstanding' UTC across the country.

Sarah Pashley its principal, said Ofsted



"raised the bar" under its new framework which "makes the achievement even sweeter".

Ofsted's report said the UTC had the "hallmarks of a school that could be viewed as a guiding light in the educational sector".

Inspectors reported that the curriculum was "superbly" designed. A-level results in 2019 put the UTC in the top 1 per cent of schools nationally.

Attendance rates were found to be "much" higher than the national average with no exclusions since it opened.

The UTC's patron, the former education secretary Alan Johnson, said he never doubted the college would be a success.

### Demand falls for free sanitary products

Schools are being encouraged to keep providing free sanitary products for pupils after the coronavirus outbreak dented take-up of its scheme to tackle period poverty.

Phs, which received £11.4 million from the government to deliver the scheme, said demand was "understandably lower" during lockdown, although a "significant number" of education organisations were still ordering products.

Thousands of products have been delivered to more than 200 schools and colleges in the past seven weeks, it said.

However, Warren Edmondson, the managing director of phs Direct, said that uptake was increasing as schools created "drop-in points and care packages for learners staying at home".

"We are actively encouraging schools and colleges to keep providing free products to students to ensure access continues for students who need them; helping to create period equality for all."

Schools do not receive money directly for the scheme. Instead each school is allocated a certain amount, depending on pupil numbers, when it orders through an online portal.

Research commissioned by phs found that 52 per cent of girls have missed school or college because of their period.

And research published this month by Plan International UK, the children's charity, found that a third of the 1,010 girls aged 14-21 it surveyed had trouble paying for or accessing sanitary wear during April.

Phs said contactless delivery was available and orders could be diverted to neighbouring schools or colleges.

### £10m fund for SEN pupils at home

The government has set up an emergency £10 million fund to help the home education of about 19,000 children with special educational needs.

The announcement comes alongside confirmation that the £26 million Family Fund will continue next year (2020-21).

The fund typically provides £400 to £500 to help low-income families with seriously ill or disabled children to pay for equipment, goods or services. The government estimated 75,000 families will get support next year.

A new pot of £10 million, provided by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, has been committed specifically to the "unique difficulties" presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

The cash will help families educate and look after children who are "staying at home more than usual". It could be used for computers, specialist equipment or educational toys.

A Department for Education adviser revealed last week the attainment gap between poorer pupils and their peers could rise by 75 per cent if schools stay closed to most pupils.

Vicky Ford, the children's minister, said: "I know that these unprecedented times may put additional pressure on families, particularly those whose children have the most complex needs. These parents deserve some extra help to look after and educate them at home."

However, there may be a delay in receiving the cash because the fund has fewer staff who have to respond to more enquiries.

According to statistics released last year, 1.3 million pupils have special educational needs (14.9 per cent of the total pupil population). The number has risen for three years running.

But school funding for SEND pupils has been slashed by more than a sixth since 2015.

Steve Broach, a barrister at the law firm 39 Essex Chambers, said while the additional funding was welcome, "disabled children should be able to benefit from entitlements to essential support, not have to rely on charity".

The government has been criticised for a slow response and not doing enough to provide additional support for children off school.

News

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# Lack of records thwarts abuse investigation

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

A lack of records from a collapsed free school hampered an investigation into the alleged sexual abuse of a child with learning difficulties, a damning review has found.

A Manchester Safeguarding Partnership report into allegations that the child was abused by their step-grandfather also said that an inability to contact former staff – alongside a lack of forensic evidence – contributed to not being able to secure a conviction.

The school, which is not named, closed after Ofsted rated it 'inadequate'. The rating followed safeguarding failures.

In a 2018 investigation into the records of closed academies, Schools Week found little guidance or official process for shutting schools.

Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said: "This is a truly disturbing report to read that clearly finds that a particularly vulnerable child was put at risk by a free school's safeguarding failure."

The report said the mother of the child, referred to as "child Q1", chose the free school as it was small and better suited to her child's needs.

Before enrolment, the child's primary had "unsuccessfully" tried to engage with the secondary free school over sending on educational files. It meant the mother had to take photocopies into the school.

But the review found there was "no evidence" to show these records were ever used to provide either educational or social support, a "failure" that put the child "at risk".

Information from the records was also not part of the child's files when the school closed, with "minimal information" transferred to the pupil's new school.

The report stated: "This lack of information would have contributed to staff at the [free] school not identifying concerns relating to Child Q1 for some considerable time."

The decision not to prosecute the step-grandfather had "caused distress" to the child and their family, the report said.

Courtney said the findings were "distressing and worrying... The failures identified in this report are not simply those of the individual



school, they are also systemic problems that have plagued the whole free schools and academies project."

The review also found it impossible to locate former staff at the school because of the "closure, and the difficulty the police and other agencies have had in contacting them".

Vicky Beer, the regional schools commissioner for Lancashire and West Yorkshire, also did not respond to "several" attempts to take part in the review. Courtney labelled this "truly shocking".

The 'inadequate' Ofsted inspection found a "lack of up-to-date policies and procedures, inexperienced staff and lack of training".

The review stated the council then asked for a section II audit to show that the school had regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, the school did not respond to requests to submit to the audit.

The review recommended that the failings over lost records and "possible breaches of the Data Protection Act" when free schools and academies closed were raised with the government. There was no further information on the data breach claims.

Charity law states that documents and records, such as board minutes, must be kept for three to six years.

The government said liquidators or administrators were responsible for ensuring that relevant documents were safeguarded after a closure, a service paid for from

the assets of the company.

The Department for Education did not respond to a request for comment.

Labour MP for Manchester Central Lucy Powell said the "deeply worrying safeguarding issues which must be investigated fully. Ministers must take necessary action to learn the lessons of the profound failures in our oversight and accountability system this has revealed."

Unity Howard, the director of the New Schools Network, said the school's failings were "clearly the direct result of poor leadership and governance, and it is right that the matter has been properly investigated".

She said it highlighted the importance of all parties working "collaboratively to ensure new schools are set up in a way to ensure a safe environment, with robust policies and open channels of communication".

"One of the many strengths of the free schools' programme is that where there have been failures, they have been addressed quickly, but it must be the case that if a school is closed their records are maintained for proper scrutiny."



Lucy Powell

# EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## School leaders are giving so much, it's time they got more back

If this were a normal term, we'd perhaps be signing off with a cheery message to enjoy your break next week before heading into the final stretch of the academic year.

But this hasn't been a normal term. And, as it stands, school leaders won't be getting much of a break next week.

The government's plans on reopening are currently hanging in the balance: there's no track-and-trace system, councils all over the country are refusing to reopen and unions are still in rebellion.

But, amid the loud noise, school leaders have been quietly going about transforming their schools into hygienic hubs - whether they are expecting pupils back next month or later.

And they'll continue to jump over those logistical, health and safety and moral hurdles throughout next week. For those pupils who won't be returning this year, schools will also continue to fine-tune their online learning offer - with an eye on the next

academic year, too.

The government is asking a hell of a lot from school leaders, but it hasn't given them much to go on: we're still waiting on the scientific evidence for reopening, and guidance has been vague and non-committal.

