

SCHOOLS WEEK

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THE NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA: IS IT REALLY FAIRER?



DfE fails to deliver on SEND review promise for THIRD time

- Government scrutiny committee chair blasts 'unbelievable' delay
- Sector leaders fear plan will be scaled back like catch-up promise
- Ministers are now refusing to set a new deadline to publish review

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOOTH

EXCLUSIVE

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SCHOOLS WEEK

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News

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Special needs review deadline passes (again)

SAMANTHA BOOTH

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EXCLUSIVE

The government has failed to meet its third deadline to publish the long-delayed SEND review, leaving the sector "in limbo" again.

Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, promised the landmark review in September 2019, following mounting concerns of a "postcode lottery" of special needs support in England.

But nearly two years on and no review has been published.

Meg Hillier, the chair of the public accounts committee (PAC), said the latest delay was "unbelievable" at a time when the sector "needs it more than ever".

"People out there are desperate, the system has got problems, everyone knows that and that's why the review is underway, people are left in limbo.

"With education facing such challenges as a result of Covid, this shouldn't be seen as something as outside of the Covid support work. It needs to be actually embedded in that."

In April last year Williamson said it was likely that the pandemic response would delay the review.

In September he told the education select committee the review would be published in the "early part" of 2021, which was later than he "would have liked".

In March, Vicky Ford, the children's minister, said the pandemic had "unavoidably" delayed the review and "altered the context in which it will be implemented". Signalling a delay, she said the government's ambition was to publish proposals for consultation in the "spring of 2021".

Appearing at the PAC that same month, Susan Acland-Hood, the Department for Education's permanent secretary, confirmed the review and accompanying green paper would be published "towards the end of June". But as of Thursday, nothing had been announced.

Acland-Hood and other senior DfE officials

will be challenged on the delay when they appear before the PAC on July 15 as part of an inquiry into school funding.

Adam Boddison, the chief executive of the National Association of Special Educational Needs, said there was a real chance the SEND review could get lost with "the processes of the everyday" if it was not published before the summer break.

"We've already seen what's happened with Kevan Collins and catch up... there's a real concern it could go the same way if it isn't published soon.

"We need to do this sooner rather than later. It's already been elongated, and we can't afford any more delays."

The government's major SEND reforms in 2014 promised to offer "simpler, improved and consistent help" for children and young people with additional specialist needs.

But since the reforms, services and access available for pupils with SEND have been heavily criticised.

The government has promised the review would help to improve capacity and support for families in England, as well as improve value for money. It would also align incentives and accountability for schools, colleges and local authorities and assess what was behind the rise in education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Simon Knight, a headteacher and national leader with Whole School SEND, said while it was "essential" the government took time to understand the "scale and complexity" of changes needed, "every delay extends the time for those children and families who are not getting what they require".

"There needs to be better communication regarding why these delays are occurring, so that we can be confident that it isn't because of a lack of urgency."

The DfE said it wanted to balance a "commitment to deliver real, sustainable change with ensuring that any reforms will reflect the impact of the pandemic". It remained committed to publishing proposals for consultation "as soon as possible".

Deprived schools top the list for NPQ funding

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Scholarships for four of the six new national professional qualifications (NPQs) will be limited only to staff in the most deprived schools.

The reformed NPQs for experienced teachers and school leaders will launch in the autumn term, as part of a range of changes to school staff training and development.

The government announced last month that £184 million would be allocated to support the new NPQs over the course of this Parliament.

The money will be spent on fully funded scholarships for eligible applicants in certain schools.

For the NPQs in leading behaviour and culture, leading teaching, senior leadership and executive leadership, full scholarship funding will only be available to those working in English state-funded schools "within the top 30th percentile in relation to pupils on pupil premium as of the end of the previous academic year".

For the NPQ in headship, aspiring leaders will also have to satisfy the 30th percentile rule, but those in their first 24 months of state school headship will not.

The scholarship for the NPQ in leading teacher development is available to all those working in or aspiring to eligible roles in state-funded schools.

The DfE will "shortly publish a list of schools that are within the top 30th percentile" so applicants can check eligibility.

But Nick Brook, the deputy general secretary of the NAHT school leaders' union, said it was "regrettable" that funding for some roles were restricted to those in certain schools.

The nine approved partners to deliver NPQs are Ambition Institute, Best Practice Network, Church of England, Education Development Trust, Harris Federation, Leadership Learning South East, Teacher Development Trust, Teach First and UCL Institute of Education.

But Brook said: "The government needs to take a more permissive approach to encourage other high-quality providers into the market, and ensure that schools have the funding to match, to reach far more teachers and leaders."

News



DfE advisers DIDN'T back keeping building reports secret

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EXCLUSIVE

The government's excuse for keeping key school condition reports secret has been called into question after members of its own advisory group said they were not involved in the decision.

The Department for Education has repeatedly refused to publish condition data collection reports for 50 schools in the first phase of the new school rebuilding programme, despite calls for transparency.

The government claimed this was because advisers agreed to keep reports under wraps. But when approached by *Schools Week*, several advisory group members said they had not been consulted on the decision to keep the reports secret.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of ASCL, the school leaders' union, said the government's "refusal to be up front about how decisions are being reached is not helping".

"Schools inevitably want to know what criteria is being used to reach important decisions on those being prioritised for repairs and it appears that the DfE's so-called consultation with leaders is flimsy and flawed."

Refusing a request for the documents earlier this year, the department claimed to have "tested the appetite for sharing reports outside schools with a sample of multi-academy trusts".

Their feedback, the DfE said, warned of a "potential for private organisations to target schools", in turn resulting in "lower school engagement" in future collections.

Schools Week requested a list of MATs consulted. In response, the DfE sent details of its 20-member "condition data collection and school rebuilding programme advisory group".

The group includes representatives of three academy trusts, representatives of the Church of England and Catholic church, six councils, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, and six construction and finance industry bodies.

The DfE said it had previously only shared reports with schools and their responsible bodies, and claimed the advisory group "agreed to continue with this approach".

One of the advisers, Ark Schools, said it was no longer on the advisory group, and that it had "no record" that its former representative had been involved in a decision on the matter.

Derbyshire County Council said it was present at the meeting where the issue was raised but was not formally consulted, and Brighton Council said it "did not express a view" on how the information should be used.

Another member organisation, that wished to remain anonymous, also said it was not consulted.

A summary report based on CDC data, published in May, warned that repairing or replacing all defects in England's schools would cost £11.4 billion.

The government recently confirmed it would announce the next 50 projects in its rebuilding programme later this year. The DfE has also promised to consult on how schools are chosen, but has not said when.

Framwellgate School in Durham has been waiting for a rebuild for more than a decade, after work planned under the Building Schools for the Future programme was scrapped in 2010.

Andy Byers, its head, called for "more transparency in the process. I'd like to see the reports published, and I would like to see a timetable."

Barton said the repair bill for England's schools "now stands at a horrifyingly large figure. All schools with elderly buildings in their estate will feel they have a strong case for urgent repairs funding and need clarity from the government on how decisions are being reached."

A DfE spokesperson this week claimed again that the advisory group had "agreed the reports in question shouldn't be released".

"Releasing the reports could hamper our ability to secure best value for money for parents and taxpayers."

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ESFA boss stands down for 'a new challenge'

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EXCLUSIVE

The chief executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Eileen Milner, is to stand down.

The senior civil servant told staff this week the "time has come" for "a new challenge".

In a letter to staff she said there was an "important role for me to undertake in the area that I call home and that feels important to do, to try and make a contribution, most especially in the context of recovery from the pandemic".

According to Milner's LinkedIn profile, she is based in the "greater Cambridge area".

A spokesperson for the Department for Education thanked Milner for her work and wished her "all the best for the future". An interim appointment would be made "in due course".

The spokesperson would not say when Milner was leaving, nor where she was moving on to.

Milner was appointed in 2017 shortly after the organisation formed through the merger of the Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency.

The ESFA is an executive agency of the Department for Education, responsible for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults.

Milner joined from the Care Quality Commission, where she was an executive director.

In her letter she said she could say with "absolute confidence" that she had "never had a day when I have regretted taking up the role, and frankly, in the toughest of times, the reason for that has been entirely down to all of you".

The "sense of community and family" created by ESFA staff was "truly exceptional and I am so thankful for it".

Milner also said the organisation was "blessed in so many ways in terms of our people and in terms of ongoing leadership", describing the quality of the executive team as "exceptional".

"They are collectively committed to ensuring that the transition to new leadership happens as smoothly and supportively as possible."

News

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Funding formula has acted like ‘Robin Hood in reverse’

SAMANTHA BOOTH

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The government’s flagship national school funding formula has shifted cash from deprived schools to their more affluent counterparts, sparking warnings ministers are “taking from the poor and giving to the rich”.

The National Audit Office today found the national funding formula, introduced in 2018, has contributed to a “shift in the balance of funding” from more deprived to less deprived local areas.

The NAO also found that schools had to cut £2.2 billion from their budgets over four years due to cost pressures.

Jon Richards, Unison national secretary, education, said “the government has acted like Robin Hood in reverse, taking from the poor and giving to the rich”, threatening to make inequalities “even worse. This funding formula must be reviewed and overhauled immediately. Money should be allocated based on educational need.”

Hard to conclude DfE is meeting ‘need’ objectives

The government has promised to “level up education funding” under the new national funding formula.

The NAO said while allocations are more “predictable and transparent”, the “multifaceted” nature of “need” makes it difficult to “conclude definitively” whether the DfE has met its objective of allocating “funding fairly”.

There has been a 1.2 per cent average reduction in per-pupil schools’ block funding between 2017-18 and 2020-21 for the most deprived fifth of schools, compared with a 2.9 per cent increase for the least deprived fifth.

The report stated: “Although more deprived local authorities and schools continue on average to receive more per pupil than those that are less deprived, the difference in funding has narrowed.”

Auditors said this was due to changes in “relative need” and the introduction of minimum per-pupil funding levels.

Schools had to cut £2.2bn to ‘live within their means’

The DfE’s own figures show that between 2015-16

and 2019-20, cost pressures exceeded funding for schools to the tune of £2.2 billion. The NAO said this meant that “to live within their means, schools needed to make economies or efficiency savings”.

The DfE estimates funding would grow faster than cost pressures in 2020-21, so schools would have some “financial headroom”. But this did not take into account the potential impact of Covid-19 costs and funding in this assessment.

However, the average revenue surplus of academy trusts rose by 16 per cent to nearly £1.3 million last year.

The number of trusts with a revenue deficit fell from 169 in 2018-19 to 112 in 2019-20. The figures cover the year to the end of August 2020, however, capturing only the first phase of the pandemic.

The DfE said the data provides assurance that during the early stages of the pandemic “schools did not incur unmanageable additional costs that they could not cover through savings elsewhere”.

It will not have the equivalent data for maintained schools until later in 2021.

Be clearer on funding

The NAO has now called on the DfE to make clear in both parliament and public that local flexibilities mean it cannot guarantee the amount of block funding each school receives.

“In particular, the department should be explicit that it does not have assurance that academy schools are receiving the minimum per-pupil funding levels that it has set,” the report states.

