

SCHOOLS WEEK

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



'Exhausted': the heads plotting early exits

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SCHOOLS WEEK

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'I want to create children who don't do things out of fear'



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Twenty years after 9/11: Can anti-extremist education work?

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Admission reform: Yes, but why wait?



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Correction:

An article in last week's edition (£6.7m school cost-cutting plan is cut back) contained inaccuracies. Despite requests for comment before publication, the Department for Education provided fresh information that corrected its own tender documents after *Schools Week* went to press.

This means references to the scheme being cut back were incorrect. They have been amended in our online story.

[Click here to view story](#)

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'I will work with you': Zahawi moves to get sector back on side

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
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The new education secretary Nadhim Zahawi has extended an olive branch to the education sector, pledging to "work with" staff to "transform the lives of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged".

In a blog post, Zahawi thanked education staff for the "outstanding job you have done during these challenging times", and pledged to "work with you to spread the opportunity of excellent education". He also said he would "invest in" and "strengthen" schools.

Zahawi has struck a conciliatory tone since taking over from Gavin Williamson, who was the first minister to be sacked yesterday in Boris Johnson's reshuffle.

The relationship between government and schools had soured during the Covid-19 pandemic after repeated blunders over school closures, exams, recovery funding and free school meals.

Gav finally gets axe before surprise Gibb sacking

Williamson's sacking was widely anticipated following criticism of his handling of the pandemic.

But it was the dismissal of schools minister Nick Gibb later that created more waves in the education sector. The Department for Education stalwart has been at the centre of Conservative education policymaking for more than 15 years, serving as a minister for around nine of the last 11 years.

He tweeted on Wednesday night that he was "sad" to be leaving the role. His replacement is Robin Walker, once an aide to former education secretary Nicky Morgan, and more recently a Northern Ireland minister.

Walker told Schools Week he was "very excited, thrilled to be taking on the role".

"It's an area that I am passionate about, having both served as PPS and indeed made a large chunk of my maiden speech about education."



Nadhim Zahawi

Unions push cause after Gibb departure

Gibb's departure is likely to be far more significant in policy terms than that of Williamson. While five education secretaries have come and gone during his tenure as schools minister, Gibb has been a permanent fixture, steering government policy regardless of who he served.

Unions have already rushed to use the upheaval to persuade Zahawi of the need to end policies such as the EBacc performance measure, to reform GCSEs and to scrap the controversial review of initial teacher training.

But the Confederation of School Trusts has said it will urge Zahawi to "complete the reform journey" when it comes to academies, something Williamson had hoped to achieve himself.

Zahawi moves to get sector back on side

For the new education secretary, the DfE is familiar turf. The MP for Stratford-upon-Avon was children's minister from January 2018 to July 2019.

In a nod to his former brief, Zahawi said this week he would put children and families at centre of the government's plans to "build back better".

During his time as children's minister, Zahawi commissioned further research into the issue of holiday hunger, which led to the wider rollout of the government's holiday activities and food programme.

He was also highly critical of the practice of off-rolling, vowing in a Schools Week interview to take action against any school found to be doing it. Zahawi will now preside over the continued implementation of the Timpson review of exclusions, which has been slow since its publication in 2019.

But he was criticised when, while a business minister, he falsely claimed that research showed parents "actually prefer to pay a modest sum" of "£1 or £2", instead of receiving free school meals.

In 2018, he was reportedly "dressed down" by a government whip for attending the Presidents Club charity dinner, after the event was rocked by sexual harassment allegations. Zahawi kept his job at the time but David Meller, the co-chair of the event, resigned from the DfE's board in the aftermath.

Reshuffle weakens DfE's spending review case

It is hoped that his performance as vaccines minister – seen by Downing Street as reassuring during the rollout of the programme – will provide a period of stability and calm in an education system that has been turned upside-down over the past 18 months.

However, despite his pledge to "invest in" schools, the timing of the reshuffle has led to fears Zahawi and other new ministers will not get the chance to bid for more funding at the forthcoming spending review on October 27.

Departments have been asked to find savings of 5 per cent in their day-to-day spending.

Negotiations with the Treasury are likely to be at an advanced stage, giving Zahawi and his new ministers less opportunity to make a renewed case for more cash.

RESHUFFLE

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Meet the new education team

NADHIM ZAHAWI, EDUCATION SECRETARY

- 1** Born in 1967, Zahawi is 54 years old, five years older than the average starting age of education secretaries, 49. But he's far from the oldest person to take the job – Keith Joseph was 63.
- 2** Zahawi is the first non-white education secretary in history.
- 3** He was born in Iraq, but his family fled Saddam Hussein's regime, and Zahawi came to the UK when he was nine. He grew up in Sussex. However, he is not the first education secretary to have been born outside the UK – that was Rab Butler.
- 4** Zahawi was educated initially at the comprehensive Holland Park school before moving to the private Ibstock Place and King's College schools in London. The vast majority of past education secretaries were also privately educated.
- 5** An often touchy subject, but as the role involves children so directly it will be mentioned at times: Nadhim Zahawi has three children. The average for other education secretaries is 1.76. The most common number of children is zero.
- 6** Zahawi studied chemical engineering at University College London, the first education secretary to study that particular subject, though Margaret Thatcher's degree was in chemistry.
- 7** He was an aide to Conservative politician Jeffrey Archer in the early 1990s. He co-founded the polling company YouGov in 2000.
- 8** According to the Guardian, Zahawi spent much of his parliamentary career working as chief strategy officer for Gulf Keystone Petroleum, which paid him up to £30,000 a month for his work. The paper also reported in 2017 that Zahawi had spent more than £25 million on property.
- 9** Zahawi has some experience in the education sphere. He was an apprenticeships adviser to Downing Street during the Coalition years, and later served as children's minister.
- 10** According to website theyworkforyou, Zahawi has "consistently" voted for greater autonomy for schools and in support of the academies programme.
- 11** His predecessor, Gavin Williamson, was in role for 785 days. The average is 840. If Zahawi stays in office for the average number of days he will leave on January 3 2024.
- 12** Zahawi revealed to our sister paper FE Week in 2016 that along with his wife Lana, he is keen horse rider. He owns a stables at his Warwickshire home.



ROBIN WALKER, SCHOOLS MINISTER

- 1** Walker, aged 43, was appointed as Northern Ireland Office minister in February 2020. He was previously a junior minister at the Northern Ireland office. From July 2016 to July 2019, he was a minister in the Department for Exiting the European Union.
- 2** He was elected Conservative MP for Worcester in May 2010.
- 3** Walker was educated at St Paul's School, a private school in London and studied ancient and modern history at Balliol College, Oxford.
- 4** He set up his own internet business upon leaving university and worked in financial services recruitment before joining the Finsbury Group in financial communications in 2003. He led the industrials team at Finsbury becoming partner in 2009.
- 5** Walker previously served as a parliamentary private secretary to former education secretary Nicky Morgan.
- 6** In 2015, Walker was named a parliamentary beer champion. According to his website, this was due to his efforts to stand up for the great British pub, secure reforms to business rates and freeze beer duty.
- 7** His father was Peter Walker, also MP for Worcester and served in the cabinet under Edward Heath and Margaret Thatcher.
- 8** Walker is married to Charlotte Keenan, former chief executive of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, and is a keen supporter of the Worcester Warriors and Worcestershire County Cricket Club.
- 9** As vice chairman of the f40 cross-party campaign, he helped to secure fairer school funding for the lowest-funded areas. January 3 2024.



But we're still waiting on others...

Baroness Berridge,
academies minister?

Vicky Ford,
children's minister?



RESHUFFLE

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U-turns, gaffes and mixed messages: lowlights of the Williamson era

TOM BELGER
@TOM_BELGER



Gavin Williamson

Few in the education sector will mourn Gavin Williamson's departure as secretary of state.

He has faced repeated, widespread calls to resign over the past two years after a string of disasters on his watch. Here are some of his lowlights (if you can bring yourself to read them):

School closure mayhem

Trust between schools and Williamson took a hammering at the turn of the year when the government managed no fewer than five U-turns in a single week.

The DfE had been pressing ahead with reopening school sites, despite a clamour of warnings over Covid-19 risks, including from government scientists. But the plan rapidly unravelled.

U-turns on mass testing and delayed starts followed before many pupils and staff returned to school for a single day in January. Prime minister Boris Johnson later that day announced all schools would close, and exams would not go ahead.

Schools had to devise remote learning plans with little notice once again.

Legal threats to school leaders

The government "bowed to the inevitable" on closing schools, as ASCL general secretary Geoff Barton put it, only a few weeks after taking unprecedented legal action to stop such closures.

Williamson had used emergency Covid powers to force Greenwich council, in south-east London, to withdraw its plea for local schools to move learning online in late December. The decision sparked disbelief, with Barton accusing Williamson of "behaving like a playground bully".

Schools Week revealed similar legal threats to the Focus Trust in north-west England and a Hertfordshire school earlier in November and December.

Exam grading fiasco

Williamson's tenure may be best remembered for last year's exams fiasco. The government sparked outcry after almost 40 per cent of teacher-assessed grades were downgraded by a controversial algorithm, with pupils in poorer areas particularly affected.

Five days later a U-turn came, sparking a chaotic scramble for university places after many had already been filled.

Williamson suggested he was unaware of problems until the results' publication. But it then emerged he had discussed results with Ofqual twice in the two days before A-level results day.

A six-month battle by Schools Week to obtain DfE-Ofqual correspondence then revealed beyond doubt that the DfE was aware of the full scale of downgrades at least three days before results came out.

No plan B for cancelled exams

The U-turn on returning to classrooms in January also threw a spanner in the works for the government's insistence that exams would go ahead.

Ministers were accused of a "dereliction of duty" as the government confirmed that teachers would assess grades instead – but then had to wait almost two months for concrete plans. Unions had been calling for contingency plans since October.

Anonymous officials later claimed there had been a "clear steer" against making contingency plans for further lockdowns from Downing Street. The Institute for Government said the missing plan B was the government's "biggest single failure".

Free school meals U-turns

Williamson was forced to endure two further humiliating government U-turns last year.

Ministers had been adamant that free school meal vouchers, which replaced school lunches for disadvantaged children during lockdown closures, would only last during term-time.

But in June last year they caved into heavy pressure, including from footballer Marcus Rashford, to extend vouchers into the summer.

Months later, Rashford forced the government into another change of tune over food provision during the winter holiday.

JAMES CARR | @JAMESCARR_93

Private school alumni dominate the new top team

The percentage of Cabinet members educated in state schools marginally increased after this week's reshuffle – but 60 per cent still attended independent schools.

While it is Boris Johnson's most state-educated Cabinet, it is still a far cry from Theresa May's top team, which contained just 30 per cent of privately educated members.