According to a poll in March, teachers were mostly working less during the lockdown. Just one in ten were working longer hours.

But nearly 30 per cent of headteachers were working longer hours (on top of an already pretty long working week).

The government is due to make a final call on Thursday on whether reopening will go ahead - just one school day before classrooms are set to reopen.

Whatever the decision - ministers need to do better for school leaders. They need better guidance, clearer instructions, and a better thought-out plan. It's the least they deserve.

SCHOOLS WEEK



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**ONS figures reveal 65 Covid-related deaths in education workforce**

**Maggie Conway**

Maybe the fact that schools are closed affects the numbers of deaths in the profession? I am very concerned that school support staff like cleaners and dinner ladies will be at risk. It takes much more than teachers to run an effective school.

**Schools won't be 'swarming with cases', says medical chief**

**Stuart**

Many teachers have not been in schools during the closure period and have only been on an occasional rota to work with children of key workers or vulnerable children. The death rate is of course going to be lower than other professions! If we are going to compare, then let's at least do it on a level playing field, with some sophistication.

I support getting children back into school, but we need to have assurances which still seem woolly about safety to do so, particularly when social distancing has already proved hard with small numbers of children in school.

One question that I haven't seen an answer to is how are schools going to welcome all year groups back – particularly in September, when presumably class sizes will still be small without a rota or blended approach to school and home-based learning. School estate cannot magically double in size!

**NEU says questions remain after government scientific briefing**

**Julie Ward,**

I think the unions have their own agenda, which is to make as much political gain as they can from this awful situation... The government has made it perfectly clear that the proposed steps are indeed cautious and not written in stone for June 1. If the R rate, or anything else, deems it unsafe for children, they will not be going back to school and that will not be anything to do with union action. Most UK parents get this.

**REPLY OF THE WEEK** **Jane Orr**

**Attainment gap could widen by 75 per cent, DfE official warns**

The most effective way to close the attainment gap is to identify the children who are struggling with literacy, in year 1, and to provide them with 3 x weekly support, in school, following a structured and cumulative synthetic phonics programme, taught in small groups (max 6 children), by a trained teacher.

Those children who are still underachieving by year 2 should have a formal assessment of their learning needs to diagnose their cognitive strengths and weaknesses. This will enable their teacher to plan an appropriate programme of remediation and to call in other professional support, if needed, for example, speech therapy, occupational therapy.

It is vital that children who are struggling are identified and assessed as early as possible. This is the only way to prevent a cycle of failure that leads to myriad emotional and behavioural issues that affect self-confidence, motivation and aspiration.

Without this support, children are regularly arriving at secondary school without the literacy skills to cope. These failing teenagers are nearly three and a half times more likely to be excluded from school.

As the attainment gap widens, due to Covid, and children with poor literacy skills are unable to access online learning, early intervention will be even more vital.



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

**Ofsted raps first school over Baker clause**

**Paul Holliday**

While applauding young people being well informed about the educational opportunities open to them, I would question whether Ofsted should act as the enforcer in these circumstances.

The fact that King Edward VII Science and Sport College teaches students aged 14 to 18 indicates that they have already considered their options at a non-traditional transfer age. Surely that is something Lord Baker advocates?

Given the apparent lack of any precedent for being "pulled up" by Ofsted for failing the Baker clause, this gives the appearance of an over-reaction.

The article indicates that there were other shortcomings in leadership and safeguarding, which is more reason not to conflate the issues.

Ofsted has enough to consider without adding duties that appear to be more honoured in the breach than in the observance nationally.

A photograph showing a young man with glasses and a woman with glasses leaning over a laptop, looking at the screen together in what appears to be a classroom or office setting.

# Create mentally healthy learning environments

CACHE is once again supporting Mental Health Awareness Week, which runs 18th-24th May.

The importance of this year's campaign has been amplified by COVID-19, and as the leading sector specialist, we want to support learners and educators to deal with the impact that the pandemic is having on mental health in the classroom and workplace.

Our qualifications can support you and your learners during Mental Health Awareness Week and beyond.

-  Designed by sector experts
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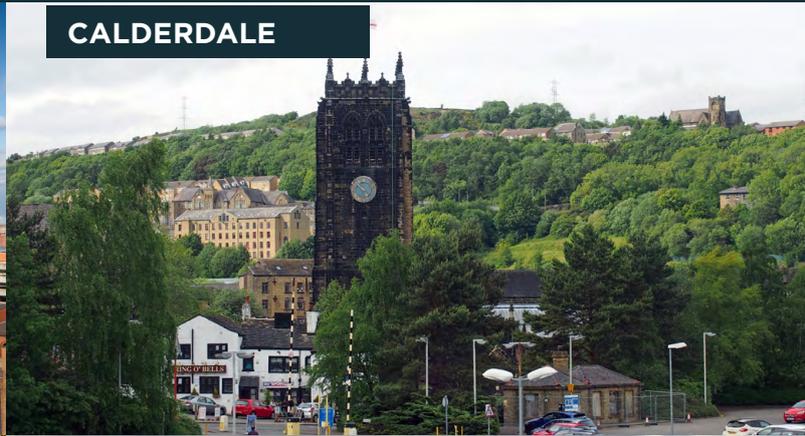
# The rebel councils

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

BIRMINGHAM



CALDERDALE



PETERBOROUGH



GATESHEAD



HARTLEPOOL



LIVERPOOL



## Dissent grows as councils shun deadline for reopening

June 1 is too early for pupils to start going back to school in England, rebel council leaders tell *Schools Week*

**T**he government's determination to begin the phased return of pupils to England's schools on June 1 looked in serious doubt this week as more than 27 councils said the move threatened the safety of pupils and staff.

Seven have advised schools not to allow more pupils back on the preferred date, while a further

20 have said they will back headteachers who decide to open later on safety grounds.

Rebel council chiefs told *Schools Week* they are unwilling to put staff and pupils at "unacceptable risk", although the government does have the legal powers to force schools to readmit more pupils. A legal expert, however, said such an