Local freedoms mean the DfE cannot ensure



that each school receives the NFF calculation. Local authorities are not yet obliged to apply this calculation – only 64 did in 2020-21. The government has refused to say when it will move to a fully “hard” funding formula, meaning local authorities have to award funding based solely on the NFF.

But multi-academy trusts can re-distribute funding to their schools based on their assessment of need, meaning that even a hard formula would not guarantee academies get the same funding as everyone else.

The DfE said every primary school will receive at least £4,000 per pupil, and secondaries at least £5,150 per pupil this year, “delivering on the government’s pledge to level up the lowest-funded schools”.

A spokesperson said the NFF “ensures that the areas with high proportions of students from disadvantaged backgrounds are receiving the highest levels of funding, providing £6.4bn in funding for pupils with additional needs in 2021-22.”

New Schools Network director stands down

The New Schools Network (NSN) director Unity Howard will step down in September. Howard, who has run the free schools support organisation since July 2019, will be succeeded by Sophie Harrison-Byrne, currently the NSN’s director of programmes.



The NSN has not said why Howard is leaving, or what new role she is moving on to.

Howard, who joined NSN seven years ago

as an intern, said she had “never imagined I would one day be leading the team”.

Harrison-Byrne said: “I know the positive impact new schools and strong trusts have on communities, and I’m delighted to be given the opportunity to lead the team as we continue to drive and deliver improvement in the sector.”

NSN’s chair of trustees David Ross said the board was “grateful” for Howard’s “steadfast and resilient leadership during the pandemic and driving forward NSN’s mission during that time”.

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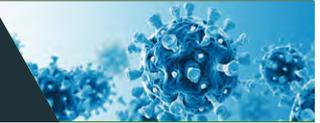
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Long read



Williamson gets ready to pop school Covid bubbles

JAMES CARR

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Education leaders are demanding “clarity about the road ahead” after the government all but confirmed it will scrap Covid restrictions in schools.

It comes as new attendance statistics suggest Covid-related absences almost doubled in secondary schools this week.

Meanwhile school leaders have written to prime minister Boris Johnson over the “cynical” attempt to shift blame onto headteachers for Covid disruption. A cabinet source was quoted in the Daily Telegraph saying schools had “over interpreted” bubble rules by sending home whole year groups over positive cases..

Parents ‘frustrated’ over isolation

Gavin Williamson told MPs on Wednesday that he wanted school “bubbles” removed as soon as possible because of the rising number of children isolating after a classmate tests positive.

He said he understood the “frustration of parents and pupils” who felt they were being asked to “isolate unnecessarily”.

A Parent Ping survey found one in four disagreed with the policy that whole class bubbles needed to isolate after a positive case.

Williamson “expects to be able to confirm plans to lift restrictions and bubbles as part of step 4” of the government’s Covid roadmap.



While a date for the step 4 announcement has not been set, Sajid Javid, the health secretary, said there was “no reason” for Covid restrictions to last beyond July 19.

Williamson said guidance for schools on the changes would be issued “immediately” the decision had been made. This would mean leaders were informed “in plenty of time before the start of the new term”.

He resisted pressure to drop bubbles this term, but did say he wanted the changes to kick in for the summer holidays, which means

summer schools might not have to follow Covid restrictions.

Numbers off school rocket again this week

Department for Education attendance data is lagged by a week. The statistics published this week show an estimated 384,500 pupils (5.1 per cent) were absent due to Covid on June 24.

This represents more than one in 20 pupils and the highest rates since schools reopened in March. It signifies a 55 per cent leap from the week before. More than 7,000 pupils’ schools have been

Daily test trial headteachers back scheme (again)

Schools that have taken part in the government’s daily contact testing trial have called for the system to be implemented across England next year.

About 200 schools and colleges took part in the scheme, which allows close contacts of positive Covid cases to stay in school while undergoing daily rapid tests.

The trial ended last week, but some schools are still testing following positive cases.

Westhoughton High School in Bolton estimates more than 500 pupils were able to stay in school as a result of participation in the trial, saving more than 4,000 on-site school days.

Patrick Ottley-O’Connor, the school’s head, said he was “hopeful” the system would be

open to all schools next year as “the impact has been amazing”. It reduced lost learning, while the ability to stay on-site improved the mental health of staff and pupils.

Midhurst Rother College in West Sussex, part of United Learning, had one positive case since joining the scheme in April.

Phillip Lloyd, the vice-principal, said the school had been “quite lucky” as its rural location meant less mixing outside school compared with city schools.

He praised the trial, but warned schools would face logistical challenges if there were larger numbers of positive cases. Schools dealing with outbreaks might have to rely on volunteers to ensure staff were not taken out of key roles.

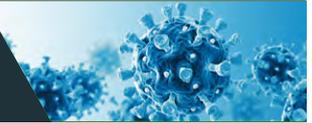
Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said the government would look at the results of the trial before it made a decision on step 4.

Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, queried whether the trial would be “subject to independent scrutiny”.

The DfE said it was independently monitored and had been approved by Public Health England’s Research and Ethics Governance Group.

Headteachers involved in a previous trial of daily testing also spoke positively of the scheme, but plans to roll it out more widely were canned over concerns about the accuracy of rapid tests.

Long read



closed completely.

However, data obtained by Schools Week from Arbor Education, a school management provider used by about 1,500 schools and 200 multi-academy trusts, suggests another surge this week.

Covid-related absences in secondary schools jumped from 6 to 10 per cent between June 21 and Monday (28), leaving one in ten secondary pupils out of the classroom.

Primary absences jumped from 5 to 7 per cent in the same period.

Active Learning Trust (ALT), which runs 15 primaries, four secondaries and two special schools, revealed its secondary attendance had fallen by almost 10 percentage points to 83 per cent over the past five weeks as Covid rates have risen.

In contrast its primary and special schools have maintained a 94 and 90 per cent average respectively during this period.

Data from the Public Health England show there were 215 new Covid outbreaks in schools in the week ending June 27 - up from 151 the week before..

A Teacher Tapp survey also revealed 30 per cent of teachers covered a lesson for an ill member of staff last week.

Dropping restrictions will cause "more disruption"

The pledge to drop restrictions does not have universal approval.

Jon Richards, Unison's head of education, said removing bubbles and self-isolation would "lead to more disruption, not less" as isolation "is one of the proven ways to keep cases under control".

He called for the return of face coverings and smaller bubbles.

Paul Whiteman, the general secretary of the leaders' union NAHT, said scrapping self-isolation



would be "very significant" and the "onus would be on the government" to explain how it would maintain safety in schools.

It has been reported Williamson is looking at introducing either daily testing for close contacts (see box out), or treat Covid like flu.

Professor Allyson Pollock, a former member of independent SAGE and director of the Newcastle University Centre for Excellence in Regulatory Science, said the government should "stop mass asymptomatic testing" in schools as it was "leading to unnecessary isolation".

She raised concerns over the accuracy of the tests and warned the government should "focus on making sure people with clinical symptoms of Covid are tested".

A return for on-site testing?

On Monday, schools were told to prepare for the return of on-site testing from the start of next year.

In a letter to leaders, Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said that "given the uncertainties around the Covid situation ... we want to help schools and colleges to be prepared for all scenarios, including testing on return after the summer holidays".

Schools should have received PPE and tests "so that they can be ready to stand up on-site asymptomatic test sites (ATS) from the start of the

autumn term".

The government's position would be confirmed with other step 4 announcements, he said.

But Geoff Barton, the general secretary of ASCL, the leaders' union, said the plan created "many questions that need to be resolved about exactly how this would operate and how it would be supported".

He urged the government to demonstrate a greater sense of urgency as schools, pupils and parents still "have no clarity about the road ahead".

Don't send home whole bubbles, schools told

Operational guidance for schools says pupils and staff must not come into school if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for Covid.

But on Wednesday, Boris Johnson's spokesperson said it was "not a requirement necessarily that whole school bubbles needed to isolate" and decisions should be made on a case-by case basis.

A Teacher Tapp survey this week revealed that 74 per cent of primary staff say they would be asked to isolate if a child in their class tested positive, compared with just 3 per cent of secondary teachers.

A Cabinet source reportedly told The Daily Telegraph there had been "a lot of over-interpretation of the rules" by schools keener to send people home than they needed to be.

Stephen Chamberlain, the chief executive of Active Learning Trust, labelled the suggestion "unhelpful and unfair", adding: "There is little room for any interpretation and schools are following all the protocols as set out by the government"

Barton has also written to the prime minister to express his "dismay" at the "cynical attempt to shift the blame for your government's failure to address the escalating educational disruption of recent weeks on to schools".

Poorer pupils missed more school days last autumn

Poorer pupils missed almost 30 per cent more school days because of Covid in the autumn than their better-off counterparts.

Updated Department for Education absences data for the autumn term shows pupils eligible for free school meals missed 8.5 per cent of sessions in circumstances related to Covid.

In comparison, pupils not eligible for free school meals missed 6.6 per cent of sessions for the same reason, a difference of 28.8 per cent. There are two sessions in each school day.

The figures are likely to add to fears the pandemic has widened gaps between poorer and better-off pupils.

In autumn 2019, before the pandemic hit, pupils eligible for free school meals had an overall absence rate of 7.6 per cent, compared to 4.3 per cent among those not eligible.

The data shows pupils with special educational needs were also more likely to be absent due to Covid in the autumn.

Broken down by ethnic groups, Gypsy/Roma

pupils missed 10.9 per cent of sessions due to Covid in the autumn, while Pakistani pupils missed 10.8 per cent.

This is compared to 7 per cent of sessions missed by all pupils. The lowest absence rates were among Chinese pupils, at 6.1 per cent of sessions.

Pupils in years 10 and 11 were almost twice as likely to miss school because of Covid than younger pupils.

In Parliament



Williamson won't correct tutoring 'error'

SAMANTHA BOOTH
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EXCLUSIVE

Labour will accuse Gavin Williamson of breaching the ministerial code if he does not correct his "error" over the scale of the tutoring programme.

Williamson has refused to correct his claim last week that the government's flagship tutoring programme would reach "six million pupils".

The department confirmed to *Schools Week* the pledge was for "six million courses of tutoring" over three years. As the tutoring is aimed at disadvantaged pupils, it's likely some will have multiple courses across the three years – meaning far fewer than six million youngsters will benefit.

Kate Green, the shadow education secretary, raised three points of orders – including two this week – to force Williamson to correct the record.

On Monday, referring to our story, Green said there was a "possibility that the secretary of state has given incorrect information to the house".

Deputy speaker Nigel Evans reminded MPs that the ministerial code "requires ministers to correct any inadvertent errors in answers to parliamentary questions at the earliest opportunity".

"An error has been made in this instance, and I am sure that the government will seek to correct it as quickly as possible."



Green raised it again on Wednesday, but Williamson did not correct the record.

Green told *Schools Week* Williamson's "misleading comments cannot hide the fact he's failing our children with these utterly inadequate recovery plans", adding: "He must own-up to the fact his tutoring programme will reach just a fraction of the children he promised."