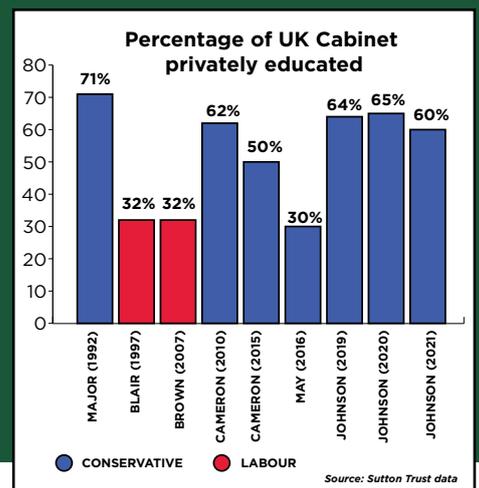
It is also double the 29 per cent of MPs overall who were privately educated and is eight times the 7 per cent of the UK's population that is privately educated.

The Sutton Trust said there was a slight

increase in the proportion of Cabinet members educated at comprehensives, rising from 27 per cent in 2020 to 33 per cent. Two went to grammar schools.

Of the ministers attending the new cabinet almost half, 46 per cent, were educated at either Oxford or Cambridge, the trust said.

The analysis also revealed just over one in four Cabinet ministers attended private schools before heading to either Oxford or Cambridge.



RESHUFFLE

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OPINION



JONATHAN SIMONS

Director Public First and head of the Education Practice



And at the 29th reshuffle, the great survivor was gone ...

Love him or loathe him, Nick Gibb was made for the job of schools minister, says Jonathan Simons

For students of history, the Long Parliament sat from 1640 to 1660. It marked the period during which the legislature wrestled with the executive and the monarch over who governed Britain. And, although lesser known, it was also the first time Nick Gibb was appointed minister for schools.

In retrospect, we should have known. Each of the 28 previous reshuffles while he's been in office have been marked by frantic discussions of "what will happen to Nick Gibb"? And as the famous Schools Week cover makes plain, he was the great survivor. The immovable. The inevitable.

On Wednesday night, there was confidence. A new secretary of state had been appointed. But the reshuffle was not that radical. Surely Nick Gibb would continue. And yet.

For those who have made it this far – teachers especially – there may be bafflement and, perhaps, rage at those who regret his sacking. For every defender, there is an attacker. Let's be honest, more

than one.

This was a minister who, say his detractors, took a deliberately selective approach to evidence, and used it as cover for a highly ideological drive to remould English education in his own eyes.

“He cared deeply about his brief, and worked it”

Good riddance to the man.

I'm not going to argue about phonics, or a legacy that includes ITT reform, curriculum change at all key stages, support for better textbooks and resources, or tougher exams. Really, I'm not. But my view is clear. Love him or loathe him, Nick Gibb was made for the schools minister job.

A good junior minister does a multitude of often contradictory things. He or she has to do all the unglamorous things their boss doesn't want to - parliamentary debates at 10pm, speeches to obscure events, sitting in detailed committee stages to do line-by-line review of legislation, signing endless letters, dealing with MPs' queries about their constituencies.

They have to appear on the media at a moment's notice. They have to do the hard work of sweating the small stuff with officials. They are the first person who angry lobby groups go to scream at. And for most of them, they have zero - I mean none, nada, zilch - power to

change anything. Most of the time, though, that's OK, because they don't really care about the policy area. Serve 12 months, don't wind up No 10, move on.

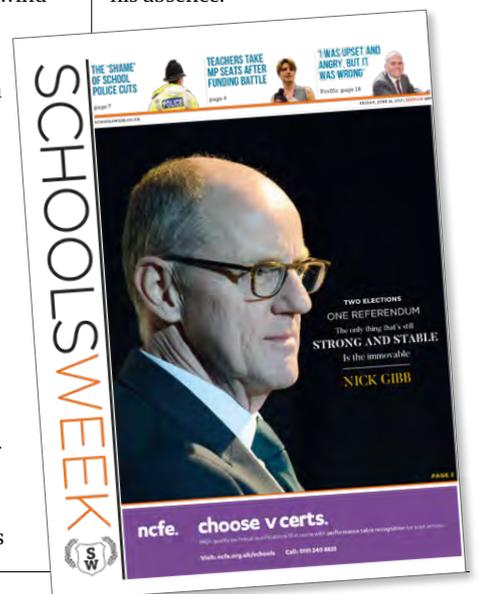
Nick was not like that. He was a rare combination of someone who cared deeply about his brief, and worked it. He outlasted secretaries of state, officials, and lobby groups. He had a clearly articulated theory of change. And he wasn't shy about defending it. When it would have been easy to dissemble, or to brush off a question, he wouldn't waver.

That steeliness of spirit - a belief he was right - is what drove many of his detractors

mad. Was he too unbending at times? Perhaps. But taken from the other perspective, if you believe in what you're doing, why would you bend?

Ultimately, people ought to go into politics to make a difference. And as the poet Charles Mackay said: "You have no enemies, you say? Alas, my friend, the boast is poor. He who has mingled in the fray of duty that the brave endure, must have made foes. If you have none, small is the work that you have done."

Nick had enemies. Small is not the work that he has done. Those of us who continue the cause for education reform will be poorer for his absence.



DISCOVERY EDUCATION ESPRESSO: OUR DAILY LEARNING PLATFORM

Cornerstone Multi Academy Trust in Devon (TCAT) uses the award-winning primary school learning platform Discovery Education Espresso to support teaching and learning across its four schools. Teachers and senior leaders explain how the recently upgraded Espresso enriches their delivery, saves time and brings learning to life for pupils.

A Seamless Solution

With a reputation for digital excellence, innovation is at the heart of teaching and learning in TCAT schools. Discovery Education is a trusted technology partner for the Trust, as Head of Education David James explains,

"We've used Discovery Education for many years and are very happy with upgraded Espresso. The new platform looks brilliant and the smart interface appeals to students. The integration with Microsoft Teams makes it easy to access and supports blended learning. It's a seamless solution."

A New Experience

Discovery Education Espresso is delivered through a brand new platform which combines Espresso's high quality digital content with customisation, creation and collaboration tools. Year 4 teacher Dale Lawson says that this makes it easier to access resources than ever before.

"The new platform is easy to use and the digital content is great. It has a very simple layout and I can find everything I need quickly. The search function is excellent, intuitive and it saves teachers time."

Powerful Resources

Espresso's high-quality learning resources are grouped into 'Channels', making it easier than ever to find content to enrich lessons. Teachers at TCAT particularly like the videos, as Dale Lawson explains,

"The Espresso videos are a great starting point. If we're learning about full stops for example, I'll begin by showing an Espresso video on the whiteboard. It's a more engaging way of learning."



Tracking Pupil Progress

Checking pupils' understanding is also easy with Espresso, thanks to built-in tools such as individual log-ins and quizzes. Dale Lawson says this helps him to see if children need extra support,

"Espresso has so many resources to support learning and the quizzes are a great way of checking understanding. We can also see what the children have accessed which is a benefit."

Creating Amazing Lessons

Espresso also features Studio, a new flexible tool for teachers and pupils. Teachers can create lessons and presentations using Discovery Education resources or their own materials, while pupils can create boards to display understanding. Year 2 teacher Deborah Hosford uses Studio to assign lessons to individual pupils.

"One of the things I really like about upgraded Espresso is the Studio tool. I use it to create differentiated lessons according to ability."

Helping Children Go Further

Espresso inspires pupils to extend their learning. Dale Lawson says that because Espresso contains so much exciting real world

content, it brings the outside world into the classroom.

"The digital resources enable us to take children out of the classroom into the past, to a different country and even into space. We can facilitate 'school trips' in a virtual way."

Bringing Teaching and Learning to Life

Back in the classroom, TCAT's teachers say that Espresso provides a seamless solution, equipping them with the content, tools and resources to bring teaching and learning to life.

"The new Espresso is better than ever", says Dale Lawson. "The addition of the Studio tool, being able to assign lessons and having your class built in so that you can individually set work for each student is really powerful. All of these new tools and functionality save time and make Discovery Education Espresso a really supportive, intuitive and helpful resource for today's teachers."

Explore the re-imagined Discovery Education learning platform at
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INVESTIGATION

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Heads can't wait to make an early exit

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EXCLUSIVE

Two in five headteachers plan to leave the profession early within the next five years, with experienced leaders twice as likely to be plotting their exit.

New research found the impact of covid was the main influence for a quarter of those wanting an early departure, while more than half cited it as a contributing factor.

Heads told Schools Week they were "exhausted" and at risk of "absolute burnout".

Nottingham and Oxford academics Toby Greany, Pat Thomson and Nick Martindale surveyed about 1,500 members of the National Association of Head Teacher (NAHT) and the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL).

They warned the data presented "significant risks for school and system performance at a time when the system needs more expertise".

A report by the researchers added: "Of course, some leaders might change their mind and decide to stay, whether for financial reasons or because the pressures ease off, but it would seem unwise to assume this."

Winter closures drive 'sea-change' in attitudes

Last December, a TeacherTapp survey found 9 per cent of heads were considering new jobs and 16 per cent retirement, sharp increases on 2019.

But an analysis of job vacancies earlier this year by TeachVac actually showed a 28 per cent decline in headship adverts in January and February.

Professor Greany said: "By the time our survey was conducted in April and May 2021, leaders had been coping with it for well over a year, so were exhausted."

The fiasco over winter school closures had driven a "sea-change in attitudes", he said.

Jules White, head of Tanbridge House School in West Sussex since 2008, announced earlier this year that he will stand down in December, about two years earlier than planned.

He told Schools Week that although the pandemic was not the main factor behind his decision, it had "compounded" issues with workload, accountability and a lack of resources.

"[Covid] made things challenging, but in some ways I've always found the job very challenging. What I'm trying to do is to avoid



absolute burnout."

Experienced and primary heads most dissatisfied

Today's research shows experienced heads were more than twice as likely to be planning to leave early.

Primary leaders were also "significantly" more likely to want to go early (46 per cent compared with 33 per cent).

One anonymous primary head, who is leaving after ten years in post, said covid was the "final nail in the coffin".

"You just think it's not worth it anymore. I've had enough. I want a life, and things aren't going to get better any time soon. In the private sector, I could earn twice as much for half the work."

'I simply can't go on, I'm exhausted'

Another leader told Schools Week they started to become disillusioned about five years ago, but were "able to keep going".

The pandemic had forced their early retirement, three years ahead of schedule and after being "ground down by decisions that do not have the

best interests of children or my staff at their core".

"I feel the guilt every day. I want to be there for colleagues who will have to pick up the pieces. But I simply cannot go on. I am exhausted."