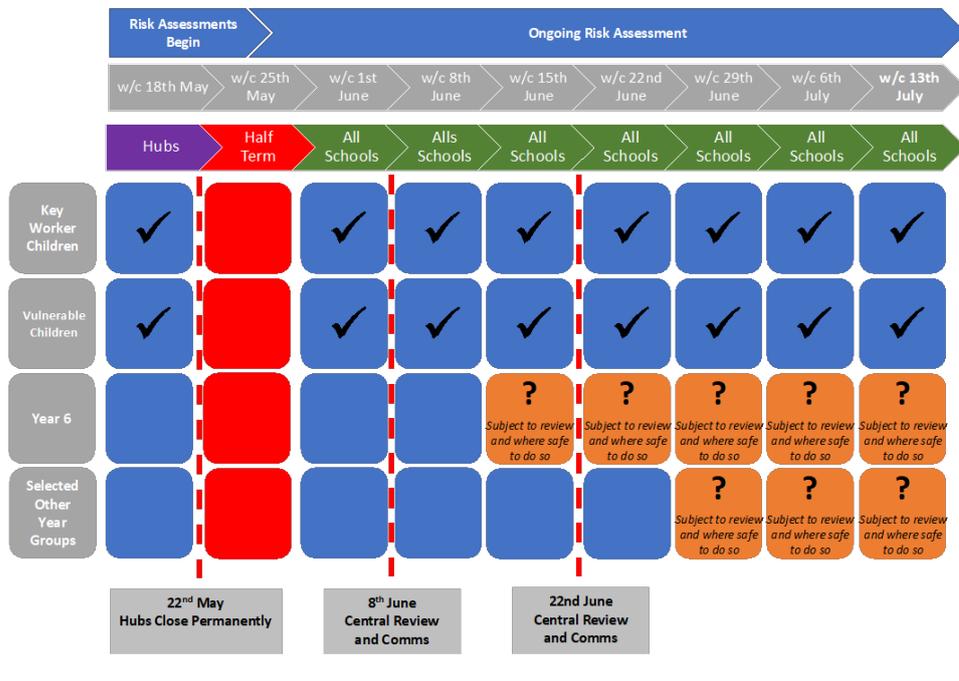
intervention is unlikely.

Ministers this week said they were hoping England would move "as a whole nation" to readmit reception, year 1 and year 6 pupils on June 1.

But interventions from worried council chiefs, coupled with variable transmission rates across

# The rebel councils

## Liverpool Primary and Junior Schools Position



the country, make it likely that many schools will ignore June 1.

Unlike the secondary sector, where most schools are now academies, councils still have oversight of more than 60 per cent of primaries. The decision on whether to reopen lies with individual heads, but town halls still hold some influence over the schools that they maintain.

very earliest”.

Detailed plans seen by Schools Week show the city proposes that year 6 pupils return and year 10 and 12 pupils receive some “face-to-face” support from June 15, providing it is safe.

They will be followed by other year groups from June 29.

Steve Reddy, the council’s director of children’s

they all have different challenges to overcome in terms of maintaining social distancing and hygiene.”

Following Liverpool’s announcement, six more councils - Bury, Calderdale, Hartlepool, Redbridge, Sefton and Stockport – advised schools not to reopen more widely on June 1.

In a letter to heads in Bury, Tamoor Tariq, the council’s deputy leader and cabinet member for children’s services, said it had “become very clear that there is an unacceptable risk to our pupils, our staff and to the communities of vulnerable people in Bury if we were to extend the opening of our schools from June 1 as central government has proposed”.

Adam Wilkinson, Calderdale’s cabinet member for children and young people’s services, told Schools Week his authority backed advice from the council’s director of public health that the government’s “five tests” for easing the lockdown had not been met.

“The lockdown has only just been eased ... and we think it’s far too premature to be able to tell whether or not the infection rate will rise again as a result of that in the run-up to June 1,” he said.

Although the council would help schools evaluate their risk assessments, “ultimately the decision will lie with the headteacher”.

“However, we recognise that as the local authority, schools will be looking to us for guidance, advice and leadership on this, and that’s why we’ve issued this very clear advice - that we don’t think June 1 is the right date for opening.”

Some of the loudest objections come from areas with high infection numbers.

For example, Gateshead, in the north east, has the second highest rate of cases in England, according to government data.

It is one of 18 councils that have backed heads to open later than June 1, but stopped short of

## “It simply isn’t feasible nor safe to stick to the same timeline”

Schools Week revealed last week that Liverpool council, the first to tell schools to defy the government’s wishes, has said that no pupils other than vulnerable and key worker children should go back to school “before June 15 at the

services, said there was “no doubt in my mind that we simply cannot reopen schools in line with the suggested timetable outlined by the government”.

“The layout of every school is different and



Tamoor Tariq



Adam Wilkinson



Martin Gannon

# The rebel councils

advising them to do so.

In a joint statement, Martin Gannon, the council's leader, and Gary Haley, its cabinet member for children and young people, said it was "the decision of the headteacher and governors of each school to determine whether or not they can comply with government instruction, partly or fully".

"The council will fully support any school that after careful consideration of all these factors, determines that they cannot comply with government instruction," they said.

Birmingham council, one of the largest in England, said earlier this week that opening on June 1 "may not be possible" for some schools. It trusted headteachers to "make the right decisions for their school communities".

However, it is not just Labour-run authorities that have doubts. Essex, Solihull, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough say they will back heads who decide to delay.

Jonathan Lewis, the service director for education at Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, said heads in his area had been "working tirelessly to consider different models of phased reopening long before



Michael Brotherton

the government made any announcements".

"Some will be able to take pupils from June 1, but some will not. I can't ask them all to stick to the same timeline – it simply isn't feasible nor safe."

Responses from local authorities in the past week show a growing consensus that different schools will go back at different times.

Even the Local Government Association, which represents councils across England, said this week that some areas "may want to work faster than others".

The growing dissent has led to questions about what the government can do, and indeed what it will do, if schools decide against the June 1 target en masse.

Ministers have played down any suggestion that they could force schools to take pupils, referring repeatedly to the need to work "cooperatively". But legal experts believe they do have the power to intervene.

The Coronavirus Act, passed earlier this year, includes a provision to allow the education secretary to give schools "temporary continuity direction",

requiring them to open, stay open or reopen, and to allow "specified persons" to attend.

Michael Brotherton, a partner at Stone King LLP,

said this gave Gavin Williamson the power not just to require schools to reopen, but to require them to "allow back certain year groups".

However, he said this would be a "brave and startling move...particularly if the reason schools were choosing not to open was on the grounds of health and safety".

"It risks unnecessary conflict at a time where it is better avoided.

"Clearly in these unprecedented times the normal conventions do not apply, but nonetheless it would be an unusual move for the government to directly overrule decisions made by schools in this regard."

John Fowler, from the Local Government Information Unit, agreed that resorting to legal processes "means handing the issue to a third party" and that in these cases, the "local argument, debate and cooperation to meet the challenge of the pandemic takes a back seat".

"And it tends to ruin important local relationships, which are, as ever, important in maintaining a local education system."

Fowler also believed there was little a local authority could do if one of its schools reopened on June 1 against its wishes.

"Schools will see the local authority's view as just one opinion, important maybe, but other information is available, and heads talk to heads away from the ears of the local education office."

## How schools and councils will fill the FSM gap

Schools and councils will dig into their own pockets to provide food for needy children during what would normally be the Whitsun half-term break, following the government's refusal to extend its national voucher scheme.

At least seven councils have confirmed plans to provide either vouchers or food parcels and hampers next week to families usually eligible for free school meals.

Other local authorities told *Schools Week* their schools would foot the bill themselves.

The government's national meal voucher scheme, which launched at the end of March, offers £15 of vouchers a week for every pupil eligible for free school meals. However, the system has been hampered

from the start by delays and technical issues.

Ministers have now refused to extend the scheme to cover half term, despite an earlier extension for the Easter holidays.

Last week school business managers and food campaigners told *Schools Week* the government could not stop schools ordering vouchers to cover the break, but several councils opted for their own schemes just in case.