Labour is now considering writing to government next week as they believe it's a breach of the ministerial code.

The DfE did not respond to requests for comment.

Boris Johnson has also made the incorrect claim, saying on June 9 that "six million children will have access to tuition".

The catch-up package, announced last month, includes an extension of the National Tutoring Programme for a further three years, run by the outsourcing giant Randstad. Schools will also receive £579 million to develop "local tutoring provision".

Catch-up cash 'a bit feeble', says tsar

The former recovery commissioner has called the government's catch-up plans "a bit feeble", saying "we need significant greater investment than provided so far".

England's catch-up package equates to £310 for each pupil, compared with £1,800 in the United States and £2,100 in the Netherlands.

Speaking to the education select committee on Tuesday, Sir Kevan Collins said the way the government had responded compared with other countries was "quite frankly a bit feeble".

He said the "scale of shock – losing on average 115 days of face-to-face learning – requires a massive national effort to recover".

Collins resigned in wake of the government's £1 billion recovery announcement. He had called for £15 billion of measures, including 10,000 schools to increase their school day to an average of six and a half hours.

The government instead said it would review time spent in school. Ministers have also suggested more money could be announced at the spending review later this year.

But Collins said: "The money must get into schools as soon as possible. If we lose an academic year, I think that's unacceptable."

"We know what the issue is, and we know the implications for our children. I couldn't stand by and say there's some kind of process you just have to wait for and hope you get the money in that process."

He said resigning was "a very, very difficult decision. But in the end when the quantum comes back as too small, too narrow and too slow – I can't stand by it. I have to be clear and honest."



Make more subjects compulsory at key stage 4, says Harford

The national curriculum has become too "permissive", Ofsted's Sean Harford has said. But making more subjects compulsory at key stage 4 could help "lever change and improvement".

The national curriculum was "inherently a good thing", but Harford said the system was "probably on the wrong side of permissiveness in terms of how much freedom we give".

Harford, who will retire as national director of education at the watchdog in August, added: "If you are wanting to lever change and improvement, you need to have control over it, and of course that's where we don't have control."

"So I would suggest, and this is not an Ofsted view ... some more compulsory subjects in key stage 4 might be the thing."

Things had "gone a bit awry" following the



Sean Harford

removal of design and technology and languages as compulsory subjects at key stage 4 in the early 2000s. Entries for both subjects have since plummeted.

"Unfortunately, when you start taking the compulsion out of certain areas of it, then schools will respond in a certain way."

But he also acknowledged that Ofsted's previous inspection framework had some impact on schools' decision-making.

"In our previous framework, when we had a single judgment which was about outcomes, and was largely but not wholly based on test and exam results, I can see why schools would respond in a certain way."

However, the EBacc performance measure, which rates schools on the proportion of pupils sitting exams in five core subject areas, was "not the reason that curriculum has been narrowed", he said.

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FUTURES

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Speed read

How to be ready for Ofsted this September

Ofsted has unveiled a host of inspection changes ahead of its proposed return in September. Here's what you need to know.

1 INSPECTORS TO LOOK AT HOW TUTORING "SUPPORTS CURRICULUM AIMS"

The school inspection handbook, which provides guidance on full section 5 inspections, now states that "where the school is directly deploying tutors to support education recovery from the pandemic, inspectors will consider how their deployment supports the aims of the school curriculum".

The use of tutors will be integrated into the "quality of education" and "leadership and management" sections of the inspectors' report and "will not be inspected in its own right".

2 INADEQUATE LEADERSHIP RATING "LIKELY" FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT FAILURES

Following its sexual abuse review, Ofsted has added a new section addressing what schools are expected to do.

Schools lacking "adequate processes" will likely be "considered ineffective" – this in turn "is likely to lead to an inadequate leadership and management judgment".

However a 'requires improvement' judgment is possible if there are "minor weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements that are easy to put right and do not leave children either being harmed or at risk of harm".

3 KEEP COMPREHENSIVE RECORDS

Inspectors will expect schools to assume sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence are happening "in and around school, even when there are no specific reports".

Inspectors will check that "comprehensive records of all allegations are kept" and that the school's policies are reflected in its curriculum.

They will also expect schools "to be alert to factors that increase vulnerability or potential vulnerability" – these include mental ill health, domestic abuse and children with additional needs.

4 OFSTED WON'T ASSESS TEACHER GRADES

Inspectors will consider available external data, but will "be mindful of the age of this data, especially around statutory assessment and qualifications, when making judgments".

Teacher-assessed grades (TAGs) from 2020 and 2021 will not be used to assess curriculum impact.

"Inspectors will not expect or accept internal data from schools either instead of or in addition to published data," the guidance says.

5 LEADERS MUST SUPPORT STAFF TEACHING OUTSIDE THEIR EXPERTISE

If a school's "quality of education" is to be judged as good or above, teachers must "have good knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach".

This includes leaders providing "effective support, including for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise".

Ofsted has raised this issue repeatedly in recent weeks through its subject research reviews.

6 INSPECTION WINDOW MAY BE EXTENDED

Schools will normally receive a section 8 monitoring inspection every four years.

However, the guidance now states: "For the first routine inspection after May 4, 2021, this period may be extended by up to six terms."

Schools Week previously reported that Ofsted could temporarily extend its statutory inspection window by two years to ensure Covid disruption did not result in a breach of its legal obligations.

7 BAKER CLAUSE FAILURES WILL BE REPORTED

This clause forces schools to let colleges, apprenticeship providers and university technical colleges talk to pupils about potential study routes.

Guidance now states "if a school is not meeting its requirements ... inspectors will state this in the inspection report".

8 PRIVATE SCHOOLS MUST LET INSPECTORS SPEAK TO PUPILS

Ofsted may be commissioned by the Department for Education to check whether a private school meets safeguarding standards. Instances for visits include a change in the age range of pupils.

Inspectors "will need to talk to pupils" during these visits.

If they can't, inspectors will "judge the relevant independent school standards as not met".



Explainer

How do you manage behaviour? The DfE wants to know

Ministers have launched a “call for evidence” on behaviour management in schools. The consultation was pledged by education secretary Gavin Williamson earlier this year. Here’s what you need to know.

DfE to update behaviour advice (note: it won’t be mandatory)

The call for evidence asks schools how they manage behaviour. The Department for Education said it was hoping to find out “how schools maintain calm classrooms, the use of removal rooms and creating mobile phone-free school days, among other measures”.

The document states that responses will help “inform revisions” to non-statutory behaviour guidance and statutory guidance on exclusions. The government has already committed to revising this guidance.

And no phone ban has been proposed

Williamson has said he wants to make the school day “mobile-free”. But contrary to reports, the consultation does not propose a national ban, nor does it mention any legislation to enforce one.

In fact, only a small part of the call for evidence is about mobile phones, simply asking schools “what challenges” they would or do face in banning mobiles from the school day, and whether they have “any concerns” about any ban.

A blog post published by the DfE this week states banning mobile phones is “up to individual schools”, acknowledging the “vast majority of schools have some kind of limitation on pupils’ access ... during school time”.

The post goes on to say that the government supports heads who already ban phones and was “consulting on how to make this the norm when we revise our behaviour and discipline guidance”.



Information on behaviour management strategies sought

The consultation asks schools what new or refreshed behavioural practices they developed during the pandemic, and in particular what they will keep in place after restrictions are lifted.

The DfE also wants to know what adjustments schools made to the implementation of their behaviour policy, and what practices or

interventions are most effective during normal times.

It also asks what pupil-level practices or interventions “have been effective for pupils with particular vulnerabilities”.

Evidence wanted on “removal rooms” and in-school units

The DfE is also gathering evidence about the use of what it calls “removal rooms” – places pupils are sent temporarily if their behaviour is disruptive.

Schools are being asked if they use such rooms, how they are used, what factors make them successful, and how vulnerable pupils, such as those with SEND, are supported when placed in them.

The call for evidence also asks for information about the use of in-school behavioural units, sometimes called “inclusion units”.

Ministers want to know whether schools’ units support pupils from multiple schools, how many pupils they admit, what the “target cohort” is and whether attendance is full or part-time.

Questions over “managed moves”

“Managed moves” are when pupils are moved between schools with the agreement of all concerned, including parents.

The DfE doesn’t routinely collect data on these, and various organisations have expressed fears about the potential for “off-rolling”.

The consultation asks schools in what circumstances managed moves are considered appropriate, how often they use them, how they are monitored and who is involved.

Heads challenge government priorities

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of ASCL, the school leaders’ union, said Williamson “appears to be obsessed with the subject of mobile phones in schools”.

He said every school would already have a “robust policy on the use of mobile phones – it isn’t some sort of digital free-for-all”.

“Approaches will vary between settings and contexts, but this is an operational decision for schools, not something that can be micromanaged from Westminster.”

Sarah Hannafin, the senior policy adviser at the leaders’ union NAHT, said phone bans “work for some schools but there isn’t one policy that will work for all”.

“Outright banning can cause more problems than it solves, driving phone use ‘underground’ and making problems less visible and obvious for schools to tackle.”



Gavin Williamson

Investigation

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The 'minefield' of post-Brexit life in schools

TOM BELGER

@TOM_BELGER

EXCLUSIVE

Some migrant pupils risk exclusion from school trips and European staff risk losing jobs under post-Brexit immigration reforms.

As the EU settlement scheme deadline expires this week, *Schools Week* investigates wider Brexit disruption to schools, from rising building costs to recruitment and travel woes.

Julie McCulloch, the policy director at ASCL, the school leaders' union, said Brexit's far-reaching effects were a "potential minefield" for leaders who faced "wading through a mire of complex changes" on top of handling Covid.

Migrant pupils "penalised"

One little-noticed casualty is Britain's lost access to the EU's "list of travellers" scheme, which lets non-EU migrant pupils travel on school trips without usual visa rules.

Some non-EU migrant pupils and children born to non-EU nationals now need visas for 16 European countries, including Greece, Portugal and Austria.

Visas cost €80 (£70) for over-12s, €40 for under-12s and nothing for under-6s. These pupils also need passports for trips to France, Italy and Spain.

Spain has only offered them visa-free travel "subject to reciprocity and overall EU-UK relations", EU documents show. It creates uncertainty beyond October, when the UK will impose similar rules for EU trips to Britain.

Paul Harrison, director of school consultants edEducation, fears trips could be derailed by the extra costs, bureaucracy and fact schools may not become aware until the last minute. "The danger is it penalises disadvantaged pupils."

Dr Paul Heery, CEO of the White Hills Park Trust, said it subsidised trips for those unable to afford them, but not all parents may ask for help. "If it's more costly and bureaucratic too, it makes it harder to keep the level of visits we've had in the past."

Trip organisers for EU schools told the *Guardian* up to 375,000 fewer children could travel to Britain over the changes, with alternative destinations found that all pupils could visit more easily.

Schools Week could find no UK government guidance online, with details only obtained by asking EU officials. A government source acknowledged changes, but said EU visa rules



were "for the EU to decide".

Alarm over staff jobs

Schools face more pressing Brexit issues for current staff, however.

Law firm Stone King has had more requests from schools wanting support with applications for settled status from EU staff.