Nigel Attwood, the head of Bellfield Junior School in Birmingham, said he had decided to stay in headship, despite the pandemic, because he felt "such an affiliation to the school and the staff and pupils".

"But how tired can you keep being?"

"It has been very difficult. I don't know a single head who works fewer than 60 hours a week just to keep up with everything."

'Greater trust' would retain heads

Asked what would persuade them to stay, surveyed leaders were most likely say "greater trust" from the government. This was followed by "actions to reduce pressure and workload", and enhanced funding and support.

Geoff Barton, ASCL's general secretary, urged the government to "take heed of the serious implications of this survey".

"The government could repair much of the damage simply by showing greater trust in the profession. Ministers must set the tone by committing to a more collaborative approach and reviewing the current raft of accountability measures."

Nick Brook, from the NAHT, said the report was a "wake-up call for the government."

There are clear steps they could take to improve the situation for schools, school leaders and children, and to help them to thrive. We can only hope they will listen."

The DfE did not respond for comment.



Jules White

Leaders' career plans for the next five years

STAY



53.2%

RETIRE NORMALLY



6.8%

LEAVE



40%

NEWS

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Tutoring in limbo as contract stand-off drags on

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

EXCLUSIVE

Tens of thousands of pupils are still stuck in limbo over accessing tutoring as a contract stand-off involving leading tutoring organisations drags on for a second week.

Tutoring providers are refusing to sign up to the flagship National Tutoring Programme (NTP) 17 days after its launch. They oppose a clause in the proposed contract that allows programme contractor Randstad, a Dutch HR firm, to “confiscate” tutors and staff from providers.

It appears the aggrieved providers, including several tutoring charities, are now considering providing tutors through the school-led route instead.

However *Schools Week* has been told that education giant Pearson has now signed up after receiving a supposedly “legally binding” letter providing assurances.

Requests for these letters from other providers have yet to be met and talks are still continuing with Randstad and the Department for Education (DfE).

The Tutors’ Association, a membership body for tutors, said that Randstad had made assurances to the disgruntled approved tuition partners on Friday, “promising” to change the contracts. But TTA’s president John Nichols said on Tuesday that the revised contract was understood “to contain no substantive changes”.

Nichols said: “Randstad has delayed offering an amended contract in line with the commitments made last week – by both the DfE and Randstad themselves.

“There is a real risk that providers are being pressured into signing unsuitable legal documents based on private assurances, rather than all providers being treated equally.”

Some tutoring organisations have contacted lawyers to see what legal options are available, Nichols said.

Resolving the fall-out from the government’s near £450 million flagship scheme will now fall to new education



secretary Nadhim Zahawi.

Nichols added: “One can only imagine what ministers and officials at the DfE will be thinking when they realise that this flagship government policy is, in effect, being held to ransom by their own contractor’s unwillingness to issue a sensible contract and stick to their own commitments.”

The aggrieved providers accounted for 50,000 pupils – nearly 10 per cent of the government’s tuition partners target this year.

A Randstad spokesperson said it was in “discussion with the small number of tuition providers on the final details within their contracts”.

They added: “Given that conversations and sign-ups are progressing daily, this can result in inaccuracies being shared in the public domain. As such, we are unable to provide ongoing commentary regarding commercial contracts and private conversations.”

As *Schools Week* revealed last week, one disputed contract clause would allow Randstad to remove a provider and force it to transfer its whole NTP business – including tutors and staff – to the

recruitment firm without any compensation.

Providers are now considering using the school-led tutoring route, the third arm of the

NTP. State schools will receive a slice of £579 million to hire tutors directly or pay existing school staff to help with catch-up tutoring.

One approved provider, who wished to remain anonymous, said: “All we want to do is start tutoring pupils as soon as possible and we have schools waiting to get started. Schools-led tutoring offers less bureaucracy for both schools and providers.

“Randstad’s approach to this contract means we would be happy to go with the schools-led route rather than enter into a one-sided contract our trustees cannot in good conscience allow us to sign.”

Another source said: “We have had a record number of schools already book in tutoring in September, and it’s 100 per cent school-led tutoring because of Randstad’s intransigence. They are losing potential pupils towards their DfE targets hand over fist.”

DfE and Pearson did not respond to a request for comment.

NEWS

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Ofsted expansion hangs in spending review balance

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

EXCLUSIVE

The government is refusing to commit to its election pledges of extending Ofsted inspections and trialling "no notice" visits.

Boris Johnson made the commitments during the election campaign in November 2019, days after the Conservative party launched its manifesto.

After Labour vowed to scrap Ofsted, Johnson retaliated with promises to extend section 5 inspections for secondaries and large primaries from two to three days.

He also promised to trial "no-notice" inspections to give a "true reflection" of how well schools were performing.

This week the Department for Education refused to say if it was still committed to the plans.

A spokesperson would only say: "We remain committed to working with Ofsted to make sure it can provide the best possible assessment of pupils' education, which parents rightly value."

Any new funding would be set out following the spending review.

Last week, the Treasury asked all government departments, bar the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), to find savings of "at least" 5 per cent.

This could amount to a £4.5 billion cut for the DfE, which funds Ofsted.

The pandemic has disrupted much of Ofsted's

normal work, with about a third of the workforce deployed across 2020-21 to aid the government's Covid response.

Full scheduled inspections restarted this week for the first time since March last year. However, between April 2020 and March this year, Ofsted made more than 2,000 virtual visits.

Despite the disruption of covid, Johnson's pledge to remove the inspection exemption for outstanding schools came into effect with the resumption of standard inspections this term.

The measure was introduced by Michael Gove, a former education secretary, in 2011. It is understood Ofsted believes lifting the exemption will cost between £5 and £10 million.

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's chief inspector, was quizzed at the Festival of Education in June about the lack of progress on the government's plans.

She indicated the pandemic had contributed to delays and admitted she "couldn't remember" the last time Ofsted had met with the government to discuss the promises.

Plans for inspectors to arrive at schools within two-and-a-half hours of heads knowing they were on their way were floated ahead of the launch of the new education inspection framework (EIF) in 2019.

The watchdog was forced to scrap the initiative following a "strong negative reaction" during the consultation.

The Conservative party directed *Schools Week's* questions on the promises to the DfE.

Spielman clarifies 'food parcels' comments

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

Ofsted's chief inspector has been forced to clarify controversial claims that schools prioritised food parcels for poor children over providing online learning.

Amanda Spielman's comments at an Institute for Government event earlier this week sparked a fierce online backlash.

She said: "In a lot of schools it felt as though their attention went very rapidly to the most disadvantaged children, into sort of making food parcels, going out visiting."

"They put a great deal of attention into the children with the greatest difficulties, which is admirable, but in some cases that probably got prioritised . . . which may have meant they didn't have the capacity left to make sure there was some kind of education offer for all children."

An Ofsted spokesperson later said the chief inspector "certainly wasn't criticising schools that went above and beyond to support families in a very new and difficult situation".

The spokesperson added Spielman went on to say that a lot of schools prioritised the most vulnerable children at a time when it looked like the lockdown might only be fairly short, which meant there wasn't always the capacity to switch to remote education quickly.

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER | @SCHOOLSWEEK

Smaller trusts to get Ofsted evaluations

Ofsted will increase the number of academy trust evaluations next year, with smaller and specialist chains eligible for visits.

Trust summary evaluations will mirror the new education framework to focus on "the quality of education as seen through the curriculum".

Ofsted said this would allow it "to increase the volume of summary evaluations, and the breadth of MATs inspected, so that we gain better insight into the role of multi-academy trusts".

New guidance says "smaller and specialist MATs, not just those that may be a cause for concern" will now get visits.

"This is to ensure that we can gain an accurate and balanced understanding of the contribution that MATs make to the school system, highlighting areas of strength that can be shared more widely and providing insight into any weaknesses."

Ofsted told *Schools Week* it planned 12 MAT summary evaluations in the spring term, and would confirm future evaluations in due course. Not every trust would be evaluated within a certain window.

Introduced in 2019, they look at whether trusts are delivering a high-quality education and improving pupil outcomes.

Ofsted visits a number of schools within a trust before discussing its findings with leaders and publishing a letter.

However evaluations have been on hold since the pandemic.

Amanda Spielman (pictured), the chief inspector, said more visits will help Ofsted better understand MATs' contribution to the school system and to share insights to help the sector improve.

A draft law to allow Ofsted to inspect the governing bodies of multi-academy trusts was introduced in Parliament last week.

It is unlikely to succeed as backbench bills rarely progress fast enough to become law.



NEWS

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Another RSC job goes up for grabs

TOM BELGER

@TOM_BELGER

EXCLUSIVE

The government is again on the hunt for a new regional schools commissioner after Sue Baldwin – a former school funding civil servant – steps down as commissioner for the east of England and north east London.

Baldwin, the second-longest serving commissioner, leaves early next year. She has held the post since August 2017.

RSCs are typically appointed on five-year terms, according to Department for Education evidence to a 2015 committee. The department said Baldwin was leaving “at the end of her tenure”, but she said she was stepping down.

The most recent publicly available pay data for RSCs, for March 2020, shows Baldwin earned between £120,000 and £124,999 a year.

The job advert to replace her is offering between £93,000 and £120,000.

It said the work included “monitoring performance of academies and free schools, driving improvements in underperforming schools, facilitating multi-academy trust development and growth, and leading on the opening of new free schools”.

But RSC responsibilities have widened beyond academies and free schools, with the DfE highlighting RSC-led regional teams’ “key role in Covid response work”.



Sue Baldwin

The advert for Baldwin’s replacement said the DfE wanted an “outstanding leader” who understood the local and national education landscape. They needed the “credibility and resilience” to engage with senior figures, from ministers to trust chiefs. The role would be based in the DfE’s Cambridge or London offices.

On LinkedIn, Baldwin encouraged others to apply, saying she was “stepping down next year from a job I’ve loved”.

She was previously director for school efficiency within the DfE and director of academies and maintained schools at the then-Education Funding Agency.

Baldwin was awarded a CB in 2016 for services to education and children’s services.

Data on RSCs’ declared interests from April this year listed her as a trustee of My AFK, a charity

for disabled children, a governor at Barnet and Southgate College and, since January, a governor at the Harris Academy Chafford’s Teaching School Hub.

Oliver Burwood, the chief executive of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust, said she would be a “hard act to follow”.

A DfE spokesperson said: “We are extremely grateful to Sue for the expertise, professionalism and dedication she has brought to her role as regional schools commissioner. She has made a great impact over the course of her career, supporting the best interests of children and young people.”

Baldwin’s exit marks the twelfth departure of an RSC since the eight roles were created in 2014. Five left in 2019.

The job is under increased scrutiny after sector leaders criticised government oversight of schools, fragmented between multiple agencies and varying by school type.