Bury and Liverpool have said they will pay for vouchers, with the latter telling the *Liverpool Echo* it would cost about £170,000.

Pupils in Dorset's schools already signed up for its £11.75 weekly vouchers will continue to receive them, while North

Tyneside said it will continue to provide packed lunches or food hampers.

In Blackpool, food parcels will be available through local community hubs; in South Tyneside packed lunches will be available for every FSM-eligible family that asks for one.

However, many councils have opted not to fund their own schemes, either because this will be done at school level or because they cannot afford it.

Jayne Aston, the cabinet member for resources on Knowsley Council, said: "The council is already looking at a huge funding gap running into millions of pounds, which is creating an unprecedented pressure on our finances."

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## AMANDA SPIELMAN

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools



## The road to recovery is one we must uncover together

**Heated debate and unhelpful commentary aside, it is by pulling together that we will do best for our teachers and their pupils, writes Amanda Spielman**

officer and chief scientific adviser last week.

It was a very good briefing and much of what was said supports the strategy of gradually introducing

frustrating as it is personally concerning.

There has also been criticism

are spending their school days. That needs to be part of the government plan if not this term then certainly next, so that schools, parents and children know what is expected of them.

When schools do start to re-admit more pupils, there will be a period of recovery, and Ofsted will play its part. We've made it clear that we won't be doing normal inspections this term, so we are thinking carefully about when we should re-start that work in the next academic year. When we do pick inspection back up, we will need to meet schools where they are, focus on building confidence in parents and supporting the process of recovery. To help us, we will be working with government, unions, professional representatives and parent groups to gather views.

I will end where I began, by saying thank you to teachers and all those working in our schools. You are providing leadership at a time of national crisis. And, as that crisis slowly abates, it will be schools once again in the forefront – helping a unique generation of young people regain the confidence, resilience and optimism that a great education provides.

“ There will be a period of recovery, and Ofsted will play its part

more children back to school. But I know that many teachers and parents will still have genuine concerns about whether it's safe to do so. Similarly, there are powerful arguments about the impact on children of not being in school. For the government and for schools, this is a difficult balancing act. The road ahead is not obvious to map out, or easy to follow, but I'm sure we can all agree that children are best off returning to school as soon as is feasible, in a way that protects their health and the health of school staff.

In the heat of debate, it has been profoundly disappointing to see some commentators trying to polarise by portraying teachers in a negative light. It's very clear to me that teachers want to teach and the current situation is as professionally

levelled at schools for their provision of home learning. Again, this is unhelpful. Many schools have made a tremendous effort from a standing start, and they are doing what they can in the absence of clear guidelines. When calls have been made for Ofsted to inspect home learning, I have been very clear that there are no standards to judge against and little clarity over what schools are required to do in these extraordinary circumstances.

And even though we can now see the path to reopening schools for all, we can also see that some children need to be educated remotely for some time to come. It will be helpful to schools and parents alike to have clear expectations as soon as possible about what all children should be getting, wherever they

Wednesday's "thank a teacher day" couldn't have come at a more appropriate time. Since schools closed to most pupils in March, you – teachers, headteachers and support staff – have been doing a remarkable job in circumstances that were unthinkable just a few short months ago. And I know you are doing it because you feel a deep sense of commitment and responsibility to the children in your care. You are mastering new approaches and technology to keep children motivated and learning. You are making sure those you are worried about remain in sight. And, of course, you are keeping school gates open for the children who really need to be there.

As I write, there is a vigorous debate under way about the merits of the government's decision to allow more children back to school from June. Along with union leaders, I was invited to attend a discussion with the government's chief medical

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**Never mind the tussle between government and unions, writes the Harris Federation CEO. This is how we're getting on with the job of preparing for our students to return**



## DANIEL MOYNIHAN

Chief executive, Harris Federation

### The phased return is starting. We must be ready for its challenges

In the much-watched clip of BBC Newsnight's Emily Maitlis blasting the myths of Covid-19, she said: "They tell us coronavirus is a great leveller. It's not. It's much, much harder if you're poor. How do we stop it making social inequality even greater?"

This question, of how we stop disadvantaged children becoming even more disadvantaged, has occupied the minds of most of us in education over the past eight weeks. The Harris Federation was lucky enough to raise hundreds of thousands of pounds in charitable donations at the outset of the crisis, which we've used for supermarket vouchers, play equipment, laptops and WiFi access for pupils in need.

Against the noise of the fight between some teaching unions and the government about reopening, it should not be forgotten that the response of teachers across the country to coronavirus has been amazing. Many schools adapted practically overnight to virtual schooling, and stayed open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children, including over Easter and on Bank Holidays.

But, for all this remarkable professionalism, and for all the social media feeds filled with photographs of virtual learning, we couldn't agree more with the Children's Commissioner's warning that decisions about returning to school cannot wait until a vaccine is available.

Bereavement, financial worries, neglect and domestic violence are just some of the terrible stresses children have suffered in lockdown. Coronavirus

may not be resolved for the next year or two, or longer – none of us knows. So, yes, we are apprehensive about reopening, and staff are apprehensive too; but the bottom line is that unless schools can intervene, the already unacceptable disadvantage gap will simply open up even more widely, with ramifications for years to come.

We are talking to them about any worries and concerns they have and will go as far as we can to minimise the risks involved. As well as installing handwashing sinks outside school we will also be taking temperatures daily using infra-red thermometers held at a distance to ensure no one is in school if they pose any avoidable risk. Our

“Despite the restrictions, we want to ensure the return to school feels happy”

We welcome the government's cautious approach to reopening schools. Staff are looking forward to being able to see their pupils again.

technology departments have made thousands of masks and visors during lockdown, donating most to healthcare providers but keeping enough aside to



ensure staff coming into close contact with pupils – for example, our first-aiders – are well protected.

The physical safety of everyone in our schools is the most important consideration in the decisions we are taking, but so is their mental health. The return to a normal routine will be beneficial in terms of the wellbeing of children, as will face-to-face contact with their friends and teachers.

There has been a lot of contact during lockdown between our schools and those children whom we know are vulnerable or have additional needs and we are training all 4,000 staff in the Harris Federation in a trauma-informed approach to mental health. We will be teaching pupils to feel safe and resilient as they come to terms with any possible traumas of their lives in lockdown.

Despite the restrictions in place, we want to ensure that the return to school feels happy for pupils. We have asked parents not to allow their children to spend time worrying about work that has been missed during lockdown, or to worry about it themselves. As a federation, we have a good record of "levelling up" children and are writing a recovery curriculum for primary and secondary that gets pupils up to speed, whatever their starting point when they return to school.

The global evidence is still that coronavirus does not particularly risk the physical health of children, but they have undoubtedly suffered in other ways. Though it is obviously not without challenge, we are delighted that the phased return to school is starting, and believe this is the vital first step in enabling us to begin making up to children what they have lost, not just in terms of schooling but also their emotional wellbeing and social development.