New Home Office guidance says employers must advise EU nationals known to have missed the deadline to file late applications.

If they do not within 28 days, employers should "cease their employment", or risk penalties for hiring "illegal" workers.

Yet employers are not obliged to check current staff status, risking no penalties if status is unknown.

Paul Whiteman, the general secretary of the leaders' union NAHT, highlighted confusion over "apparently contradictory" advice, and said the government must ensure teachers received settled status.

Wider Brexit disruption

Recent research suggests 1.3 million migrants have left as Covid battered the jobs market.

Dan Morrow, the chief executive of Dartmoor MAT, said building project costs at his schools had soared by a third since 2019, partly because of shortages of European builders. "We've had to delay some essential repairs and builds."

Sheffield schools began preparing for meal supply disruption last week as a result of shortages of EU delivery drivers.

Julie Moktadir, a partner and head of immigration at Stone King, said many EU nationals were site managers, lunchtime supervisors and teaching assistants. But new

EU recruits now needed sponsorship, with a £25,600 salary threshold and other rules making them ineligible for such roles.

Narmi Thiranagama, an immigration policy officer at the union Unison, backed scrapping the £25,600 threshold to fill shortages until ministers addressed "poor pay".

Language worries

Many EU teachers can obtain sponsorship, but visas cost up to £1,220 and annual healthcare surcharges £624.

Employers must register for a cost of £536. *Schools Week* analysis of UK-wide data suggests only 261 academies and 185 councils have done so.

Baroness Jean Cousins, a co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages, said that about a third of secondary languages teachers were EU nationals.

"If it's made difficult to recruit while not producing enough home-grown linguists, it really would spell danger for the sustainability of languages."

The government wants 90 per cent of pupils studying all EBacc subjects, including a language, by 2025.

But McCulloch said it was already missing languages recruitment targets, with the number of European teachers seeking qualified teacher status halving since the EU referendum.

New TeachVac analysis of UCAS data shows that offers for languages teacher training places have also hit their lowest since 2014.

EU nationals arriving this year no longer qualify for capped fees, tuition and maintenance loans or bursaries, and face average postgraduate fees £5,650 above the £9,250 cap for UK nationals.

Quicker visas

A government spokesperson said reforms made all overseas recruitment "easier and quicker", however.

Lower visa fees and salary thresholds for international languages teachers show "we value their contribution".

Pilots of visa advice and overseas teacher "acclimatisation" services for secondaries could be expanded in future. A cap on skilled workers has also been lifted, and recruiters no longer have to advertise domestically before looking overseas.

News

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Proposed new VA secondary is scrapped

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

One of only three proposed new voluntary-aided schools approved for government set-up cash has been cancelled because of a lack of basic need and an available site.

Avanti Schools Trust applied to open a new Hindu secondary school in the London Borough of Redbridge in 2018 after the government reopened the process for new VA schools to win capital cash.

Applications were reopened after ministers reneged on a promise to lift the cap on the number of pupils who could be recruited based on their faith in new free schools. But of 14 applications, only one was approved in principle, and two others, including Avanti's, were placed "on hold".

But this week, the Department for Education removed Avanti's bid from its list of bids on hold.



Mike Ion, Avanti's education director, said the trust and local community were "bitterly disappointed that our VA school proposal has been cancelled due to a lack of basic need and site availability".

He said Avanti, which already runs a primary school in Redbridge, was "absolutely committed to establishing a secondary provision in the near future".

"There is only one Hindu secondary school in the whole of Greater London and Hinduism is the most underrepresented

faith in the country," said Ion. "We know how disappointed those families will be and will continue to press the DfE to work with us towards a positive solution."

Schools Week revealed in 2019 how Avanti was offering "naming rights" to prospective parents who pledged large donations, as it struggled to raise its £2 million, ten per cent contribution to capital costs.

The DfE said at the time it was working to identify a site for the school, and gave Avanti until September of that year to come up with the cash and find a site.

Of the remaining VA school bids, one from the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education for the new Kingston Church of England Secondary School remains on hold, while a bid from the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia to open Hampton Waters Roman Catholic VA School was approved "in principle".

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Just 1 in 10 heads to get mental health support

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOOTH

EXCLUSIVE

Only 10 per cent of school leaders look set to get mental health support, despite a previous promise to make the new government scheme available to all.

The Department for Education is looking to award a £760,000 contract for an 18-month package of wellbeing support from autumn this year.

The tender says the programme must be made available to state primary and secondary school leaders of deputy head level and above, and prioritise those with no access to an employee assistance programme or the equivalent.

A wellbeing survey last year found that 20 per cent of teachers had no form of mental health support available at their school or college.

The tender adds that the contractor must deliver a "programme of professional supervision to a minimum of 2,000 school



leaders who are experiencing mental health and wellbeing challenges". There are 20,000 state schools in England.

But the DfE told *Schools Week* in May that the intention was to make the service available to all primary and secondary schools.

Schools Week asked the department

whether there would be capacity to exceed 2,000 to meet demand, but it said it had nothing further to add.

Under the scheme, leaders will receive at least six sessions of online peer support or one-to-one online or phone counselling.

Schools Week understands the DfE wants to help leaders "by plugging the gap in provision".

The department also wants to "increase the evidence base" on the impact and value for money of "professional supervision and wellbeing support" for school leaders and "learn lessons to inform future policy and interventions".

The programme will be based on a current £157,000 pilot run by the Education Support charity, which is working with up to 385 schools.

According to the charity's teacher wellbeing index survey last year, 77 per cent of teachers reported they were stressed. This jumped to 89 per cent for senior leaders.

EXCLUSIVE

JAMES CARR | @JAMESCARR_93

'Tell us the whole story on pupil premium change'

The government must publish a full breakdown of its pupil premium "stealth cut" analysis as the current explanation only reveals part of the story, a think tank has warned.

Last week the Department for Education finally admitted schools would miss out on about £90 million in pupil premium funding.

The admission comes after ministers discreetly changed the system to be based on free school meals (FSM) eligibility in the October 2020 census, rather than the usual January census.

According to DfE data, an additional 103,900 pupils became eligible for pupil premium between October 2020 and January this year.

The DfE's analysis states primary schools lost out on £92.4 million because of the change, but secondary schools gained £2.6 million - with nearly 5,000 additional recipients benefiting.

Jon Andrews, the head of analysis at the Education Policy Institute (EPI), warned that "simply showing the net change in pupil

premium eligibility only tells us part of the story".

Previous analysis of freedom of information requests sent to local authorities suggested the loss could reach £125 million, while a survey by the leaders' union NAHT showed it could be up to £180 million.

Andrews called on the DfE to "break down [its] figures" as "the losers from this change are those pupils who have recently moved on to free school meals for the first time, the winners are those who were last eligible for free school meals over six years ago".

Pupil premium funding is triggered if a child has been eligible for free school meals in the past six years - this figure is often referred to as FSM6.

Pupils can get the premium next year if they were eligible for FSM at any point between January 2015 and October 2020. Before the census change, this would have been between May 2015 and January 2021.

This means some pupils eligible for FSM in January 2015, but not the following May, may

now get funding they otherwise wouldn't have received.

The DfE said it worked out the figures by comparing the total number of FSM6 pupils with those that would have attracted pupil premium if the January census had been used.

Dave Thomson, from FFT Education Datalab, said the methodology "sounds right, but doesn't really help the public understand how the differences have arisen".

"We need something that shows movements into and out of the FSM6 group over time."

In January 2016, the DfE reported FSM had fallen to a 16-year low - at just 14.3 per cent of pupils. By 2018, it had fallen further to 13.6 per cent, but it now sits at 20.8 per cent.

When asked to provide its methodology, the DfE said there was nothing more to add as the £90 million was based on publicly available census data.

But the latest FSM6 data is yet to be published.

EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Delays can be tolerated, but silence is an insult

The government has now failed for a third time to keep its own promise to publish the long-awaited SEND review.

The review will attempt to solve problems caused by the government's own reforms. And the sector has already been waiting years.

As we point out, people can stomach delays - we are in a pandemic after all - if there is good reason. But the radio silence from the government is disrespectful.

Why can't government give clarity about why the sector has been left in limbo, again? Offering an olive branch of decent communication is an easy win.

Instead, the silence fuels fears that big promises will just end up as damp a squib as the catch-up plan.

Any serious SEND solutions will need funding attached. Let's hope ministers are using this extra time to bullet-proof their case to the Treasury for the funding the

sector needs to right the reform wrongs.

One topic ministers have been vocal on this week, though, is banning mobile phones. After making a big fuss, it turns out the department is only looking to tweak non-statutory guidance. Much ado about nothing.

Of bigger importance this week is the (sort of) announcement that Covid restrictions such as bubbles and self-isolation for close contacts are to be scrapped.

Williamson makes a compelling point: it's not fair to subject children to additional restrictions while everyone gets on with a life with fewer Covid rules.

However, it's a big change - and comes at a concerning time, as the Delta variant seems to be running wild in classrooms.

What school leaders want is clarity. Williamson has promised the sector "plenty" of notice to implement the changes. But we've heard such promises before, and school leaders will rightly be wary.



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‘Let’s develop teachers more as we do in medicine’

Peps Mccrea is ‘obsessed with the mechanics of teaching’. Here he explains why he wants to take the mystery out of the classroom

Peps Mccrea, dean of learning design, Ambition Institute

Peps Mccrea, dean of learning design at Ambition Institute, must have one of the best names (and possibly one of the best job titles) in education. It certainly makes him a memorable social media presence, where the teacher-educator tweets research papers about how to give better lessons (he’s also an author of ultra-

concise books on the subject). I can’t help myself: is Peps his real name?

“My passport name is Paul,” laughs Mccrea. “When I was in primary school, one of my teachers called all the pupils by their equivalent French first names. So, mine was Pepe or Peps, and from then on I’ve always been called that.”

It’s not the only way that school impressed itself deeply into Mccrea’s identity. Classrooms seem to be his second home.

Like Mccrea, his mum was a maths teacher, and as a young child in Northern Ireland he would sit at the back of her classroom after his own school day had finished.

“I’d try and do the questions the other kids were doing. She had a lovely big blackboard, one of those roller ones you pull down. She loved teaching. I’m very proud of her – she added a lot of value to that community over a long period of time.”

Mccrea has always been surrounded by

Profile: Peps Mccrea



Olympic Gold Medalist Stephen Martin, who gained gold with the Great Britain hockey team at Seoul, is surrounded by enthusiastic hockey players eager to get a glimpse of his medal when he visited the Cuckoo Club's Saturday morning coaching session held at Cuckoo.

Mccrea (third from the left, back) with Olympic gold medalist Stephen Martin

teachers: his mum's four sisters are teachers, his sister teaches maths, and his wife is a maths lecturer. I'm just remarking on this when Mccrea jumps up and takes me eagerly downstairs (on his laptop) to the living room.

"This is our blackboard!" he grins, and there against one of the walls is a roller specimen just like his mum's, with chalk scribbles all over it. "Look, you can see I've got children," he beams, pointing to several pronouncements of 'poo' in wobbly handwriting. Although this blackboard is not his mum's original, Mccrea still has her old wooden protractor, proudly displayed on his desk.