The Association of School and College Leaders called RSCs and local authorities a “rather messy ‘middle tier’” in a report this week, calling for the “creation of a single structure with appropriate local democratic oversight and co-ordination”.

Meanwhile, the Confederation of School Trusts issued its own call for reform earlier this month, backing a new body combining the regulatory functions of RSCs and the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

JAMES CARR | @JAMESCARR_93

DfE’s free cyber ‘scorecard’ helps schools check online security

Schools can access a free cyber security scorecard that measures the robustness of their online security measures - before its full rollout early next year.

Schools were hit by high-profile cyber attacks during the pandemic, resulting in lost financial records and deleted coursework. Many faced four-figure recovery costs.

The Department for Education’s “Cyber Secure” tool will be piloted between September 16 and October 9. It will be launched fully early next year.

It is a free and anonymous self-assessment tool that allows schools to assess their cyber security measures through a grading system of 0 to 5.

Nick Gibb, the then schools minister, announced the tool last March when he revealed the sector had been struck by more than 70 ransomware attacks during the pandemic.

He said the tool would “enable schools to assess their cyber security, helping school leaders and staff safeguard their pupils’ education”.

The DfE said schools would be able to log into the tool anonymously and establish their security levels. They would also be able to compare their levels of security with local and national averages.

The government would not receive any information on specific schools, but would get anonymised data. This would allow the

DfE to take a proactive approach to increase security and resilience.

In March, the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) warned schools to take further precautions following a spike in cyber attacks.

In the same month, one of the country’s largest academy trusts – Harris Federation – fell victim to a targeted ransomware attack. Hackers demanded a £5.8 million ransom, leaked school data on to the dark web and cost Harris more than £500,000 for the repair of equipment and staff overtime.

The department has also undertaken a Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) Cyber Risk Pilot with more than 500 schools.



**#PROTECT
STUDENT
CHOICE**

DON'T SCRAP BTECS

The Government has recently completed a review of Level 3 BTECs and other applied general qualifications in England. The main proposal is to introduce a twin-track system of T levels and A levels at Level 3, where most young people pursue one of these qualifications at the age of 16. As a result, funding for the majority of BTEC qualifications will start to be removed from 2023.

#PROTECTSTUDENTCHOICE

The **#ProtectStudentChoice** campaign coalition of 15 organisations that represent and support staff and students in schools, colleges and universities is deeply concerned about this proposal. We urgently need your support to protect the future of BTECs and other applied general qualifications:

- Sign our petition on the Parliament website and share with your colleagues, governors, students and parents – petition.parliament.uk/petitions/592642
- Write to your local MPs to secure their support
- Tweet support for the campaign [#ProtectStudentChoice](https://twitter.com/ProtectStudentChoice)



To find out more visit www.protectstudentchoice.org

Heads' union sets out plans to bridge the attainment gap

TOM BELGER

@TOM_BELGER

School leaders have set out a blueprint for tackling “entrenched injustice” in education, from overhauling exams, the curriculum and league tables to prioritising poorer pupils in admissions.

The wide-ranging plans to bridge the attainment gap were set out in a report by the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) this week.

It warns that problems have worsened since a 2019 Education Policy Institute study claim that the gap could take more than 500 years to close.

But while some of ASCL's plans were widely welcomed, others proved more controversial.

Here's a breakdown of the key proposals and reaction:

Write consensus-based core curriculum

A new review body should rewrite the “crowded” curriculum, focusing on fewer topics in more depth and more coherence throughout pupils' education. It should build “cross-party consensus”, with schools, experts, parents and political parties represented.

But Sam Freedman, a former Department for Education adviser, warned that consensus meant “groupthink” and a “huge barrier to entry” for new ideas. Curriculum “should be a matter of political debate”, he said.

Meanwhile, Michael Pain, the chief executive of the MAT support firm Forum Strategy, said ASCL's call for the curriculum to be mandatory in academies would “straitjacket trusts” and discourage innovation.

“The freedom that academy trusts have to develop their own curriculum encapsulates the view that it's school leaders and teachers -not the latest politicians - who are best placed to decide what a quality education is,” he said.

But ASCL officials said its elected members in academies backed the proposal. They also noted there was little data on how widely freedoms were used.

Prioritise poor pupils in admissions

The association also wants a school admissions review to consider forcing schools to prioritise children eligible for the pupil premium or in persistent poverty. Such rules already apply for children in or previously in care.



Geoff Barton, its general secretary, said the debate was “uncomfortable” for some, but would tackle “entrenched injustice” as middle-class parents could afford homes near better-rated schools.

Joe Hallgarten, the chief executive of the Centre for Education and Youth, said it was a “useful call”.

But FFT Education Datalab researchers said in a blogpost it was “unclear” admissions reform alone would bridge attainment gaps.

They acknowledged disadvantaged pupils were “disproportionately more likely to go to lower-attaining schools”. But their previous research found the gap would narrow only by about 20 per cent if disadvantaged pupils were reallocated evenly across all schools in 2019, assuming attainment 8 scores were unchanged.

“Obviously this would be worthwhile,” researchers wrote. “But the attainment gap will not be closed until the attainment gaps within schools close.”

Give staff one day a week for planning

Proposals include a pilot in which teachers spend 20 per cent of their time for collaborative planning and continuing professional development, particularly in deprived areas.

Teach First said on Twitter it too wanted reduced timetables in disadvantaged schools.

Sam Sims, an education lecturer at UCL, said evidence had grown on “what constitutes good, effective professional development”, making more time a “really valuable resource”.

The National Association of Head Teachers'

education blueprint earlier this year also said all schools and teachers needed a minimum entitlement of freely chosen, properly funded CPD.

It cited Education Policy Institute analysis that found it “has the potential to close most of the gap” between new and experienced teachers, with greater impact than performance-related pay or longer school days.

Teachers are entitled to a minimum of 10 per cent planning, preparation and assessment time. Doubling this would force the recruitment of more teachers.

Tweak rather than tear up

The report warns about the disruption of wholesale “system change”. Julie McCulloch, ASCL's policy director, added that a complete overhaul of any kind was “not a panacea”, despite the “fragmented” landscape of school structures.

Barton said the blueprint focuses on a series of “eminently do-able” measures.

Among the many other proposals are weighting pupil premium cash to persistently poor pupils and extending it to older ones, evaluating schools against a new “scorecard” with measures broader than attainment, and scaling back statutory primary assessments.

The NAHT's blueprint also backed fewer primary assessments, warning it was “hard to see” how six statutory assessments this year would help recovery. It said performance tables should remain suspended.

Hallgarten called the pupil premium reforms “possibly the most important” proposal. Angela Donkin, the chief social scientist at the National Foundation for Educational Research, noted recent funding increases had “favoured schools with more advantaged children”.

COVID



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How the vaccine roll-out in schools will work

New Covid guidance has set out how vaccination programmes in schools will work, with the government's winter plan detailing restrictions that could be enforced in the months ahead. Here's what you need to know ...

Schools will not run jabs roll-out ...

As with normal school vaccinations, the School Age Immunisation Service (SAIS) will plan the roll-out, administer the jabs and be legally responsible for the delivery.

Inoculations will start "from the beginning" of this term. Schools will be contacted by their SAIS provider to agree a date and the best approach for vaccination.

Children who are 12 and over on the day the SAIS visits will be offered a jab.

Children who miss this because they turn 12 after the visit, are ill or who change their minds will get a follow-up offer. This is expected to be delivered away from school to minimise disruption.

... and will not have to 'mediate' in consent rows

Schools will have three primary roles: to share information leaflets and consent forms to parents, to provide space for jabs and to provide vaccine teams with details of eligible children.

They will not be responsible for "mediating between parents and children who may disagree about whether or not to consent".

This will fall to nurses from the vaccine teams who have "extensive experience and the expertise to handle these issues and are professionally accountable for their decisions".

In secondary schools, some older children may be "sufficiently mature to provide their own consent" (this is known as "Gillick Competence" and will be assessed by the vaccine team). Parents cannot overrule the decision of a Gillick competent child.

Schools advised to check security plans

Schools Week revealed this week how campaign groups had issued legal letters threatening headteachers with jail or million-pound fines if they offer vaccines.

However, the guidance makes clear that "legal accountability for offering Covid-19 vaccines to children and young people sits with the SAIS and not with the school".

But schools are advised to get in touch with vaccine teams "at the first opportunity to understand what security planning they have in place, and what if any actions they recommend you carry out ahead of vaccinations in your school".

In the event of a protest or planned disruption, school leaders should alert the team, council and police to "discuss the best way to manage the situation".

The government also says it is "aware some schools have received letters or emails which feature false or misleading information" about vaccines. Heads are advised not to "engage directly" with any misinformation.

Power to close schools scrapped

The autumn and winter Covid plan says the government will scrap some of its emergency powers, including the ability to order school closures.

But it looks set to keep its power to force them to stay open. Ministers can give directions "requiring the provision, or continuing provision, of education, training and childcare".

Only "parts of" this section of the last year's Coronavirus Act will be scrapped, including an element allowing the education secretary to modify the duty on councils to secure SEND provision in a young person's education, health and care plan.

Remaining powers will be reviewed next spring.

Secondary school testing to continue 'for the rest of this term'

Asymptomatic testing of secondary pupils will continue "for the rest of this term", and will be a "valuable tool in minimising the overall disruption to education". It will be reviewed later this year.

The government says the return of students to schools and universities, and workers to workplaces this month was "likely to put further upward pressure on case numbers".

Detailed plan B guidance due soon

The document also refers to a "plan B", which would prioritise measures "which can help control transmission of the virus while seeking to minimise economic and social impacts". They would only be enacted "if the data suggests further measures are necessary to protect the NHS".

Measures includes legally mandating face coverings in "certain settings", although it does not say which settings would be included.

It is believed more specific guidance for schools could include the return of bubbles.

NEWS

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Trust that shortlists 'blind' wins governance award

SAMANTHA BOOTH
@SAMANTHAJBOTH

A trust that shortlists with job applicants' ethnicity, university and name taken out has won a governance award.

The 18-school STEP Academy Trust, based in south London and East Sussex, has a three-year plan to become an "anti-racist organisation".

The trust said it was part of its "moral duty" to open up a conversation about racism and go further to become "anti-racist", following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis last year. His death sparked civil rights protests around the world.

At the biennial National Governance Association (NGA) awards last week, the trust shared an award for "outstanding governance in a multi-academy trust" with Anglian Learning in the east of England.

Judges said STEP's story "epitomises how governance in a growing organisation needs to evolve and change".

Jennese Alozie, STEP's director of effectiveness and performance, told *Schools Week* it had targeted the curriculum and recruitment and retention to work out what could be causing barriers across its 18 academies.

The trust wanted to avoid staff promotions through "who they know" and had moved to "shortlisting blind" where the ethnicity, university and name were taken out of job applications.