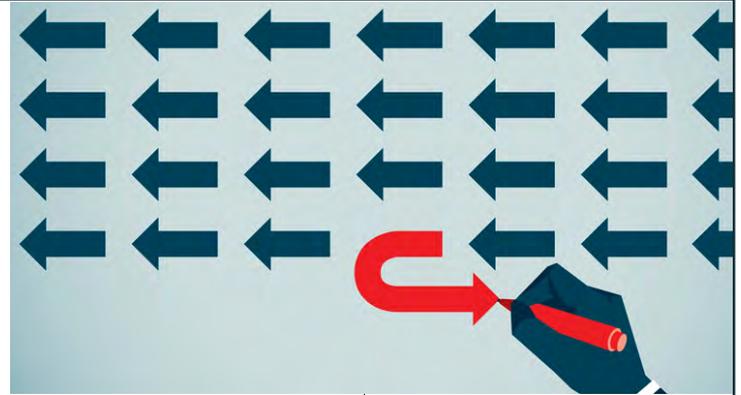
# Opinion

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## NATALIE PERERA

Executive director and head of research, Education Policy Institute



### Policymakers need to think differently to make school reopening a success

**The traditional civil service approach to decision making will not be enough to build parents' and teachers' confidence in a safe return, writes Natalie Perera**

A fundamental skill of the civil service is being able to weigh up a range of factors in order to reach a policy recommendation. It's an important craft, particularly in a profession where one has to remain objective and free from politics and ideologies. This approach leaves ministers with the ability to pursue policies based on whether they value the economic, health, education or any other benefit the most.

It's tempting to apply this approach to the decision to reopen schools. As the number of daily cases and deaths continue to fall, we must consider how we rebuild the economy, get back to work and to our normal lives. Also at the forefront of our minds is the lost learning time that many children will have experienced during this period; time that disadvantaged children can ill afford.

But in this case, when faced with a global and deadly pandemic,

policymakers need to rethink the traditional approach of balancing all the factors. Now, the scientific advice must take precedence over

“ A two-way dialogue between policymakers and practitioners is crucial

everything else.

The announcement that the government will look to reopen schools to certain year groups from June 1 has generated endless debate. That debate has been, understandably, driven by a need to protect children, teachers, families, businesses and society. It has, at times, been polarised and divisive.

That is why it is crucial that the government publishes the scientific advice behind any decision to reopen schools in full and with urgency. Until it does so, we cannot expect parents or teachers to feel completely confident in the decision to go back to school.

Government guidance needs to be clear about the risk of spreading the virus and needs to set out the safety precautions that must be put in place in order to mitigate that risk. On the critical issue of tracking

and tracing, we are already seeing a chasm between the advice from the scientists and statements from politicians.

The guidance must also consider lessons learned internationally from

countries that have already begun to reopen schools and it must be realistic in how those measures can be implemented, for example, by considering staggering reopening dates between infant pupils. It must also address pupils who have additional or acute health needs – a group who have been largely overlooked during this debate.

A two-way dialogue between policymakers and practitioners is crucial. The scientists know best about the transmission of the virus. Practitioners know best about how children behave and the environments that enable them to thrive.

If battle lines continue to be drawn now, the government will find it difficult to retreat if it needs to do so. But it is imperative that it has the ability to withdraw if it looks like the virus is spreading, and it

should be able to do so without fear of reputational damage. With rigorous testing and monitoring in place, the option to cancel or scale back reopening should always remain on the table. A pact between government and the sector needs to be made to ensure that decisions made further down the line can be guided by the science and not by politics or point-scoring.

In turn, the government should respect the decisions of school leaders if they, with their governing bodies and trusts, conclude that they cannot reopen in a way that complies with the guidance. The choices of parents should also be respected and the decision by government not to penalise parents for non-attendance of their children is absolutely right. At the same time, the government will need to consider how it targets support to disadvantaged families if, as the IFS find, they are less likely to send their children back to school in June.

The decision about when to start to reopen schools more widely is not an easy one. But it is crucial that when the government announces its final decision later this month, it must do so with full transparency, with the full weight of the scientific evidence behind it and with the expertise of the sector in how to implement it.

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**Recovery is about rethinking our values, not just rewriting our lesson plans, writes Mary Myatt**

It's pretty obvious that we can't just pick up, without missing a beat, exactly where we left off. We need to acknowledge the big event everyone will have experienced in terms of the lockdown – and for some, the significant loss associated with it – before we can hope to get back to the business of teaching and learning. In the words of sociologist and holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl, “suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning”.

But what might we hope to achieve through any kind of “recovery” process? One ambition might be that, given what has happened, we can arrive at a better frame of mind, individually and collectively. Another might be that we can set out clear, agreed expectations for how things will be from now on. And a third might be to find a mechanism for acknowledging recent events in a way that allows us to get on with educating children.

Out of consideration for this need for schools to make sense of our shared experience, some have suggested a “recovery curriculum”. Yet there is an inherent danger in the phrase, which implies rethinking content and rewriting materials. That could be pretty time consuming and detract from teaching by adding workload to an already stretched and tired profession.

The alternative is to consider the “recovery conversations” we have as adults and with children. As we are human beings first and professionals



MARY MYATT

Education consultant and author

## A ‘recovery curriculum’ or ‘recovery conversations’?

second, it's important to start with the adults first. (And when we are talking about adults, this should include everyone: teaching assistants, site staff, lunchtime supervisors, teachers and leaders.) The way an organisation acknowledges its collective experience will affect the school climate and, in turn, how pupils respond upon their return into that environment.

share theirs. This might be in small groups, departments or whole staff, but whatever form it takes, if there isn't some way of allowing people the chance to talk about what has happened, feelings are likely to fester. Of course, there is a complicating caveat on disclosure: not everyone will want to share their experiences, and that should be respected. However, it

“Our values provide the lodestar for our decisions and actions”

There is something so momentous about the lockdown that it cannot be ignored. Everyone will have a story to tell and many will want to

should be an expectation for all that we listen to those who choose to recount their experiences.

Beyond the catharsis of expressing



personal narratives, our conversations ought to consider how our experiences stand in relation to our school values. In other words, we have been through a collective experience and we need to articulate again our core purpose. Why do we come to school each day? What difference are we making? What is different now from before? Our values provide the lodestar for our decisions and actions and the return to school for all pupils is a chance to revisit these.

There is a case to be made for a similar process as classes and tutor groups come back together. There can be a tendency only to focus on the negative, but it's important to remember that no experience is ever black and white. There are plenty of accounts of pupils rising to the challenge not just of doing work set by teachers but also of looking out for others and helping during lockdown. One way of doing this is to deliberately scaffold these conversations to identify and acknowledge both negatives and positives. Underpinning this is that we listen carefully when others are talking. And the option to speak, or not, applies to pupils as it does to adults.

In this way, by investing time in and for the whole school community at the start of staff and pupils' return – through storytelling, speaking and being heard, and wrapping things up as a collective – we acknowledge what has happened, good and bad, and can draw out the most positive aspect of all: that it is good to be back together. Hopeful, not helpless.

# Opinion

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## Lockdown diaries – a week in the life of...