A love for his subject also appears to be inked into his very skin: he has a black circle tattooed on to one palm, and a long line inked from his hand up to his shoulder. I can't help feeling he is himself a human blackboard. Apparently Mccrea will only reveal their full meaning over a pint, but he says as a maths teacher he particularly likes geometrical shapes.

Inspiration from the school playground also makes an appearance indoors, with an actual slide beside the stairs. "We have to get the friends' kids to sign a waiver," he grins. Best of all, however, is a wall beside the blackboard where pages of old maths textbooks are pasted all over like hipster wallpaper, tiny algebra equations just visible.

I ask whether this is evidence of nostalgia for a more traditional age of schooling. "No, it's just a love of teaching. They're artefacts from that age and history. It's not that I think there's a better era, actually, I think there's potential for a lot better teaching nowadays,



Mccrea in the classroom

"He jumped up, ripped his book in half and ran out the window"

because we have access to much more evidence now."

Mccrea has produced three books on teaching that have a solid fanbase in the sector. Approval from the more 'traditionalist' educators has led some to place Mccrea in the 'trad' camp, but he says he's "agnostic" about such labels. Instead, he's just interested in what works.

The blackboard, slides and shapes hint at the two obsessions in Mccrea's life: teaching and design. His father was an engineer, and Mccrea was brought up on a rural farm in County Tyrone, where he says he was often building.

"There was a lot of craft and making. If you needed a new shed or a gate, you'd go and build it." Yet while studying engineering at the University of Bath, he found he wasn't interested in the business side.

He recalled a knack he had for explaining things to friends at schools (often leaping up to explain concepts while the teacher was out on a fag break) and so he instead started a PGCE in Brighton. It was here he began thinking hard about how lessons work.

Mccrea recalls "a notoriously challenging year 8 group" while on placement. "I'd got them settled and was teaching them, thinking, 'this is amazing'." He approached one "particularly wild" pupil and congratulated him on his graph, noting that he needed to start the x axis at 0 rather than 1.

"He jumped up, ripped his book in half, swore at me, and ran out through the window. I thought, 'how did it go so wrong so fast?'"

After four years at another school, Mccrea returned to this same school and helped improve the maths results. Finally, after seven years at the chalkface, he was nabbed by Brighton University to teach on its PGCE course.

"The draw for me was, I loved teaching pupils, but I was even more interested in the mechanics of teaching itself. What does good teaching look like and how do you do it? It was like an obsession."

He's since written three books on the topic. The first, *Lean Lesson Planning*, was born out of a desire to help teachers

Profile: Peps Mccrea



Mccrea's desk (with wooden protractor)



Mccrea filming an explainer

“Teaching is so hard and so complex, it deserves and needs a real level of attention”

establish “what you want pupils to think about at every point in the lesson. Doing that provides an explanation for why you do certain things in the lesson. Without that lens, there’s a risk you do stuff in the classroom that doesn’t form a coherent plan.” For Mccrea, better teaching is about creating a smarter design.

His second book, a couple of years later, was *Memorable Teaching*, which explained how to make best use of pupils’ working and long-term memory. “It’s pretty mainstream now, but at that stage it felt more cutting edge.”

But Mccrea decided his second book “wasn’t the full picture”. He explains that how teachers actually motivated pupils “stayed in this mysterious realm... Are you born with it? Is it charisma?”

Mccrea has a problem with the idea of an “inspirational” teacher. Evidence shows that inspiring someone doesn’t always motivate them to change their behaviour, he says. So the third book, *Motivated Teaching*, argues other factors have greater sway, such as

“social proof”.

“Think about Facebook and Twitter,” he says. “They have hundreds of developers whose job it is to get you to do a specific thing. There’s a lot we can learn from them in terms of how to motivate people to do things.” The ‘like’ button, for instance, works as social proof, just like the star ratings for Amazon products. Teachers can use this insight in the classroom.

“The classic mistake is if I tell my class, ‘lots of you didn’t do your homework, sort it out’, then the normative message I’m sending is that most people don’t do their homework, and those who did are now feeling anxious, because they’re at risk of not being part of the group.”

Instead, teachers should congratulate the majority when they do something right – not highlight the fact the majority have not done what the teacher wants. His point is that teachers can boost pupil motivation by understanding how norms and belonging work.

Mccrea has clearly thought hard about the

mechanics of teaching. Why look so closely?

“Because teaching is so hard and so complex. It deserves and needs a real level of attention. It’s too easy to treat aspects of teaching as a mystery and write them off.”

As dean of learning design at Ambition Institute (‘dean’ conjuring up a university figure, knee-deep in research), Mccrea has landed a role he could almost have written himself. “In a lot of other teacher education contexts, I had to be the designer and the deliverer, whereas here we have a dedicated design team, and a dedicated delivery team. So I can make sure my team are really expert at understanding the curriculum.”

His team have been mapping out the Early Career Framework, for which Ambition is a lead provider. Under the framework, new teachers are funded for a structured two-year package of professional development. It will be rolled out nationally from September.

“It’s about creating the points to engage with the evidence at a deeper level,” reflects Mccrea, excitedly. “It’s one step closer to teaching people more as we do in medicine.”

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Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Eton's investment in sixth forms for disadvantaged pupils is risky, writes Francis Green

News that Eton is partnering with Star Academies to sponsor three academically selective sixth forms in the Midlands and the north of England have been greeted with a mixture of approval and concern. Some children from disadvantaged families will feel their life chances have improved. But will there be losers as well as winners?

The new schools are to be modelled on the existing, highly selective London Academy of Excellence, whose pupils achieve well. Eton says it is trying to shed its elitist image. Acknowledging its privileged position, it opened its facilities to key workers during the early Covid lockdowns, and now is extending its educational outreach.

Judging from the evidence, children drafted into private school access schemes in the past have done relatively well. The prime example is the assisted places scheme under Margaret Thatcher, although this was mainly hijacked by the middle classes.

Those who go to grammar schools also appear to do somewhat better than their peers who don't make it past the 11-plus. So maybe academic selection helps those selected a little, but the evidence is not decisive once their starting points are thoroughly taken into account.

How much of an effect the new ventures will have on their pupils will depend on how much money Eton puts in. On average, private schools devote at least three times the resources that are available for state school children. At Eton the ratio is much higher. But we don't know yet how much the new colleges will have to play with.

Each pupil will also benefit from having other bright pupils as their peers, but in all likelihood the value-



FRANCIS GREEN

Professor of work and education economics, UCL Institute of Education

Eton reaches out. So who benefits?

added effects of the new colleges, although positive, will be small. Expect to hear stories in a few years' time of especially good A-level performances and top university access, but remember then that the point was to

of venture: it is risky, and I don't mean from a financial perspective. Academically selective schools have a dampening and potentially demoralising effect on neighbouring schools - evidence tells us that the

“Such sponsorships are far too small to noticeably level up our school system”

select high-achievers to begin with. This expectation of achievement hides the key problem with this sort

progress of children who are not selected is harmed. I can't see why it would be different in this case.



When eventually the “lucky” locations for the three ventures are revealed and approved, headteachers in some nearby schools may be justifiably worried. To counter the potential harm, Eton could be doing more good if the new colleges were required to be no more academically selective than neighbouring schools and sixth-form colleges. It could then use means-testing as its primary or sole selection criterion. That would, of course, require careful calibration and monitoring, but experience suggests this is quite feasible.

If nothing else, Eton and Star Academies would do well to sponsor an independent evaluation of the overall impact on the localities they are hoping to help. Perhaps they could even team up with the relevant local authorities for this.

Taken in the round, the news helps to soften the elitist reputation of Eton. But in the large scheme of things these and similar sponsorships are far too small to noticeably level up the differences in our segmented school system. Last year, only 25 private schools (1 per cent of all private schools) went in for any sponsorship of state schools. And we can doubt know how much resources were devoted to many of them – such facts are never revealed when claims of public benefit are made.

It is unlikely that many other schools will follow suit. Eton is the richest of them all with net assets in excess of £450 million and an income of nearly £58,000 for every pupil. Most other schools thinking of doing the same thing would have to ask their fee-paying parents to foot the bill. That seems unlikely.

Opinion

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

It's still possible for the DfE to play TAG grade inflation down, writes Jagjit Chadha, but we are well into extra time

We have known since early this year that because of Covid and lockdowns, public exams would not go ahead this summer. Accordingly, the government announced that teachers would be awarding grades, based on data and evidence collected for each pupil.

As opposed to the external verification of exam performance, there is an obvious potential problem with such a plan. How can we design a mechanism to encourage accurate portrayal of pupil performance, when there may be an incentive to exaggerate?

That's not to criticise teachers and schools. It's just an objective assessment of the circumstances they find themselves in.

For a start, there is the simple reality of peer pressure. There may be no league tables, but we're far from schools seeing each other as anything other than competitors or comparators, if only because they are accountable for their results. Then there's parental and pupil pressure. All are acutely aware that the grading system might be tenuous, and that awarded grades will still play a central role in qualifying young people for their next steps.

Third, and perhaps more subtly, the assumption of grade inflation may be self-fulfilling. All schools will assume all other schools also fear getting left behind and behave accordingly. And this self-fulfilling process will be fuelled by the perceived absence of any threat or sanction if teacher assessed grades (TAGs) are substantially different from tolerance levels or beyond understood variances.

Translated, the fear of giving grades



JAGJIT CHADHA

Director, National Institute of Economic and Social Research

TAG you're it! There's still time to prevent grade inflation

that are too low is much greater than the fear of giving grades that are too high.

Separately, I have analysed this problem using simple game theory to assess the grade inflation bias. In such an analysis, the benefits to schools

always for schools to high-ball their marks.

An appropriate policy response would involve imposing some costs to grade exaggeration. The external moderation of marking by exam boards is a start. But it's

“Fear of giving low grades is much greater than fear of giving high ones”

of producing accurate grades, low-balling or high-balling depends on the strategies adopted by other schools.

It was easy to show that there is no expected advantage for any school to low-ball grades. Sadly, there were equally few advantages in targeting accuracy. The best option, in the absence of any change to incentives, is

unclear whether the thought that “exam boards may want to discuss the centre's grading decisions” and “where the exam board disagrees with the centre's grade, it can withhold results” are sufficient threats.

And it's fair to schools that exam boards have already begun to agree a reduction in their fees in



acknowledgment of schools' increased costs for collecting data and evidence. The boards still need to fund systematic moderation after all. But they could also be doing more to support school evidence collection as they go about their sample checks.

More importantly, some of the information on Ofqual's sampling methodology has been published, but it's not enough. It looks to be concentrating mostly on outliers, which could let off a host of centres who high-ball their grades through intra-mark inflation (Cs becoming Bs, for example) but not enough to raise flags. The cumulative effect could be huge.

The DfE consultation documents said that: “Exam boards will put in place arrangements for external quality assurance (QA) to check each centre's internal QA process [...]”. But what we have so far is still too cursory.