To avoid promotions based on who staff knew, or who they got on with, the trust had brought in a new "career pathway". Staff knew what training was available at every stage of their career to make them eligible for a promotion.

"It's to make it really clear that diversity in leadership can't be done by accident," Alozie said. "You need to think through 'could this have been stopping some people from moving through the ranks because they don't know in a sense what the rules are of development?'"

Anti-racism was also woven into lessons, but was not "tokenistic".

"It has to be well thought through because there's no point covering, for example, a few black authors when actually we haven't really understood why it might be necessary for them to be in there.

"More recently, for example in science and technology, these are some of the people – and yes there are people of colour in there – who invented the Gameboy, PS4, who contributed to coding. It becomes more obvious that that 'ah, these are people that have existed within the past ten years and that is possible for me as well!"



STEP staff, from left to right, Jennese Alozie, director of effectiveness and performance, CEO Mark Ducker, Helen Day, chair of STEP academy committee, Philippa Jackson, senior STEP clerk and Rama Venchard, chair of STEP trustees.

The trust's board and executive team did not want to give a "knee-jerk" response to the Black Lives Matter movement last year following Floyd's murder and instead had spent the past year developing the anti-racist plan.

Among the other winners were Learn Academies Trust in Leicestershire, and Riccall Community Primary School in North Yorkshire, who were jointly awarded the "outstanding vision and strategy" gong.

Cleeve School in Gloucestershire was given the outstanding governance in a single school award. Judges praised the governors' "deep dives" into pupil attendance and exclusions, and determination that school trips be accessible to all.

Presenting the awards in the House of Commons, Baroness Berridge said governance had "never been more critical" to children's education.

"Boards need a diversity of perspectives to bring healthy debate, better decision-making



Baroness Berridge presenting Cleeve School with their award

and fewer blind spots. A diverse board that represents its community more closely builds the confidence and trust of its pupils, staff and the wider community," she said,

An NGA poll found just 5 per cent of state school governors were from minority ethnic backgrounds, a figure that has remained largely unchanged for 20 years.

Emma Knights, the NGA's chief executive, said: "Stories of excellence ... help underline that governance truly contributes to the success and sustainability of our schools and the educational achievement and wellbeing of children and young people."

NGA GOVERNANCE AWARDS: THE WINNERS

OUTSTANDING CLERK TO A GOVERNING BOARD
SARAH STEVEN, THE GALAXY TRUST, KENT

OUTSTANDING LEAD GOVERNANCE PROFESSIONAL
CARINA SAWYER, MAGNA LEARNING PARTNERSHIP, WILTSHIRE

OUTSTANDING VISION AND STRATEGY
LEARN ACADEMIES TRUST, LEICESTERSHIRE
RICCALL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTH YORKSHIRE

OUTSTANDING GOVERNANCE IN A SINGLE SCHOOL
CLEEVE SCHOOL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

OUTSTANDING GOVERNANCE IN A MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST
ANGLIAN LEARNING, EAST OF ENGLAND
STEP ACADEMY TRUST, SOUTH LONDON AND EAST SUSSEX

OUTSTANDING GOVERNANCE IN A FEDERATION
CASTLE CHURCH OF ENGLAND FEDERATION, HERTFORDSHIRE
ISLINGTON FUTURES FEDERATION, LONDON

EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Zahawi strikes right tone

Coming out of a pandemic, the sector needs decisive leadership. School leaders have been crying out for such qualities since Covid-19 struck but were left inexplicably on their own by the bumbling Gavin Williamson.

Nadhim Zahawi seems to be an individual who will take risks in an informed and considered way. Glancing over his CV, he has a proven track record not only in business, but in various ministerial roles.

Most recently he was praised on both sides of the house as vaccines minister. While the bar could not be any lower after Williamson's blunderful tenure, Zahawi ticks a lot of boxes.

Boris Johnson deployed one of Zahawi's core talents - his ability to communicate clearly - throughout the pandemic. Could that ability soothe a sector scarred by sorry silence at key Covid moments?

His promises yesterday evening to work with the sector is a good start.

While the sector breathed an enormous sigh of relief over the Williamson sacking, it may be

schools minister Nick Gibb's departure that has far greater consequences.

Despite his quiet and meek persona, he was a rottweiler in pursuing his vision for education, from introducing phonics, leading curriculum reform and ushering in tougher exams.

While a divisive figure, many acknowledge his ability to respectfully and passionately debate with those who disagreed.

But the move will create an opportunity for interested parties to steer education reform perhaps down a slightly different path. As education secretaries came and went, there is no doubt that Gibb was the one calling the shots post-Michael Gove.

Already we have seen leadership unions using Gibb's departure to call for a shift away from EBacc targets and reform exams.

A new cabinet minister will always want to make their own mark, but the new boss at the DfE is more likely to gently swerve than to slam the brakes on any major policies or reforms. Especially with such a bulging in-tray.

SCHOOLS WEEK

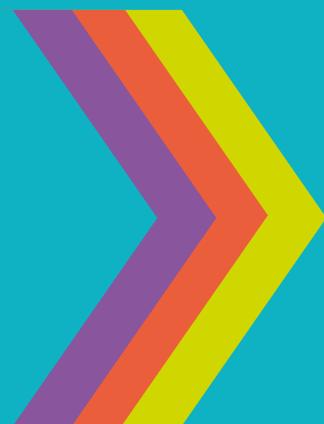


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Profile

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ



“I want to create children who don’t do things out of fear”

Nadine Bernard, headteacher at Van Gogh primary school, landed her first headship at one of the most infamous academy controversies. She talks to Jess Staufenberg about facing down ghosts of the past...

For Nadine Bernard, letting go of feelings of shame or inadequacy has been at the core of getting to where she is now.

Bernard is in her first headship, at a school with perhaps one of the most infamous histories in recent English education.

The former Durand Academy, now re-branded as Van Gogh primary school, began its rapid collapse into controversy in 2014. A

National Audit Office investigation revealed that then-headteacher Sir Greg Martin had topped up his already generous salary to more than £400,000 via management fees for the public’s use of leisure facilities on the school’s site.

The five-school Dunraven Educational Trust then took over Durand Academy, which reopened under its new name in the summer of 2018. Bernard arrived the

following year and, after a brief maternity leave, has just completed her first full year.

There are still a few legal wrangles left for the school over premises, but Bernard is letting nothing bother her, and is determinedly future-facing.

Last week she won a Fair Education Alliance “innovation and intrapreneurship” award for her Aspiring Heads initiative. The organisation aims to equip black teachers

Profile: Nadine Bernard



Bernard with her husband, Ethan, and their three sons.



Bernard exploring the plants with pupils

with the “resilience, skills and mindset to secure leadership roles”.

Bernard has previously struggled to shake off feelings of inadequacy herself. “I would say in terms of my childhood memories, I am a child who actually lacked a lot of confidence, due to significant traumas that happened to me. It took me time to find my place in the world, to feel I am valuable and deserving.” She doesn’t wish to share details, but says she often shares the story privately if she “knows it will help someone else”.

Her ensuing lack of confidence also led to her being bullied in primary school, which was in East Dulwich in London. For her, school was not always somewhere that built her confidence back up.

“I remember one teacher in particular just used to do an ‘X’ across my whole page. That, with everything else I was experiencing, continued to reinforce I wasn’t good enough.”

Bernard also recalls standing with her mother in the school office, and overhearing a member of staff say “you shouldn’t have put her down for that secondary school”, indicating she wouldn’t cope in an academic environment. “My mum said, ‘that school is going down on that piece of paper. My daughter is more than capable.”

Bernard describes her mother, Isoline, as her guiding star: a woman, who having travelled to a new country from Jamaica, was determined to get the best for her daughter. Time and again, she fought for her.

Now Bernard’s past classroom struggles

“Everyone deserves to be respected [...] to show their best self”

have underpinned her approach to tackling a school with its own sense of historical shame.

She reflects on changes she has since introduced: “From what I understand, children would walk through corridors in complete silence. But actually, I want to create children who don’t do things out of fear, but out of an awareness and understanding that, ‘actually, this is a good thing to do.’” She’s always been cautious about “behaviour policies that are about reprimanding children and throwing out consequences for behaviour”.

“As a child, there are certain things we cannot expect them to know. Children come from different backgrounds, different circumstances, and some children for example will have a better understanding of what sharing looks like than others. So I see it more as training children to be their best self.”

Bernard doesn’t expect children to conduct themselves perfectly after being



Bernard as a child with her mother

told an ‘expectation’, because she believes habits change over time. “I think a lot of times schools can expect: ‘I’ve told you once, I’ve told you twice, I’ve told you 10 times’, but there’s something important we need to understand about practice.” She adds: “Everyone deserves to be respected. I know how it feels not to be respected, and that doesn’t allow someone to show their best self.”

The same drive explains why she has placed character-building at the centre of her school improvement strategy at Van Gogh primary. Durand Academy was graded ‘inadequate’ in all categories in 2016, and as a new school is now awaiting inspection. “That was very, very important to me,” she says. “It’s all about developing self, and the

Profile: Nadine Bernard



Bernard with her deputy headteacher, Tania Kimberley and inclusion lead, Segolene Mathurin

“People don’t see the many times I’ve had to pick myself up”

skills that you need to interact well with others and lead yourself well.”

As a once-shy child, Bernard is also committed to reducing passivity in her pupils, instead building their skills as speakers and in turn raising their self-confidence. An example is the introduction of “effective maths”, in which pupils discuss maths sequences together.

“They take turns. Before, all that dialogue was potentially being missed, because it was so much about the teacher talking. We want children to do more of the thinking, because when you think, that’s when you learn.”

Building confidence and overcoming barriers was a large part of Bernard’s story in adulthood, too. In her last year at Roehampton University, where she studied primary education, she found out she was dyslexic. “It was such an epiphany moment that explained so much. But I also thought, ‘wow, Nadine, you’ve developed your own way of working without those fundamental supports.’”

Bernard also had to face down a damaging lack of expectation within the education system. She recalls a visit from an Ofsted inspector in the last five years. “When I

welcomed them into my school, they looked at me and said in a discrediting tone, ‘you’re the head?’”

She continues steadily: “I’ve had innocent comments about how I would potentially look more professional with my hair straight. I’ve had my skin touched and stroked or people touching my hair. I also remember being told to think carefully about what name to give my son.”

Of the controversial report from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, published in March, Bernard says: “We can’t keep shutting the issue of racism down, because that way you can never make a difference. It can feel like we make 10 steps forward, then 20 steps back. It becomes tiring, exhausting.”

But during it all, her mum’s voice telling her “never to be ashamed” rings in her ears. She’s also discovered “real champions” among white colleagues too, pointing to Liz Robinson at the Big Education academy trust as “like a sister” to her.