### ED VAINKER

Founder and executive principal, Reach Academy Feltham

#### Monday, May 11

Last night’s announcement by the prime minister ensures questions all day, the first from a key worker parent at 7.30am. I confess to not being able to answer. That becomes a stock phrase as we await detailed guidance.

Mondays and Thursdays, we distribute food – 2,000 meals a week to families from our school, two others and the wider community. It has been a great way to keep track of our pupils and has become an important ritual for our community, but the increasing number of people coming to collect it is a reminder of the massive economic impact the lockdown is having, especially on the many whose work was on zero-hours contracts and who the furlough scheme doesn’t help.

#### Tuesday, May 12

Tuesday is filming day for Oak National Academy teachers. Fourteen of our teachers are filming 50 lessons a week and, like their counterparts all over the country, are doing it alongside their other responsibilities as volunteers. We have seen healthy competition in recent weeks and production values have shot up. It has been

a brilliantly organised collective endeavour across the sector, with organisations offering their time and expertise for free to develop brilliant content.

Some lessons have been watched 50,000 times and as a parent I am not at all surprised. My three weeks of quarantine before Easter were saved by the video lessons provided by our teachers. My two – 9 and 6 – have no interest in being taught by their dad; a teacher explaining things to them works much better in our house.

#### Wednesday, May 13

Much of today is spent talking to prospective candidates for our new fellowship. We want to support people pursuing headship to do what Rebecca Cramer and I didn’t have the opportunity to do before we started Reach – visit other brilliant schools, understand finances and shadow experienced leaders.

Lockdown hasn’t stopped the education system from looking at opportunities for development, and I chat with two teachers interested in what impact an all-through school and cradle-to-career community hub could have where they live. We intend to work



with groups around the country to explore this in the coming years.

In the afternoon, I catch up with our Reach Children’s Hub team to learn about the Citizens UK listening campaign they’ve just completed. As they have with delivering food and connecting with isolated members of our community, our parents have stepped forward to lead this campaign. It’s about returning power to people, and there’s no doubt that is happening in Feltham.

#### Thursday, May 14

Feltham’s headteachers have always met regularly but our collaboration has had more purpose in this period. Today, we agree a common framework for communicating with our parents about the next steps to provide clarity. We resolve to come back together on Tuesday to reflect on what our parents are telling us and agree our next steps.

We write to parents, describing measures we will follow and asking whether they will send their children in. It is for each family to decide and we explain that pupils

can return throughout June and July.

#### Friday, May 15

We add detail about a phased return to school and supporting those at home. Smaller class sizes will need more staff, meaning less time to deliver remote teaching. We will use Oak National Academy’s lessons for those still at home with remote staff focused on feedback and pastoral support. Like all the schools involved, we’ve committed to keep making Oak lessons for all year groups until the end of term.

Later, I teach my health and social care group. I was already eager to teach the public health unit long before all of this, but the second assignment, “Evaluate the effectiveness of a chosen public health campaign”, has made the lessons fascinating. We’ve wrestled with the Imperial College paper, discussed R and compared our approach with South Korea’s. They need to start writing but complain that every day things change.

Try being in charge of a school, I tell them.

# Reviews

## BOOK REVIEW



### How Learning Happens

**Authors:** Paul A. Kirschner and Carl Hendrick

**Publisher:** Routledge

**Reviewer:** Amir Arezoo, vice principal, Horizon Community College

Evidence-based practice. We know all of the answers, right? Frequent and regular testing will help students remember better. Developing a growth mindset increases your chances of success in life. Being a good problem solver is domain-specific. So why does a book like *How Learning Happens* matter?

Well, as Kirschner and Hendrick explain, the misapplication of educational theory is unfortunately prevalent: one only has to think of Bloom's Taxonomy and Multiple Intelligences as cases in point. Kirschner and Hendrick set out their rationale to take "the often implicit knowledge that [teachers] have about our profession and make it explicit", with the understanding that "good teaching is an art informed by science". Clearly then, *How Learning Happens* is designed to be a force for preventing teachers from falling into the trap of misconception, and incorrectly putting theory into practice as a result.

The book consists of commentaries on 28 papers that the authors consider key to understanding how we learn. The papers are grouped into six distinct fields: how the brain works; prerequisites for learning; how learning can be supported; teacher activities; learning in context; and, perhaps most interestingly, cautionary tales and the deadly sins of education.

There are some "famous" (in the realms of educational psychology at least) academics here: Sweller, Rosenshine, William and Black; and there are some not so famous, such as Rothkopf and Pintrich. There are some who are perhaps infamous, for example Dweck and Bloom. (The latter features for one of

his less remembered but potentially most important papers.)

Despite being academic in principle, *How Learning Happens* is easy to digest. Kirschner and Hendrick don't simply reproduce the texts verbatim. Instead, the book is written with the classroom practitioner in mind, using each paper's abstract and key elements, linking them to wider connected research (there are copious references) and then developing the findings into concrete methods of application.

Importantly, the authors take lengths to explain caveats when putting theory into practice. For example, in the discussion of Dweck's paper on motivation and personality, the authors set out a theory of why attempts to replicate her interventions may not have generated similarly effective results to the original research. It is through this methodology that Kirschner and Hendrick demonstrate that, while we may know the best examples of evidence-based practice, when it comes to application of that practice, there is more than a "one and done" approach needed.

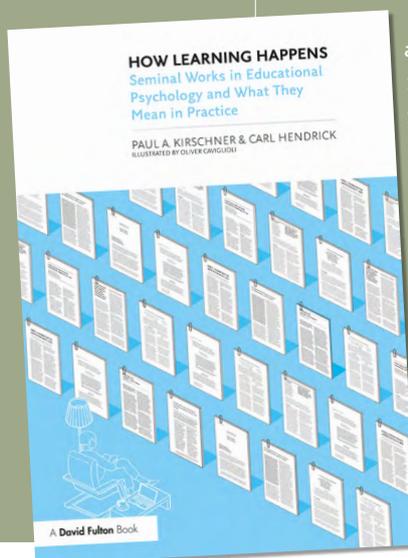
Throughout the book, and whatever their stance on the research discussed or ideologies criticised, Kirschner and Hendrick write with a warmth that doesn't detract from the academic rigour applied in

their thinking. That said, the authors are not afraid to cut down persistent examples of received wisdom and popular ideologies (the assumed benefit of using ICT, discovery learning, etc) through their "Cautionary Tales" and "10 Deadly Sins of Education".

Kirschner himself is referenced in some sections, which sceptics may claim is self-serving and driving a particular ideology. However – and this is important – said sceptics should not ignore the scope of the chosen papers, the referencing, and the reasoning behind their choice. Champions of those practices grouped under the "10 Deadly Sins" banner may point to the numbers of subscribers to their philosophies to advocate for persisting in their beliefs, but the depth of academic theory and research presented here seems to slay their sacred cows.

My key takeaway from this book is how important a teacher is. According to Kirschner and Hendrick, they are the lynchpin of learning – responsible for the right environment and incentives to learn as well as clarity of communication and rigorous activity design.