It is now early July. We still don't quite know what is going on prior to results day. And we don't seem to have worked out what we will do afterwards to hold schools who high-ball to account, without penalising students. The deadline for teachers to submit their marks has passed, and results are expected in August. There is still time to get this right, but not a lot.

The government must provide more support to schools for the collection of the data and evidence required of them to corroborate their grades. Ofqual must also ex ante announce its specific monitoring and moderation process. And it must commit to an ex-post analysis of marking decisions.

Failing to do so risks the validity of our qualifications system this year. Which will hurt most those who choose to play fair.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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The lack of diversity in the English curriculum is less pervasive than it was, but a new report shows how far we still have to go, writes Caren Onanda

I have always loved discovering the world through reading and it's one of the reasons why I became a teacher. However, there was always something missing from my literary experience, and it wasn't until I grew older that I started to understand and address it.

Now, 14 years into my career, and as an English teacher and pastoral leader at a very multicultural school, I dedicate a lot of my time to working with my colleagues and external organisations to extend the range of opportunities available to our students.

Be it through the curriculum, enrichment or interventions, we need to reflect the rich diversity of society in the educational experience our students have. In our English department, we have brought in books like *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas for year 9s. Poet, Inua Ellams, broadcaster, Afua Hirsch and writer, Nels Abbey are among a wide range of writers we've invited to work with our students.

And they really value the space to have important discussions about society, politics and identity among other topics. When the content reflects the students, the impact is that they engage more – in the study of literature as well as society at large. We've found they're more likely to pick English at A-level too.

So we're making progress, but when it comes to examined elements we still find ourselves more constrained. Stories about people of colour often revolve around tales of pain, anguish and death. Where are the books by and about people of colour just having normal lives? We have to be bolder in



CAREN ONANDA

English lead practitioner and head of year 10, Woolwich Polytechnic School for Boys

Diversifying literature is a collective responsibility – and it works

our pursuit of change. Diversifying the texts and authors that all children study can only enrich and empower their lives.

which perhaps some can't. These are the schools and communities where the work of creating these opportunities needs to happen most.

“When the content reflects the students, they engage more

Introducing a new book can often mean creating a new scheme of work, new lesson plans and resources. That's one of the biggest hurdles, but the pay-off for students is huge. At least we can mostly count on parental support,

I was born in Kenya and moved to the UK at the age of five, going to school in Newcastle (where my father completed his PhD) and in Edinburgh, from the age of 14. My formal UK schooling lacked any diversity in the



texts we studied. Luckily, I had access to diverse literature and learning opportunities – but only at home.

It was only when I went to university, and then when I trained as a teacher, that I fully realised how entrenched that lack of diversity was. I started to make a more concerted effort to read books from diverse authors in my 20s. But when I studied for a Masters in contemporary literature, I realised I still had not read enough – or even heard of Critical Race Theory.

How could I have got through so much of my education without anybody bringing these diverse concepts and texts to my attention? The absence of diversity in literature is simply that pervasive.

I'm glad that the work of activists and educators over time is bringing about change. We're finally talking about decolonising the curriculum. We're looking at the diversity of our workforce. We're analysing the results of different ethnic and socioeconomic groups and asking tough questions. Schools are beginning to do the work.

And they are being supported in the effort. Penguin Random House and The Runnymede Trust, for example, have teamed up with individuals and groups who have been campaigning for educational reform for years to create the *Lit in Colour* initiative. Its first report is out this week and it makes for sobering reading.

So, diversifying literature (and the rest of the curriculum) is finally being seen as a collective responsibility. But there's still a lot of work to be done before the young people we teach, who love to discover the world through reading, do so without a gap they'll be left to fill in for themselves later.

Opinion

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

If the DfE keep floating the proposal of lengthening the school day for lack of a better idea, we've got three more promising prospects for them, say two Chartered College researchers

The idea of extending the school day to help students 'catch up' on 'lost' learning seems to be endlessly teased by the government in the media. If that's because of a lack of other ideas, then the Chartered College of Teaching exists to serve.

In fact, we have already stated that the research findings on this are much more nuanced than the idea's proponents make out. The OECD's analysis of 2018 PISA data states that "time spent in school is, in fact, much less important than how the available time is spent".

While some studies suggest additional teaching hours benefit student progress, others show that the first two hours of teaching have the greatest effect, after which the impact drops off. PISA evidence also shows that remedial lessons have no effect, on average, on student attainment.

So, concerned about the feasibility and impact of 'catch-up' lessons during an extended school day, the Chartered College looked into alternative strategies to support student progress. Three key suggestions arose from the international evidence.

First, a quiet room for homework and study after school hours was the most frequently observed strategy for after-school support in PISA 2018 data. Even after accounting for per-capita GDP, students with this access performed better on average in reading, maths and science. So access to quiet study space at school could be especially beneficial to those who can't access such a space at home.

DR LISA-MARIA MÜLLER

Education research manager, Chartered College of Teaching

GEMMA GOLDENBERG

Research and learning specialist, Chartered College of Teaching



Three better ideas than extending the school day

While evidence on the impact of background noise on concentration is complex, it suggests that intelligible speech and background music with lyrics may impact reading comprehension particularly negatively and that students with additional

effective, it should supplement rather than replace regular teaching.

Third and finally, a report from the Social Mobility Commission states that extracurricular activities result in a range of positive outcomes for young people, including improved

“Extending school time is a low-impact strategy based on moderate evidence”

learning needs such as hearing impairments, EAL or those who receive learning support may be particularly negatively affected by background noise.

Second, peer tutoring was also associated with higher student performance in the latest PISA data. Extensive research shows an overall positive effect on attainment equivalent to five months of additional progress.

Some evidence suggests that gains are greatest for children with SEND and those who are low-attaining, and that peer tutoring programmes are most effective when they take place during school hours. Same-age tutoring in programmes of less than eight weeks and sessions of less than 30 minutes is optimal, and to make it even more

attendance, confidence and social skills.

According to an OECD report, countries whose schools offer a larger amount of creative extracurricular activities show greater equity in student performance. In addition, students enrolled at schools providing such activities perform better in reading, on average.

Some research also suggests that extracurricular activities can have a positive impact on academic achievement. But opportunities to take part in such activities are unequally distributed, so providing all students with equal access to them promises a range of benefits.

The DfE are prone to citing the EEF review on extending school time, yet



it categorises this as a low-impact strategy based on only moderate evidence. Moreover, it recommends that any such increase should be supported by both parents and staff.

Recovering from the pandemic is a national effort. Children will need parents, teachers, school leaders and policymakers to work together to see them through, and strategies that are grounded in clear evidence will maximise our chances of success.

But even the three suggestions above come with provisos and caveats. Context is key, and implementation is complex and multi-faceted.

That's why, among all the stakeholders, teachers' professional experience and judgment must not be overlooked. Our schools are skilled at weighing up the costs and benefits of interventions to staff, students and families.

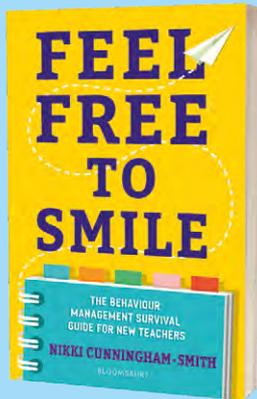
We can provide them with alternatives for consideration. But if decisions are taken out of their hands and made on the basis of winning votes in the short term rather than winning the recovery in the long term, then we risk making things worse for students and schools who have already faced significant challenges.

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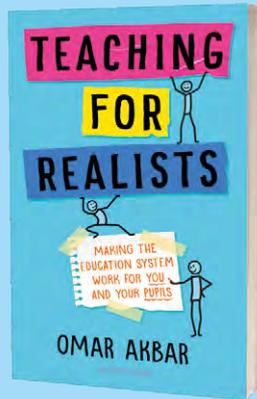
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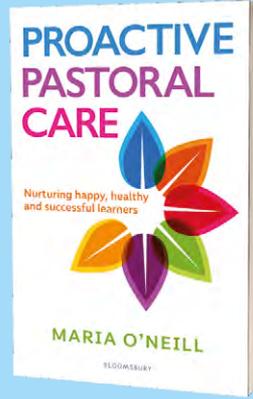
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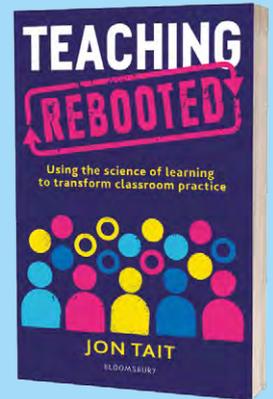
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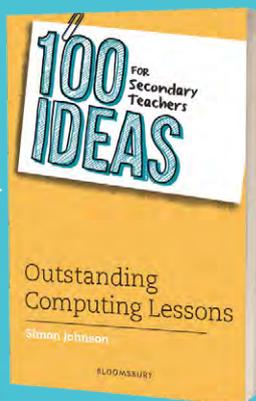


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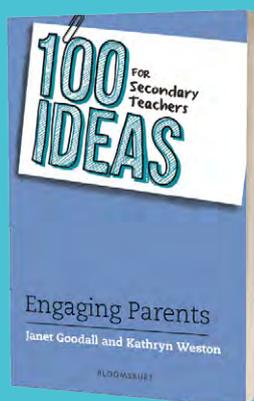
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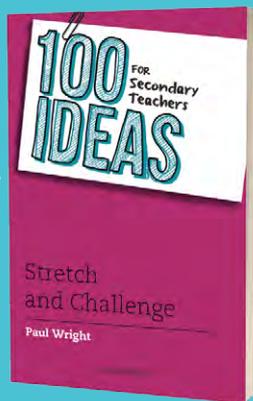
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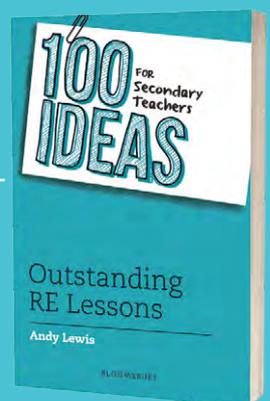
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Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



How To Think

Author: Tom Chatfield

Publisher: SAGE Publications

Reviewer: Amir Arezoo, vice principal, Horizon Community College

Tom Chatfield is a very clever guy. He has a PhD, has taught at St John's College, Oxford, and is a philosopher of technology. He is clearly someone who has been able to think and make sense of the world around him. In his new book, *How To Think*, he sets out on a mission to help the reader "become a more confident thinker and learner" with "techniques for dealing constructively with doubt and uncertainty". In my mind, he does a pretty decent job.

I take from Chatfield that the essence of thinking well is to hold an inherent scepticism about what we're presented with on a daily basis; how to parse the melange of information, misinformation and disinformation that we take, receive or are burdened with on a daily basis in these modern times. This is rooted in reflecting on how we communicate ideas, reason, debate and explain, using a Socratic model of questioning the assumptions on which we base our thinking. In fact, Chatfield asks the reader not to "take anything for granted", including anything he offers in the book.