And so, after George Floyd’s terrible murder last year, Bernard set up Aspiring Heads, an online leadership development programme for black teachers (she

points out that she cannot claim to have expertise in the experiences of all minority ethnicities, and they should not be lumped together).

“I’m not a whinger, I’m solution-focused,” Bernard smiles. She runs a monthly webinar with each of her teacher students, introducing them to a different black education leader and working through six leadership ‘competencies’.

Students complete modules online with an accompanying podcast recorded by Bernard and her husband Ethan. Now, the pair have won £15,000 through the FEA award. This month, Ethan left his job as a youth worker to run the project behind the scenes full-time.

It brought a sense of “liberation”, says Bernard. “It feels like I’ve been through a lot, and a lot that I feel many people around me are totally unaware of. People don’t see the many times I’ve had to pick myself up, to find my confidence when it could easily have been crippled. This recognises something I’ve invested so much time and energy into.”

In the middle of next month, there will even be an Aspiring Heads leadership summit. It’s subtitled: “Overcoming, Preparing, Moving Forward”.

It’s Bernard’s philosophy. And it perfectly suits the troubled history of a school like Van Gogh primary – a history she is determined to leave far behind.

Opinion

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

The new Covid guidance is already leading some schools to punish clinically vulnerable families, writes Jo Maugham. The DfE owes them all a better deal

It's September again and schools are finally back in session, after 18 months of the greatest logistical challenges modern education has ever seen.

But schools are facing lingering problems arising from the Government's desire to return to a pre-Covid world.

The only consistency in Government guidance for schools over the past year and a half has been its inconsistency. Ministers' advice on how schools should deal with Covid has yo-yoed and educators have had to adapt constantly.

In August, Dr Jenny Harries wrote to families to say that children the Government once classed as especially vulnerable to Covid were, as if by magic, no longer considered vulnerable. All of these children must now attend school in person.

This is despite a worrying lack of Covid safety measures. For the new academic year, schools no longer need to do any contact tracing, no one is required to wear face masks and for most school-age children the Covid vaccine programme has yet to start.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that schools may now be the least Covid-safe places in the country. SAGE, the Government's own expert advisors, are expecting "exponential increases" of Covid in school children.

These are the facts. They pose serious questions for every family. But for families with health conditions, the effect of the Government's new rules is far worse. Either they risk prosecution by keeping their child at home to protect their health or the



JOLYON MAUGHAM

Director, Good Law Project

Schools mustn't follow the DfE in abandoning vulnerable families

health of a family member, or they risk a loved one's life by sending their kids to school.

We already know of one case in which an immunosuppressed parent was criminally prosecuted for their child's absence from school.

Other parents tell us they've been

be higher. The Government must acknowledge that some families have health vulnerabilities. We can't just wish those complexities away.

We want the Government to mitigate the risk of Covid outbreaks in schools. They could do this by requiring that pupils self-isolate if

“ Either they risk prosecution, or they risk a loved one's life

bullied by schools worried about attendance figures into deregistering their child, leaving them without formal education and causing enormous strain on family life.

We passionately believe the best place for children is in school. But managing a world with Covid in it is complex, and the stakes could not

they come into close contact with someone who has tested positive, doing on-site testing and funding schools to improve ventilation.

But in particular, we want the education secretary, Gavin Williamson, to improve the guidance for local authorities and schools so they know how to support parents



with vulnerable family members to make decisions about what is best for them.

That guidance needs to make clear that, during the transition period, it will sometimes be right for schools to support children to learn from home. This is particularly the case for vulnerable children who are, in light of recent advice from the JCVI, now awaiting a vaccine.

It needs to be clear that parents who make reasonable decisions about what is in their family's best interests should be supported, not threatened with fines or prosecution. And it should provide for the continuation of online schooling for a limited number of especially vulnerable families through additional funding from Government.

But most of all, it should be clear that it is wrong for schools to put attendance figures ahead of children's best interests by encouraging parents, sometimes by threat, to take their children off the school roll. That is the very opposite of proper provision, and a responsible secretary of state should make that very clear.

The bottom line is that children can become infected with Covid-19. They can play a significant role in spreading the virus to their wider communities. Some children who catch Covid-19 do develop severe symptoms, and up to one in seven still has long Covid symptoms up to four months later. While death or severe illness is unlikely, it is certainly possible, particularly for vulnerable children.

Covid has not gone away, despite what the Government would like to think. More must be done to make schools safe while the pandemic continues.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Responding to ASCL's proposal to reform the admissions code, Ed Vainker and Rebecca Cramer say schools don't need to wait to make their intakes fairer

We welcome the proposal in this week's ASCL publication, *Blueprint for a Fairer System*, that school admissions should prioritise children from disadvantaged backgrounds. After all, it is something we have been doing at Reach Academy Feltham for the past five years.

Launching the report, Geoff Barton described "entrenched injustice" in the way that the economics of property ownership restrict less affluent families' access to the best schools. A 2019 PWC report identified the additional cost of living near high performing schools at £27,000 for primary schools and £25,000 for secondaries. This is one of several reasons those eligible for pupil premium are half as likely to attend an outstanding school as their wealthiest peers.

Initiatives like pupil premium are specifically aimed at redressing that balance by prioritising resources where they can have the greatest impact. They represent a growing commitment across the system to education as a tool for social justice and have contributed to dramatic improvements in the quality of education nationally over the past 20 years. This same moral lens could be helpfully applied to school admissions.

The ASCL proposal invites a change to the school admissions code, but in reality schools are already free to take this step. The code allows schools to prioritise places based on pupil premium eligibility, and there are more inclusive alternatives to catchment-or distance-based over-subscription criteria. In his recent book, *Fractured*, Jon Yates urges school governors to take

REBECCA CRAMER

Co-founders, Reach Academy Feltham



ED VAINKER

Why wait? Admissions reform is in your hands

advantage of this freedom to create more truly comprehensive schools, and a number of them already have, including One Degree Academy in Enfield.

For our part, it was in 2015 – three years after opening our school and a year after we moved to our permanent

our commitment to serving the whole community of Feltham by changing our policy. Just like ASCL's new proposal, we committed to ring-fencing 29 per cent of our places for pupils eligible for the pupil premium, the average pupil premium figure for schools within a mile of Reach.

“Our reputation changed our cohort, so we changed our policy

home and received an 'outstanding' judgment from Ofsted – that we started to see its reputation change our cohort. Estate agents trumpeted that homes were "in the catchment of Reach Academy" (even if they were not), and two nearby office blocks were turned into apartment buildings.

So we made the decision to safeguard

A year later we went further. We adopted the over-subscription criteria recommended by the Sutton Trust and moved from distance over-subscription to random allocation for families living within our two local postcodes.

Of course, we consulted on these changes extensively and explained



them to our community. The admissions code requires it, and for good reason. Making a change like this is difficult for parents who have been making important life decisions, preparing and planning based on one policy, only to be faced with another.

Ring-fencing some places for pupil premium-eligible students is unlikely to significantly change cohort composition, which fluctuates annually based on the profile of those applying. Even so, we initially faced a number of admissions appeals where parents cited the policy as unfair. We stuck to our commitment to fairness, explained our rationale, and no appeal was ever upheld. Within a couple of years the criteria were no longer cited in appeals. Now, they are widely accepted by the community.

We still have to work hard to inform our community of the criteria and invite parents who are eligible to complete the additional form to confirm their eligibility. But the impact is that every year our proportion of pupil premium-eligible pupils increases. It is now at 65 per cent, and we are proud to admit more of this cohort than live in Feltham, as well as more pupils with EHCPs and Looked After Children.

It hasn't been without its challenges, but we are delighted we took the step and would recommend it to any school. So we welcome ASCL's proposal, but the truth is that schools can act now without the need for systemic reform. With moral purpose and transparency, we can lead our communities to even more social justice and even better schools for every pupil, regardless of background.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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MADELEINE FRESKO-BROWN

Assistant headteacher and member,
Jewish Teachers' Association

Including observant Jewish teachers is a matter of faith

Accommodating time off for Jewish festivals isn't just good practice, writes Madeleine Fresko-Brown, it's a teachable moment for an inflexible system

Monday evening, 7pm. A friend and colleague knocks on my door. She's been at school all day, and I have been at synagogue, celebrating Sukkot.

After a brief, friendly catch-up, she takes a deep breath and launches in with the real reason for her visit: "I have a bit of an ethical dilemma. I might be about to do the wrong thing. I'm sorry. We have Ofsted tomorrow."

Cue speechless silence. Tomorrow was yet another Jewish festival, the seventh of a long run of days preventing me from going into school, switching my phone on, checking my emails, or doing any work at all. And now I would be missing an Ofsted too.

"My partner said I shouldn't tell you," she went on apologetically, "he said it was your day of rest."

The realisation dawned that even education's most anticipated event could not drag me away from my religious observance. Quickly, a calmer, more assured tone set in.

"The lead practitioners have it totally covered," she continued. "They're doing lunch duties, they were included in the team briefing and they're on the timetable for learning walks tomorrow."

Still slightly stunned, all I could do as she left was to wish her and the team good luck. Some teachers

“ Asking me to compromise my observance is unreasonable

cut sickness or bereavement leave short to avoid the guilt that comes with missing an Ofsted – to 'do their bit' for the collective effort. While I felt some guilt, my religious practice mandated that I could not do this. My only choice was to have faith in my team and let the show go on without me.

If you're a leader in a school with Jewish staff, chances are they will have asked to take some religious leave. Many secular or traditional Jews will ask for the three days usually covered by most schools' religious leave policy, but observant Jews consider ourselves bound by the laws of the Torah and its mandated days of religious observance.



And it turns out there are quite a few: two for Rosh Hashannah, Yom Kippur, two for Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah, two for Pesach and two for Shavuot. That's 11 days, of which eight usually fall

them and in the cover staff provided a valuable springboard for the rest of the term.

And there's another benefit too. Some teachers and leaders feel that they are irreplaceable, that the school or classroom couldn't possibly run without their constant presence. Being forced to take inconvenient days off can be a helpful lesson in ego-reduction, and in the value of a lower-stakes culture around the job.

But Ofsted visits aren't planned – or low-stakes – I hear you cry. True, but in my absence the three lead practitioners stepped up fabulously, led the inspectors around on learning walks, talked intelligently about the learning they saw and demonstrated the strength in depth of our teaching and learning team.

I met with the lead inspector on my return and my absence hadn't mattered one bit. An object lesson in humility, and the confidence boost we all needed that my team would be ready to take the helm when I went on maternity leave the following year.

So next time a Jewish teacher declares they need eight days of religious leave, have a little faith: in them, and in yourselves. Say yes.