*How Learning Happens* is ambitious in reach, determined in argument and thorough in reasoning. The authors have produced a text that will aid teachers to appreciate and correctly use the science necessary to improve their practice. Schools looking to implement professional development on teaching and learning on an evidence-based footing would do well to use it as the foundation of any programme.



# Reviews



Our reviewer of the week is James Pope, director of Whole Education and founder of InspirEDucate

@popejames

## A New Broom

@MoreMorrow

Focusing on how Covid-19 has exposed the inequalities in our society, Dan Morrow writes about the need to take our collective experience and build something better, for the benefit of everyone. He leads with his perspective of society's response, how in this "hour of need" we have collaborated and co-operated, recognising and celebrating the contribution of key workers. Dan implores us to recognise a fundamental truth, that many of those we are celebrating are ordinarily overlooked and dismissed as unimportant in our busy pursuit of more. Oh, how we have come to rely on them now. Morrow goes on to reflect on how this applies to education, how we can re-imagine and reprioritise our work focusing on the true purpose of education. If our celebrations and gratitude are genuine, then we must surely not allow things to return to "normal". Even though each and every one of us desires normality, we must build something new. To not do so, to sweep the inequalities back under the carpet when all this is done, would be to have failed those we are celebrating.



**Can we be the midwives of our own future? A call to the education sector**

@lifeflowbalance

Echoing these themes, Charmaine Roche takes a slightly different perspective. Our situation leads us to some fundamental questions about society, equity and education's part in these, but change is hard at the best of times. So how can we best prepare? How can we find the capacity to lead this change before the opportunity is gone? How can we build something new through the lens of appreciative inquiry, celebrating with positivity what came before? Building her narrative around a quote from Antonio Gramsci – "the old world is dying, while the new world struggles to be born..." – Roche explores how we can, and must, lead our way through the death of the old world, the struggles and possibilities presented by delivering the new one, and the uncertainty of what lies beyond.

**Enemy of the State**

@shuaibkhan26

Continuing on the subject of change, Shuaib Khan reflects on growing tension and upset as the country starts the process of emerging from lockdown. A narrative has built around the needs and demands

of society and the role schools are required to play in meeting them. Throughout this period of reduced school provision, all school leaders and staff have focused on the needs of the disadvantaged. All are worried about disadvantaged children falling behind. This has now been seized as the moral imperative to lever a return to more normal school provision. Khan carefully picks his way through this narrative, exploring the sometimes dangerous assumptions that are made about the disadvantaged and questioning the solutions that are formed from these assumptions. The idea that solving complex societal issues such as poverty and disadvantage can be achieved through education alone is proof enough that the way government thinks and "cares" about the disadvantaged needs to change, Khan argues.

**Educators: You Can Do This**

@gatortiff

Tiffany Beck serves up the antidote to a week of negative rhetoric from some quarters of government, media and society with a refreshing reminder that we should be positive about the impact we have on the lives of young people and their families. School staff and the education system as a whole have had to rapidly respond to a significantly changed world, and Beck uses this post to celebrate the skills, experience and traits that have made that possible. We put our pupils first and do our best for them; we are resilient; we seize opportunities to do things differently; and we communicate with kindness and empathy for the benefit of our communities. Beck also reflects on the need to share our narratives with each other, because a shared professional culture and a collaborative community are how schools will emerge stronger and better from the current chaos and uncertainty.

# Research

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

## Can we educate teachers effectively in a remote learning environment?

**Harry Fletcher-Wood, associate dean, Ambition Institute**

One problem schools face on reopening is how to help their teachers to keep improving. This is particularly acute for trainee and newly qualified teachers, both of whom have suffered from truncated training and school experiences this year. With disruption to travel, limitations on face-to-face encounters and many teachers and teacher educators looking after their own children, traditional teacher development may prove more difficult than previously. Very few research studies have tackled the online teacher education directly, but the handful that have offer promising avenues for teachers and teacher educators to explore.

One study offered teachers a maths professional development programme and set out to directly compare “the effects of online versus face-to-face courses in which the goals, content and activities are kept as comparable as possible”. The teachers read the same material, tried the same classroom activities, and completed the same assignments across an eight-week period, with the same teacher educators leading the programme.

The study showed that what teachers thought about maths teaching had changed, and students had noticed changes in teachers’ practices, such as being asked to come up with more ways to solve maths problems. When the researchers compared the online and face-to-face groups, the effects were practically identical on the two groups. Teachers in the face-to-face version of the programme felt they’d had a slightly better experience, but the biggest difference



between the groups was about their future preferences: given the choice between online and face-to-face learning in future, teachers who had experienced online teacher education were more likely to choose it again.

Another study reveals one of the most powerful approaches available for teacher educators. It is a randomised-controlled trial of My Teaching Partner – a coaching programme that helps teachers to improve classroom climate and their interactions with students through video-based coaching. The teacher submits video recordings fortnightly: the teacher educator reviews them, highlighting particular segments which form the focus of a phone conversation about students’ reactions and possible teacher actions to address them.

This approach has a lasting impact: students gain substantially better results in teachers’ classes the following year (after coaching has stopped). The same approach has been tested in other studies in a variety of schools, for longer and shorter periods, and has continued to demonstrate positive impact, suggesting that coaching can work even when teachers can’t meet their coaches in person.

Finally, a very recently released study looked at teacher development and coaching using simulations:

teachers interact with a group of students on screen who are voiced and characterised by a trained actor. In this study, trainee teachers taught a simulated class briefly and were supported to improve through either independent reflection, immediate, structured coaching (while interacting with students) or subsequent, structured coaching.

Both immediate and subsequent coaching helped teachers to improve their classroom management. They addressed problems more quickly, more succinctly and more effectively; since they were able to manage the challenges they experienced, they were less likely to seek further punishments for minor incidents of poor behaviour.

Reflection alone, however, did not help them to improve and instead led them to become more frustrated. The authors conclude that “immersive virtual environments create fairly authentic ‘field-like’ spaces to approximate practices with feedback and support from expert teacher educators”, demonstrating that teachers “do not have to learn ‘on the job.’” While the coaches were working face-to-face with teachers in this study, this need not be the case: it suggests that simulations can help teachers to improve, even if they can’t get into the classroom.

Effective remote teacher education clearly still faces barriers. A meta-analysis of teacher professional development suggests that online elements tend to be associated with lower impact for teacher development approaches, though its authors aren’t able to identify why with the data they have.

Nonetheless, the studies described here suggest that when teacher educators focus on the most important aspects of teaching and provide the most promising forms of support, they can help teachers improve even if they can’t meet face-to-face.



# WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

## FRIDAY

It's fair to say the Department for Education hasn't excelled in the response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The free school meal voucher scheme was bungled to a spectacular degree. Schools have complained of absent and confusing guidance from the department. The promised free laptops are taking their sweet time to reach vulnerable children. And, to top it all off, they seem woefully unprepared for the return of pupils to schools that they seem to want so much.

But the DfE really outdid itself today, when it finally allowed us all to see an overview of the scientific advice it has received on the virus and the impact on children.