Contrary to the simple design of its cover, *How To Think* is a densely packed, aphorism-laden tract. However, it is a very cleverly structured document that never feels like it over-burdens you. Its chapters are interspersed with activities to engage with the reflective process, and I was instantly drawn to taking part, annotating the book as I went along and actively pausing to consider the ideas presented. In other

words, *How To Think* is not just a book that explains effective cognitive processes; it actually models these processes and trains you in them.

Many teachers have engaged with cognitive theories in the past decade, and those versed in them may feel there's nothing new in the ideas Chatfield puts forward. However, Chatfield is not looking to push new boundaries in the field of cognitive science with this book.

Instead, he offers a multi-layered approach to providing rigour to the cognitive process. The combinations of case studies, examples of the steps to be taken in the different models of thinking and the reflective exercises make great illustrations of metacognition in action.

There are some downsides. In the attempt to provide concrete examples of modes of thinking, Chatfield relies a great deal on our experiences of the coronavirus pandemic. In a sense, this seems justified. It's timely and relevant, and it has provided the internet with a great source for a raft of conspiracy theories

and 'alternative facts' amid a constantly evolving understanding of what the global populace is facing.

For me, though, it felt like it actually distracted from some of the salient points the author was making. I appreciate the intention to make the chapters

engaging, but I question whether most of us are really in a position to be dispassionate enough about present circumstances to truly focus on the messages shared.

Likewise, the dichotomy of quoting Ken Robinson's thoughts on creativity while describing the importance of structure for creative thinking felt like a misstep. To put the thoughts of the champion of unharnessed divergent thinking in support of what is otherwise such an organised and procedural book is odd, to say the least. At worst, it undermines the book's credibility.

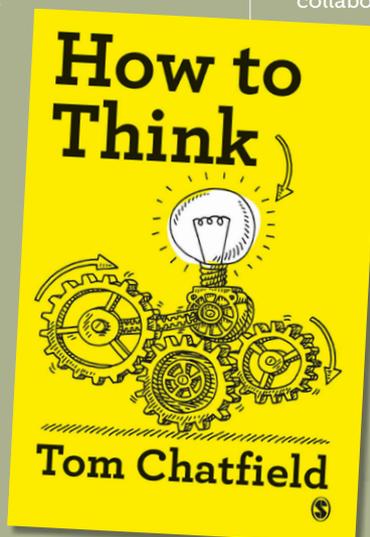
That aside, *How To Think* is definitely worthy of teachers' attention. It would make an excellent tool to inform planning, how to formulate proper arguments and explain ideas. Likewise, it would be a helpful resource to explicitly impart these skills to students, not just to model them.

School leaders will find plenty to support them too: how to effectively collaborate on new projects, how to

tackle others' and one's own assumptions, and how to overcome crystallised and polarised views.

As Chatfield states, "All learning entails the admission and exploration of ignorance". In our antithetical culture, any path to synthesis and enlightenment seems worth exploring, not least when it comes to the world of education.

So edu-Twitterati, take note.



Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is **Sonia Thompson, Headteacher, St Matthew's C of E teaching and research school, Birmingham**

@son1bun

Building a house in a student's skull – modelling in the English classroom
@curtainsleep

The secondary English community is so vibrant. Even a cursory glance at #TeamEnglish on Twitter is enough to prove that. Alex Wright adds to that vibrancy with a joyous blog, and his latest post charts the process of getting knowledge into his student's heads.

He analogises modelling as a classroom practice, with building, dismantling and rebuilding. Acknowledging that student responses (or lack thereof) can leave us questioning our teaching abilities, Wright states that "there is a difference, of course, between seeing an expert doing something and being able to imitate that yourself".

But leaning on the words of Barbara Bleiman, Wright describes how he supports his novices on their journey to thinking like an expert, the process of creating the conditions for that, where the barriers are and how to eliminate them.

He calls this an 'externalised conversation' and goes on to extrapolate how modelling minimises cognitive load. This granular approach takes time, he acquiesces, but then so does building something solid. Reading this left me almost tempted to sing, "One word at a time, Sweet Jesus". Almost!

TOP BLOGS of the week

Scoop

@SamJDThomas

Samantha Thomas is one of those wonderful school librarians who is clearly passionate about the job. I've only just stumbled across her blog, and I'm hooked. In every post, she extols the virtues of reading for pleasure through the lens of her students' engagement in the library.

This post is extra special because in it she is chronicling the brilliantness of one of my favourite school magazines, Scoop. Thomas is clear about why this magazine is library gold and navigates us through its vibrant pages of relevant and diverse content, also celebrating the fact that each edition has a guest editor.

I particularly appreciate Thomas's comments on the necessary and ever-present poetry content, which is too often neglected. From its eye-catching design to its well-targeted writing, she can't praise it enough. And I agree. Any student from year 5 to year 7 will benefit from its addition to the school library. Just as any teacher interested in literacy will benefit from this blog.

The Fallacy...(Teachers in disadvantaged schools aren't as good)

@smithsmm

"Fed up". "Sick and tired". When it comes to the trope that teachers who work in disadvantaged schools are somehow not

as good at their job, Simon Smith is not holding back any more. As a head who has spent his career in schools of significant disadvantage, Smith writes with steely-eyed clarity about his experiences and is quick to dismiss any 'saviour' complex. On the contrary, he writes, great teaching, teamwork and tenacity pay dividends; and doing so requires teachers who are bothered and leaders who are brave enough to create a space in which they "are valued and can do their job".

He concludes that any narrative that labels those in disadvantaged schools in this way is at best counter-productive. We should appreciate these teachers, he says, "rather than sticking the boot in". As a headteacher of a disadvantage school, I fully endorse that.

Leadership handbook 2.0 – Expert school leadership

@MrNickHart

Headteacher Nick Hart has recently updated his leadership handbook and generously shared its 100+ slides with anyone who wishes to make use of them. In this blog, he explains the reasons behind its conception and for this new iteration, and offers guidance on making best use of it.

But the blog is also an opportunity for Hart to define expert school leadership. He offers the idea that there is formal knowledge about "what works" as well as "hidden knowledge... about our own school context and the knowledge we have of ourselves". Hart's position is that one can't work without the other, and that only by having both can leaders become better decision makers.

With links to current DfE frameworks, the handbook itself is fantastically useful. But the conclusion that, no matter what the handbook offers, effective leadership is about context informed by formal knowledge makes this blog a grounded and inspirational piece with which to start looking to next academic year and, hopefully, the emergence of a new normality.



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 The countdown to the 12th Festival of Education has begun...

Research

The NFER will review a research development each half term. Contact @TheNFER if you have a topic you'd like them to explore

Who has lost most from the change to pupil premium?

Dawson McLean, Economist, National Foundation for Educational Research

The Department for Education's newest statistics show 1.74 million pupils were eligible for free school meals in January 2021. That's an increase of nearly 300,000 pupils since January of last year, a jump of 3.5 per cent of the total student population, from 17.3 to 20.8 per cent in a year.

However, due to a recent change in how this funding is allocated, many of these newly eligible pupils did not attract funding to their schools. Of the total increase in free school meal eligible pupils, 62,000 fewer pupils attracted pupil premium funding than would have without the change, amounting to a reduction in total pupil premium funding of almost £90 million.

The pupil premium was introduced in 2011 to help address the persistent attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers. Currently, pupil premium funding is paid to schools based on the number of pupils who claim free school meals or have claimed them in the past six years, and is set at £1,345 for primary-age pupils and £955 for secondary-age pupils.

In December 2020, the DfE announced it would be changing the basis of pupil premium funding so that payments would be based on the October pupil count, rather than the traditional January count. Many schools have lost out on funding as a result.

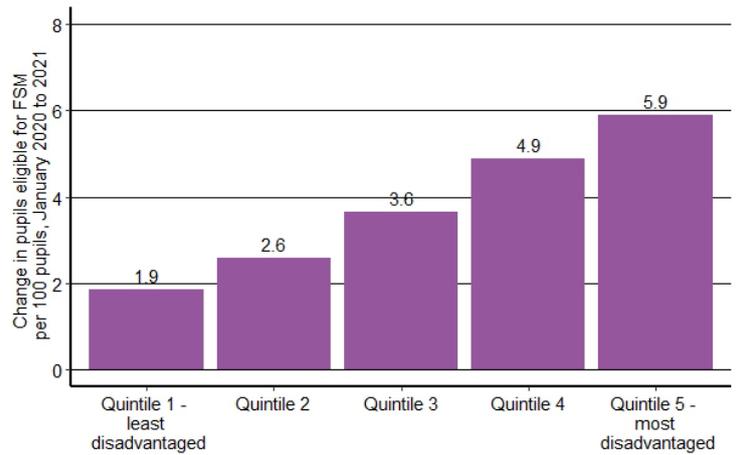
With this change, pupils who became eligible for free school meals between October 2020 and January 2021 would not have qualified for free school meals in time to increase their school's pupil premium funding. Yet due to the pandemic, these months were highly likely to see an increase in the number of eligible pupils.

And even for those who did become eligible before the October count, schools had less time than they would have reasonably expected to record 'new' free school meal eligibility, leading to an undercounting of the true number of eligible pupils.

Over the past year, most of the increase in free school meal eligibility has occurred in the most disadvantaged schools. While the number of pupils eligible for free school meals increased by two pupils per hundred in the least disadvantaged 20 per cent of schools (based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals in 2020), the 20 per cent most disadvantaged schools saw an increase of about six in every hundred.

This is likely partly explained by different economic effects of the pandemic across the country. Schools in the North, Midlands and London experienced larger increases in pupils eligible for free school meals per hundred than schools in the South and East. These same regions also saw the largest increases to the average unemployment rate between November 2020 to January 2021, relative to the previous three months.

Although we can't say exactly which schools are most affected from the change in the basis for pupil premium funding, the latest statistics confirm that the most disadvantaged schools have borne the brunt of the increase in pupils eligible for free school meals and



Disadvantaged schools have seen the biggest increases in pupils eligible for school meals. Note: Analysis includes mainstream schools only and excludes schools with fewer than 100 pupils on roll.

Source: NFER analysis of DfE data

therefore are the most likely to have lost out on funding due to the change.

We can add that current evidence suggests the change in pupil premium funding has primarily impacted primary schools. That means this effect is likely to be further concentrated in the most disadvantaged primary schools. While disconcerting in its own right, this is doubly concerning as we know the most disadvantaged schools are also the most likely to require additional support to help their pupils catch up.

Some may reason that the educational needs of pupils who became eligible for free school meals during the pandemic differ from those living in long-term disadvantaged households. We would need more granular detail about who they are to confirm or negate that argument. But in the meantime, they likely still need extra support from their schools during this period.

And at a time when the most disadvantaged schools are most in need of support, reducing the funding available to them is certainly questionable as an 'evidence-based policy'.



WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

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

MONDAY

Shadow education secretary Kate Green's speech to the Festival of Education this week was heavy on criticism of the government but light on new Labour policy.

Asked about her party's priorities, Green pointed to its alternative recovery plan for children, and said the immediate priority was to put their futures "back on their feet".

But what of the National Education Service (NES)? It's been the name of Labour's flagship education policy for the past six years, but still very few in education would be able to tell you what it is.