Opinion

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



DAVID ROBINSON

Director, post-16 and skills,
Education Policy Institute

Narrowing A-level choices put students' futures at risk

A level choices are less diverse than ever, with potential risks to students' futures. Schools and policy makers alike can and should act, writes David Robinson

On 14 March 2013, then education secretary Michael Gove wrote to Ofqual's chief regulator, Glenys Stacy. The letter concerned the reforms to A levels which the government had set in motion.

Back then, A levels consisted of two equally weighted parts: the AS level, taken in the first year, and an A2 assessed at the end of the second year.

Concerned that this modular approach to A levels was causing a loss of depth of study and leaving young people poorly prepared for higher education, the government tasked Ofqual with developing the new and now separate A and AS levels we see today.

In his letter, Michael Gove stated that he recognised the benefits of the breadth offered to students by A levels and was "keen to preserve this".

But fast-forward to today, and this is not what has happened.

New research from the Education Policy Institute, supported by

the Royal Society, shows that the diversity of level 3 subjects taken in the 16-to-19 phase has dramatically fallen since 2010. The proportion of students taking qualifications from three or more of the main subject groups – that's maths,

science, languages, humanities and vocational – has halved over the decade.

Most of this decline in subject diversity took place after the government began the roll-out of the reformed A levels in 2015, when take-up of AS levels began to decline. But this was also magnified by falls in per-student funding since 2010, and a funding formula that no

longer backs extra AS levels.

These changes should concern schools, because they can make a difference to employment outcomes for students. Our research suggests that students who take a greater mix of level 3 subjects see a small boost to their earnings by the time they reach their mid-twenties.

Those with a greater variety of subjects covering at least two of the main subject areas go on to earn 3 to 4 per cent more than those who had subjects from only one main subject area. These positive earnings are in line with other factors, such as the status of university attended, that have a growing influence on earnings later

“ Schools must not see university access as simply the endgame

into a career.

We also know that having a broader set of skills is likely to provide students with more resilience for the world of work, giving them opportunities to move into different roles. But with their subject choices now exceedingly narrow, such benefits risk being out of reach.

What does all of this mean for

schools and colleges making decisions about their provision? And how should they guide the decisions of students?

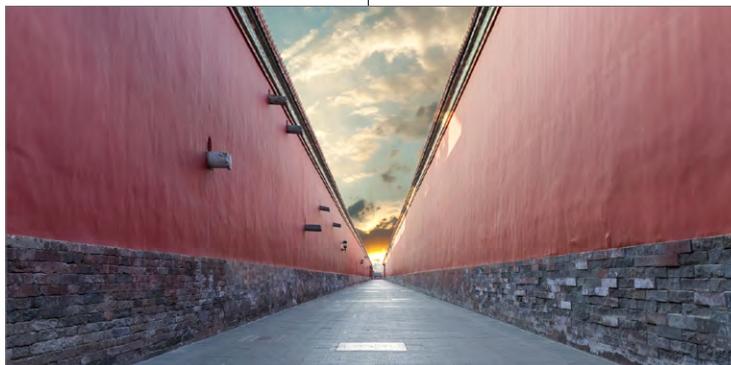
Clearly teachers will first and foremost be informed by the ability and aspirations of their students. But our research suggests that subject choice matters for students well beyond access to university courses.

Schools and colleges must therefore not see securing access for their students to competitive university places as simply the endgame – the long-term matters too. The choices they make at 16 may continue to affect their employment outcomes well into their careers.

Given there are likely benefits to a broad education at this age, teachers should also ensure that pupils have considered the full range of subject options.

Having a funding system that is able to support this approach would certainly help to support greater subject breadth. To prevent A level choices from narrowing further, we've called on the government to review current funding arrangements, which hinder the take-up of an additional AS level. This should also be met with a wider review of 16-to-19 funding in England, which has suffered significant real-terms cuts since 2010.

The government's reforms to A levels nearly a decade ago have evidently failed to achieve their stated aim of maintaining subject diversity. To better support students' progression, it must act to ensure that our already uniquely narrow 16-to-19 education is not squeezed further still.



Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



My Secret EdTech Diary: Looking at Educational Technology through a wider lens

Author: Al Kingsley

Publisher: John Catt Educational

Reviewer: Terry Freedman, freelance ed tech writer and publisher, ICT in Education

Should you be in the fortunate position of either being head of a new school, or the head of digital technology with a blank sheet of paper and a decent-sized budget, this "Diary" will prove to be a godsend.

For example, we are told that long-term planning is essential, especially in the realm of infrastructure and hardware. What happens in three to five years' time when the equipment is either worn out, no longer fit for purpose or both should be a primary consideration.

We are also warned of the futility of implementing apparently wonderful new technology – Google Glass is cited – and then trying to find the educational benefits of having done so.

And, to take another example, we are cautioned about the disadvantages of implementing e-safety software that looks for certain keywords and blocks the websites that use them without regard to context.

All good advice, but nothing that wasn't said 30 years ago. Indeed, much of the advice is excellent, although it is a sad confirmation that the trope that education lacks any sort of collective memory is in fact well observed.

There are several welcome aspects of the book. Firstly, having had to respond in no time at all to the challenges of online education, we now have a wealth of experience to draw on in terms of what worked well and what didn't. The author does so very well, pulling in experiences from the UK and elsewhere.

Secondly, the checklists and "Top

Tips" throughout make it easy for the reader to take in quite complex ideas and information almost at a glance.

Thirdly, it's useful to learn how edtech suppliers decide on what to bring to the market, and how they go about doing so.

However...

There is an old joke – you will have heard it – in which a driver stops to ask someone the way to a particular place. "Well," answers the pedestrian, "I wouldn't start from here." And while this book offers good advice about what can be achieved with educational technology, the importance of having a strategy and so on, one has the sense that it has come 18 months too late. Except, of course, without the pandemic the interest in a book such as this would have been decidedly narrower, and the book itself thinner.

This is the implicit paradox at the heart of this book. Based on the author's extensive experience both as an edtech supplier and an educationalist, as well as what has been found to work well in using educational technology for providing teaching during lockdowns, the "Diary" has much to commend it.

However, advice along the lines of how schools should plan their spending on edtech may strike some as being a little late. It might have been useful to have at least included a section or a whole chapter about how to identify and then reverse decisions that, in retrospect, were unwise. To some extent this is implied in the list of questions that planners should ask, but a more explicit treatment would have been welcome.

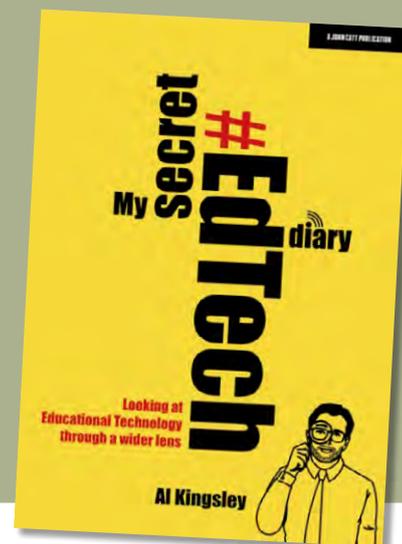
Which raises the question: who is this book for? This is where the waters become

a little muddy. Although it seems clear that the intended readership is anyone charged with a school's digital learning strategy, the author also says the book is aimed at budding "edupreneurs". This dreadful neologism seems to refer both to someone who wishes to implement a particular (edtech-related) idea in their classroom, and companies looking to bring a new idea to market.

As a pulling back of the curtain so that teachers can see the process new edtech products (should) go through this is interesting and, perhaps, even useful. But as a guide for "budding edupreneurs" it seems out of place here.

A few structural omissions are frustrating. There are no chapter summaries, no index and no comprehensive list of all the websites mentioned.

However, as a compact and accessible guide to good practice in the implementation of education technology in schools, supported by research from the wider field of education, the "EdTech Diary" is a good investment.



Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is **Jon Hutchinson**, assistant head, Reach Academy Feltham and visiting fellow, Ambition Institute

@JON_HUTCHINSON_

Strategy: a 2,500 year-old history

@joe__kirby

Almost a decade ago, Joe Kirby was at the vanguard of an educational revolution. I had just started teaching, and drank in everything he wrote. I've often revisited his posts from 2013 and reflected on how they could be published today and still seem ahead of the curve. But then, we entered a Joe-Kirby-dark-ages as he hunkered down to apply his ideas at the chalkface. Now, he has returned.

Bloggng with the same trademark mixture of iconoclasm and reasonableness, Kirby turns his attention here to strategy. He argues that school leaders often wrestle with this conundrum of what to prioritise, and surveys thinking on the topic from Sun Tzu to the EEF, drawing out the insights from each. His informative analysis warns of common pitfalls with 'template' approaches, before offering a clear (though challenging) alternative.

Reflections from ResearchEd 2021

@greeborunner

For thousands of teachers, ResearchEd conferences have become cherished for

TOP BLOGS of the week

CPD and networking, with the national conference in September a particularly special event. In this blog, Zoe Enser sets out her highlights from the day.

To begin with, Enser summarises a talk from David Didau unpicking a phrase that has become almost cliché in recent years: the curriculum is the progression model. After this, a commentary is provided on Paul Kirschner's talk on generative learning, which Enser recalls watching with some trepidation having recently authored a book on the same topic.

This post offers some key insights into big ideas, and reminds us of how important ResearchEd is in connecting classroom teachers with academics to discuss research and provide mutual understanding and growth.

A note on shifting from the vehicle

@SaysMiss

When teachers were first consulted on the new early career framework, the response was overwhelmingly positive – rare for any education policy, let alone one that would mean such a profound change for the profession. Now though, as the policy collides with busy classrooms, some dissent is emerging.

As Kat Howard insightfully notes in this blog, this may be due to the fact that starts of conversations are easy. Speaking in the abstract is safe. However, as Howard puts it,

"now we can move onto something a little meatier. But meatier is problematic."

Here, using examples of concepts and strategies from cognitive science that have become common language in many schools, Howard attempts to put 'meat on the bones' in a way that avoids both genericism and lethal mutations. She draws on examples from her own specialism of English, but those in other disciplines will undoubtedly benefit from following the process, ready to do the same in their subjects.

Guest blog by Helen Bradford: The DfE's new reading framework

@earlyed_uk

The most passionate debates in schools often start with one of two topics: how we should teach children to read, and how we should teach children in the early years. Too often over the years, I've seen these debates descend predictably and unhelpfully into binary pro- vs anti-phonics shouting matches.

Given that context, the Department for Education's new Reading framework: teaching the foundations of early literacy was bound to court some pushback. But amid the noise, this blog from Early Education associate Helen Bradford sets a new standard for constructive criticism. Its forensic, personal and measured look at the framework is insightful and thought-provoking.