When we say overview, of course, we're being generous. The document was about as informative as the government's daily Downing Street press conferences.

However, the immediate problem with the document wasn't its lack of detail, but rather some details that weren't supposed to be in it at all.

Under the heading "spread and vulnerability to disease", there were a few lines of erroneous text discussing "testing subjects".

A search of DfE documents shows this line also appears in a number of

other releases, including a 2014 key stage 4 science consultation.

Copy and paste errors aside (they were quickly rectified), the document also gave conflicting information.

One passage stated that "in the event of a child or member of staff testing positive for coronavirus (Covid-19), the relevant group of people within the school with whom the child has mixed closely (their cohort) should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for seven days".

However, a later paragraph states that in the same situation, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.

Clear enough for you?

## MONDAY

As seasoned Week in Westminster readers will attest, we refrain from making fun of people for poor spelling, punctuation and grammar...unless of course they're trying to make a point about the quality of English education.

So, we felt we had to include the doozy below in a question to ministers from the office of an MP

"to ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department makes of parents's competence in (a) reading, (b) writing and (c) mathematics in relation to home schooling; and if he will make a statement."

D'oh!

## TUESDAY

Environment secretary Oliver Dowden was so keen to reel off details of the government's plan for the return of schools at the Downing Street briefing earlier this week that he managed to miss out an entire year group.

Speaking about the phased return of primary school pupils, he spoke about years 1 and 6, but neglected to mention reception children, who are also supposed to go back from June 1.

It's a good job headteachers gave up on the briefings as a decent source of information a long time ago, isn't it?!

## WEDNESDAY

Another day, another cracking intervention from Lord Adonis.

This week, the former schools minister and self-appointed regulator of lazy schools, was fuming about problems with virtual meetings of the House of Lords.

"About one in four speeches & questions in the virtual House of Lords either can't be heard properly or fails online entirely. Is this people's typical experience in large Zoom gatherings?" he said on Twitter (of course).

Cue plenty of educationalists pointing out that he had (eventually) arrived at one of the main problems standing between schools and successful online lessons.



**Shoreham College**  
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS AGED 3-16



## Head Teacher

Competitive salary

**The Governors of Shoreham College invite applications for the post of Head Teacher, to commence within the next academic year. We seek an experienced senior school head or an ambitious senior leader with a proven track record of overseeing whole school initiatives. We are looking to appoint an articulate, intelligent, innovative and visionary leader with strong business acumen, who will build on the achievements of our current head and lead the school to further growth and success.**

Shoreham College is a registered charity, overseen by the Kennedy Independent School Trust Ltd. The College was founded in 1852 and is close to the sea, Brighton and the South Downs National Park. We have a Christian foundation and a strong reputation for meeting the individual academic and pastoral needs of our mixed ability intake. We are co-educational from age 3-16, and we are proud of our pupils and their achievements. We are fully compliant and our exam results are impressive.

The Governors wish to appoint an inspiring, motivational and dynamic leader who is solution focused and intuitive. The appointee will possess high levels of emotional intelligence and demonstrable strategic skills, someone who is proven at the most senior levels in education.

The Head Teacher will have direct responsibility for educational outcomes, safeguarding, student recruitment and community engagement. The Head Teacher will be the public face for our School.

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A candidate pack, including application form, recruitment monitoring form, job description, person specification and information letter from the Chair of Governors is available from the College website ([www.shorehamcollege.co.uk/recruit](http://www.shorehamcollege.co.uk/recruit)) or upon request from:

**The Clerk to the Governors**  
**Shoreham College**  
**St Julian's Lane**  
**Shoreham-by-Sea**  
**West Sussex**  
**BN43 6YW**

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Tel: 01273 592681 Fax: 01273 591673  
e-mail: [ashleywarner@shorehamcollege.co.uk](mailto:ashleywarner@shorehamcollege.co.uk)

Applications should be returned no later than noon on Friday 5 June 2020.  
Longlisted online interviews: Tuesday 16 and Wednesday 17 June 2020.

Shoreham College is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

We will process your data for recruitment purposes only. If you are unsuccessful in your application, we will keep your data on our systems for 6 months in case any similar future roles become available. If you have any objections to us storing your data for this purpose please email [data@shorehamcollege.co.uk](mailto:data@shorehamcollege.co.uk).

For further information about our compliance with GDPR please see our privacy notice.

huish  
RICHARD HUISH



# HEAD TEACHER

**Salary:** Group size 6, starting salary L21 to L35 (£67,183 to £94,669)

**Contract:** Permanent

**Start Date:** September 2020

The Taunton Academy is seeking to appoint an exceptional, driven, dynamic and inspirational leader to build on the academy's many strengths and further develop our vision of delivering high class education. We are an ambitious Church of England secondary school based in the beautiful county town of Somerset.

Sponsored by the Richard Huish Education Group, the Multi-Academy Trust model offers the school potential to retain its unique characteristics and to maintain its own local governing body; whilst also offering the Head Teacher a high degree of autonomy in the work of leading the school, with the freedom to focus on teaching and learning.

**We are looking for an exceptional leader who:**

- Will demonstrate strategic vision and have a track record of exceptional leadership and management experience
- Is dynamic, motivational and has a proven record of delivering high quality teaching and learning
- Is resilient and financially astute with an unparalleled understanding of education and the challenges in developing schools
- Has an aspirational mindset, leading by example in the pursuit of high standards and levels of achievement
- Is able to understand, value and develop the values of the school and wider Trust
- Is an excellent, engaging communicator who will develop strong relationships with children, parents and the wider community
- Can embrace and relish the opportunities available for collaboration and strive for excellence within the Huish group of schools.

**Application process:**

If you would like to discuss this role further please contact The Richard Huish Trust CEO [johna@richuish.ac.uk](mailto:johna@richuish.ac.uk) Further details and an application pack can be found on the vacancies pages of the school website [www.thetauntonacademy.com](http://www.thetauntonacademy.com) or the Richard Huish Education Group [www.huish.education](http://www.huish.education)

Please complete the application form and a covering letter in which you explain how your values, knowledge, experience and skills/abilities meet the requirements of the Job Description.

Please return your completed application to: The HR Manager at Richard Huish College, South Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 3DZ or [vacancies@huish.ac.uk](mailto:vacancies@huish.ac.uk)

**Closing Date for applications:**

**Friday 29th May 2020, 12 noon**

*The Richard Huish Trust is committed to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to all necessary pre-employment checks including Enhanced DBS, Prohibition check,, qualifications, identity and right to work. We actively promote equal opportunities and welcome applications from all sections of the community.*

*All applicants will be required to provide two suitable references.*

SCHOOLS **WEEK** | FE **WEEK** | EDU  
WEEK **JOBS**

# Recruitment advertising during the Coronavirus Pandemic

To assist organisations over the forthcoming weeks, Schools Week, FE 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 digital editions**
  - A **free of charge** second insertion of your advert

**CLICK HERE TO****ADVERTISE  
A ROLE****CLICK HERE TO****SPEAK TO A  
MEMBER OF  
THE TEAM**