Green accepts her party didn't have time to "fill in the detail" in the run-up to the 2019 general election, and revealed a review of policies under the previous administration was still ongoing.

She described the NES as "a really useful concept for engaging in some of these discussions", but acknowledged it had to be "much more than just a title and a brand".

Let's hope Labour doesn't wait until 2024 to tell us how it plans to take the policy forward...

TUESDAY

We understand it's an important time for football fans in England, with the national team performing better than it usually does in the Euros.

But MPs involved in an important debate on education recovery funding on Tuesday could have seemed a little

less eager to get proceedings over and done with in time for our, ultimately successful, clash with Germany.

Opening the debate, education committee chair Robert Halfon noted "what is happening not long after this debate", while Tory MP and former DfE adviser Richard Holden noted that "time is tight, and I am sure that plenty of people would like to go and watch the football at some point".

Finally, education committee member Christian Wakeford said: "We all clearly want to see whether football is still coming home."

We get it, it's been a horrendous year-and-a-bit and the football is providing some welcome light relief. But did it really need to be mentioned so many times in an education debate?

We're sure Sir Kevan Collins has been likened to many things in his time, but we think this week is the first time he's been linked to a Dickensian character.

Labour MP Mick Whitley told the Commons debate on recovery that Collins had been "put in a position of a latter day Oliver Twist pleading for more, Sir".

We presume that makes Gavin



Williamson the miserly Mr Bumble, who makes poor Oliver toil away in the workhouse with very little to eat?

There was another furore in the media this week over a supposed outright ban of mobile phones in schools, despite there being no such plan currently on the table.

In fact, the DfE's broader call for evidence on behaviour, published this week, devotes very little space to mobile use in schools. But the phone obsession has sidelined other sensible questions about managed moves and removal rooms.

What possible reason could the government have for focusing our attention on mobile phone restrictions, something ministers readily admit are already in place in most schools?

We suspect that spinners see any day spent not talking about the education recovery funding debacle as a win.

With his early retirement impending, it seems Ofsted's Sean Harford is now the very definition of "demob happy".

During an enlightening House of Lords committee hearing this week, the outgoing national director of education railed government curriculum decisions, criticised universities for their treatment of students during Covid, and echoed his boss Amanda Spielman's recent calls for more funding for inspection.

We look forward to similar spirited interventions during Harford's last month-and-a-bit in the job.



Chief Executive Officer

Mater Christi Multi-Academy Trust

Salary: circa £110k

In faithfulness to Christ's command: "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News!" [Mark 16:5]

In partnership with the Diocese of Lancaster, Mater Christi Multi-Academy Trust wish to appoint a Chief Executive Officer for our new and expanding Multi-Academy Trust.

The Trust will initially comprise eight Academies, St Joseph's Catholic High School in Workington, St Bernard's Catholic High School and Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School in Barrow, St Margaret Mary's Catholic Primary School and St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School in Carlisle, Dean Gibson Catholic Primary School in Kendal, St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School in Windermere and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Lancaster.

Since the Bishop of Lancaster, Bishop Paul Swarbrick, intends that all diocesan schools join Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts, following his wishes we will develop the MAT to embrace all the Catholic schools of the north of the Diocese.

The role offers an exciting, career-defining, opportunity for an outstanding, visionary Catholic leader. We seek to appoint a Catholic person of authentic faith, who will lead our Trust by example and with wisdom.

We are looking for a dynamic and innovative individual who will provide the strategic direction and educational leadership needed in shaping the future of our newly formed multi-academy trust.

The successful candidate will:

- be a **practising Catholic**;
- be an inspirational and credible Catholic leader;
- have proven leadership and management skills within diverse and complex organisations;
- have an excellent understanding of the education sector;
- have a proven successful track record of raising educational standards.

For an initial informal conversation (in complete confidence) please contact Father Ruscillo, Chair of the Board of Trustees on fr.ruscillo@carlislecatholicchurch.org. Alternatively, please contact Emma Duffy to request an application pack by email emma.duffy@avec-partnership.com or by phone 07585 919241.

Closing Date: Noon 23 July 2021

Interview Date: w/c 13 September 2021

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is central to our ethos and we expect staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Applicants will be required to supply three references, including a Faith Reference and undertake an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and Section 128 Barring check to comply with the Safeguarding and Child Protection policies of the Trust.



Academy Business Director

Pay range Point 6, 45 to 49 (£50,826 to £55,017)

We are seeking a committed and experienced individual to work as part of a dedicated Senior Leadership Team to ensure that the school can fully embed its aspirational vision for all. If your values are to be driven and are passionate about promoting the highest standards of business ethos, compliance and effective use of resources in all administrative functions, please get in touch. The successful candidate will need to be a problem solver who, in the role of Academy Business Director, will be first point of contact for operational aspects of the school.

Applicants must complete the enclosed Anthem application form to be considered for the role and email this to HR@stmarks.anthemtrust.uk.

The closing date for applications is Monday 12th July at 13:00pm. Interviews for shortlisted candidates will be held on Monday 19th July.



Deputy Headteacher for Inclusion

1-Year Fixed Term Contract, Full Time Burnt Oak, Barnet

Do you have experience and passion for working with children of primary school age in the position of Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for Inclusion, Behaviour and Safeguarding?

As a leader, do you enjoy inspiring creative and innovative approaches to teaching and learning and respond to the individual strengths and needs of the children in your care?

Our successful candidate will display relentless passion and strive for the very best. You are excited and motivated by the rewards and challenges offered by working in a growing school and welcome the opportunity to really make your mark!

Please visit <https://www.watlingparkschool.org.uk/recruitment/> to review the Application Pack

Email completed application and monitoring forms to office@watlingparkschool.org.uk

by 12 noon 8th July 2021

Watling Park School, Pavilion Way, Burnt Oak, HA8 9YA, Telephone: 0208 353 4249 (8am – 4pm)

Part of Bellevue Place Education Trust

TRAINER (HOME-BASED, MATERNITY COVER) (13 MONTHS, FULL TIME)



The Bell Foundation is a Cambridge based educational charity working to overcome exclusion through language education and is delivering its vision through four programmes which focus on pupils, young people and those involved with the criminal justice system for whom English is an Additional Language.

The Bell Foundation has a rewarding opportunity for a full-time, home-based online Trainer to work within a growing, dynamic team to develop EAL training and resources for schools and teachers on both its UK-based EAL Programme and its Language for Results International Programme.

Trainer: £29,217- £33,913 per annum

Hours: 35 hours per week, Monday to Friday (13-month maternity cover)

You will play a key role in both the development and implementation of training as part of the Foundation's EAL and International Programmes. You will also support the Criminal Justice and ESOL Programmes to develop training and resources.

You will have a proven track record of running high quality EAL teacher training to schools and experience of working in a comparable role. You will have

experience of creating digital content and resources and a sound understanding of what constitutes effective and evidence-informed CPD.

With excellent digital, communication and interpersonal skills, you will be a self-starter with a can-do attitude with excellent attention to detail and an eye for quality with the ability to critically evaluate and review.

This is a home-based role with one day per month from The Bell Foundation Cambridge office.

To apply

To download the application form please visit:

<https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/about-us/vacancies/>

The Bell Foundation is committed to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. A DBS check will be requested in the event of a successful application.

Closing date: 17:30 on Thursday 8 July

Online interviews: Thursday 15 and Friday 16 July 2021

Chief Executive Officer

Salary: L28-L35 (£79,748 – £94,669)

Start Date: from January 2022 or earlier if possible



The Skylark Partnership (TSP) is seeking to appoint an exceptional leader, with a strong track record of school improvement, in a setting that includes SEND and/or alternative provision, to join us as our new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). We currently have two medical alternative provision academies in our Trust, Hospital and Outreach Education AP Academy in Northamptonshire and the Cherry Tree Learning Centre in Dudley, rated outstanding and good respectively by Ofsted, prior to conversion.

We are very aspirational for our young people and do not allow their medical or mental health difficulties to limit their potential. We are passionate about making a difference to them and their families, giving hope for the future. We are keen to grow the Trust and encourage other alternative provisions for young people with medical needs to join us.

Our Trust is defined by our core values of resilience, respect, co-operation, compassion, honesty, trust, and hope, along with our ethical leadership. This is a rare leadership opportunity for someone to make their mark and contribute to ensuring that TSP continues as an educational influencer both regionally and nationally.

As an experienced professional, you will be able to demonstrate strategic leadership and excellent people management skills. You will lead and promote the Trust and be a driving force for innovation. You will be able to demonstrate extensive staff development experience and expertise. Most importantly, you will have a passion for education for young people with medical needs, ensuring that they have equal rights to and in line with their peers. You will need the determination to make a positive difference and commitment to continuous improvement across the Trust.

As an exceptional leader, you will be able to deliver and lead on the TSP vision and strategy. You will have the support of a committed Trust Board for your own professional development which will include mentoring and induction. You will be leading a passionate team of senior leaders across both academies to secure the best outcomes for our young people.

You will be an excellent ambassador with a proven ability to form productive partnerships, particularly with health colleagues that support the long-term future of our highly ambitious MAT. We are looking for an outstanding individual to lead us into the next phase of our development. Emphasis on staff wellbeing is an integral part of our culture and we provide a highly supportive working environment.

If you are inspired by what you read in this pack, Trustees would encourage you to arrange an informal and confidential virtual meeting to discuss the post in more detail with the Chair, Frances Jones, prior to applying.

This appointment is supported by ASCL's Leadership Appointment Service. If you feel this opportunity is for you, please contact Bal at ASCL Leadership Appointment Service on 07492 353368 or email Bal.Kaur-Pierpoint@ascl.org.uk for further information. To arrange an informal and confidential conversation / virtual meeting about this post with Frances, please contact Bal.

Please email your completed application form to s.valentine-swallow@skylarkpartnershiptrust.co.uk.

Closing date for applications is: Monday 12th July at 12 noon

Shortlisting will take place on: Monday 12th July

Interviews will be held over three days between 13th – 16th July. Days 1 and 2 will be remote



Teaching Institute Programme and Project Manager

An exciting opportunity to join a high performing academy trust as we extend our reach from West Yorkshire into the North West. Dixons Teaching Institute provides first class training and development for staff in our academies. It is also home to Bradford Research School, part of the EEF Research School Network and a DfE Behaviour Hub. We work across the North West to develop evidence informed teaching and leadership. We are now looking for an experienced programme and project manager to manage the professional development provision we offer and support our rapid growth.

Why choose Dixons Academies Trust?

- Values driven
- Almost 30 years of challenging educational and social disadvantage
- Ambitious for every child and highly inclusive
- Always in the top 5 nationally for progress at secondary
- Committed to recruiting a diverse workforce
- Exceptional colleagues will support you to be your best
- Low staff turnover

Full details on our jobs portal - visit www.dixonsat.com/join/jobs and search by job title.

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Offers available until Friday 9th July 2021

[Click here to get in touch](#)



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SAVE THE DATE!

The Festival will return to its home in 2022.

Join us at **Wellington College**

for the 12th Festival of Education.

More information and tickets will be released at noon on **Monday 6 September**.

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