Putting my cards on the table, I'm broadly supportive of the DfE's guidance. Yet I am in no doubt that anyone who may need to teach children to read – which really is just a convoluted way of saying 'teachers' – would benefit hugely from reading this critique.

Whichever side of the debate you fall upon, your position will be more nuanced, informed and balanced after reading what Helen Bradford has to say on the matter. I know mine is.

Research



UCL Institute of Education will regularly review a research development throughout the year. Contact @IOE_London if you have a topic you'd like them to explore

Can schools effectively tackle extremist ideologies?

Dr Becky Taylor, senior research associate, UCL Institute of Education

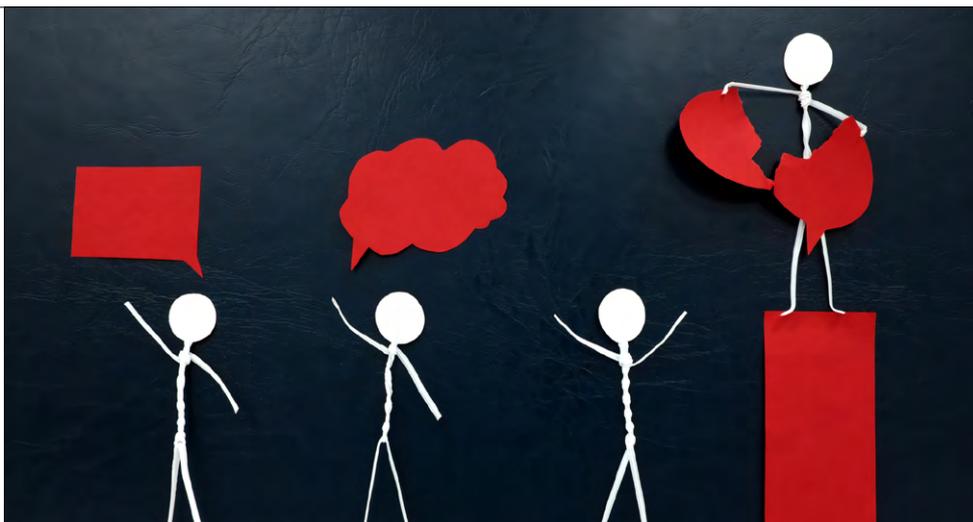
A resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan. Racist, homophobic and misogynist discourses securing establishment voices across the world. At home, hateful speech in our stadiums and a recent shooting by a perpetrator with links to online 'incel' groups. This, the 20th anniversary of 9/11, is clearly a time to reflect on our role in challenging extremist ideologies.

But can schools do it? And if so, how? What are the challenges, and how can they be overcome? The Centre for Teachers and Teaching Research at UCL Institute of Education was commissioned by the education charity SINCE 9/11 to carry out research into these questions.

In particular, we set out to explore the role schools can play in enabling young people to resist joining extremist or violent groups, and the ideas they perpetrate. We were also interested to find out what classroom resources and support teachers need in order to address extremism. To this end, we carried out a literature review, a survey of teachers in schools in England and interviews with teachers in five schools, as well as with a Prevent education officer.

On a positive note, teachers reported that it was exceptionally rare for students to be radicalised or to engage with extremist or violent movements. However, extreme views were worryingly common. The overwhelming majority of survey respondents had heard students express extreme views at school: 95 per cent had heard racist remarks, 90 per cent had heard conspiracy theories or homophobic remarks and three-quarters had heard Islamophobic comments or extremist views on women.

These are shocking findings, with immediate and significant implications for how safe our



schools feel to young people. So what can schools do about it?

The teachers we spoke with were emphatic that an important strategy is for students to be able to discuss controversial views with each other in a safe and constructive way at school. As one head of PSHE told us, "the heart of it is ... make sure they're having conversations". He described a lesson where a group of students expressed homophobic views. He asked them how they felt about racism (they were strongly opposed to it) and shared a poem about human rights. Arguments and heated discussion ensued, but some students came back later that day to tell him that it had changed their minds.

Facilitating discussions such as these, which enable young people to critique the views they encounter through social and traditional media, from politicians and from peers, requires a high level of skill and knowledge on the part of teachers. It requires clear boundaries, an understanding of the limits of free speech, knowledge of the subject matter and of critical literacy skills, and expert professional judgement in the moment.

This would be a big ask even if these conversations only came up in English or humanities lessons where they are part of the curriculum.

But of course that's not the case. And even citizenship and PSHE, where they might also be expected to arise, are often taught by non-specialists in bolt-ons to tutor programmes. Simply put, too many teachers lack the relevant training and experience for the role.

On a positive note, we did find that there are lots of good resources for teachers to use. But without the relevant pedagogical expertise, such lessons can end up being more about "delivery of content as opposed to exploring the opinions or thoughts or views of students," as one English teacher told us.

So, 20 years on, there is only one conclusion to be drawn from our research: all teachers should have access to professional development to support them in addressing controversial and sensitive issues. The skills and knowledge are there, in third-sector organisations and among expert teachers, but they are too thinly spread.

Our research shows that extremist views can be diminished, and that teachers facilitating discussions have a central role in achieving that goal. But it takes the kind of pedagogical expertise that only comes from ongoing professional development, experience, and a culture that makes it clear that addressing extremism is not only a priority, but everybody's business.





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Westminster

Your guide to what's happening in the corridors of power



FRIDAY

Ahead of the spending review you'd think that DfE bods would be trying everything to get more money in their coffers. But it turns out the department could lose up to £4 million on a grade-II listed building in north London.

The Hampstead police station was earmarked for a new free school and snaffled up by the DfE for a cool £14.1 million in 2013.

But a long-running planning battle scuppered those plans and, according to the *Camden New Journal*, the DfE has now flogged the site for £10 million.

Managing to lose £4 million on London property is quite an achievement. Send in Lord Agnew's cost-cutters!

TUESDAY

This week we heard that an Ofsted inspection is like root canal work. More whingeing from the anti-Ofsted crew? Er, no. This was direct from the mouth of Her Maj.

Amanda Spielman told an Institute for Government event: "I sometimes think the best analogy for an inspection is a root canal treatment at your dentist.

"You don't look forward to it with joy, but once it's done, you're actually pretty glad it's been done."

Next time the phone rings from Ofsted – you know the drill!

PS: Not content with widespread hatred from the profession just for running Ofsted, Spielman thought it wise to question the temerity of school leaders choosing to feed hungry children at the start of covid.

Asked about the unevenness in resources between state and private schools during the pandemic, Spielman said: "In a lot of schools it felt as though their attention went very rapidly to the most disadvantaged children, into sort of making food parcels, going out visiting".

"They put a great deal of attention into the children with the greatest difficulties, which is admirable, but in some cases that probably got prioritised... certainly over summer 2020, which may have meant they didn't have the capacity left to make sure there was some kind of education offer for all children."

Holy moly.

--

The government has missed its own deadlines to deliver the SEND review. Three times.

When asked about this at a Westminster Education Forum, Andre Imich, the DfE's SEND adviser, told attendees: "I'm sure we would forgive the delay if it comes up with something that does lead to improvement."

A lovely indictment of DfE policy: good things *might* come, but only to those who wait, and wait, and wait.

WEDNESDAY

HOLY SHIT, IT'S RESHUFFLE DAY.

For once, the government made good on its pledges and booted Gavin Williamson from Sanctuary Buildings.

In a classic blunderful Gav move, he seemed to confirm his departure on Twitter while not actually confirming

his departure (see tweet).

He also spelt prime minister wrong. If Gav wasn't so incompetent, we'd take this as a sly dig at his old boss for telling him to gather up his little red book, whip and Cronus the spider and sling his hook.

More worrying news later this evening, though, when Nick Gibb, schools minister since 1786, announced he'd been sacked. (Take note Gav: three succinct lines that included the lines "I am not continuing in my role." And he managed to congratulate the new ed sec too.)

Anyway, legend has it that Gibb has to be kept at DfE towers or the whole thing will fall. Sanctuary Buildings was still in one piece as *Schools Week* went to press.

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Pissed off that the government's exams fiasco has ruined your life chances? Well, best keep any profanities to yourself because the exams watchdog has a new rule for its social media followers.

A new "social media use" document, under "moderation, messages and replies", states that Ofqual followers should not "swear, make malicious or offensive comments".

Followers should also "not spam the channel" nor "post messages that are unrelated to the topic of the original post". And they should only "use English as we are not able to moderate comments in other languages". Merde!



REGIONAL SCHOOLS COMMISSIONER – EAST OF ENGLAND AND NORTH EAST LONDON

Salary up to £120,000 per annum
 Location Cambridge or London with travel in the region, and attendance at meetings in London and other RSC regional offices.



Department for Education

Dedicated to delivering first-class education to children and young people across England, the Department for Education is a stimulating and rewarding place to work. With over 9700 open academies and free schools, we're looking for an outstanding leader with a track record of significant achievement and delivery, a good understanding of the education landscape both nationally and locally, a commitment to diversity and an ability to lead through change.

You will be part of a strong team of commissioners, making important operational decisions on behalf of the Secretary of State for all academies, free

schools and sponsors in your region. That means monitoring performance of academies and free schools, driving improvements in underperforming schools, facilitating multi academy trust development and growth, and leading on the opening of new free schools. You will also lead a Civil Service regional team that plays a key role in Covid response work, wider school improvement plans and sufficiency of pupil places. Engaging effectively with trust leaders and stakeholders is key, as is commanding respect in support and challenge in the sector.

Please visit CS Jobs and search for Regional Schools Commissioner.



EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL
 L28-L35 £81,942 – £97,273

As Executive Principal, you will lead The Forest School in the charming town of Knaresborough and be the designate Executive Principal of our new build specialist school in Osgodby, Selby (due to open in September 2023).

This is a unique opportunity to not only lead a flourishing and highly regarded special school but also shape the development of a brand new, purpose built, special free school. We are looking for an inclusive, experienced and committed professional to join us.

This role would suit a head teacher or principal who is looking for a move to executive leadership or an experienced executive leader who recognises the unique opportunity to be involved in something special and exciting.

This is a once in a career opportunity to contribute to the design and build process of a new school and also join the community of a thriving school in the beautiful county of North Yorkshire.



Heatherwood School
 A Vibrant Learning Community

Class Teacher

Heatherwood School is a special school for pupils aged 3-19 years with severe, profound and/or multiple learning difficulties. The school has a post 16 provision for pupils with moderate learning needs. Heatherwood School is part of Nexus Multi-Academy Trust.

Heatherwood School is seeking to appoint a highly motivated, innovative teacher who understands the importance of child-led, personalised learning for our inspirational pupils. The successful teacher will understand the importance of working within a multi-agency team and effective parent/carer relationships to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils of Heatherwood School.

This is an opportunity for an outstanding teacher, who is looking for a new challenge in relation to teaching pupils with complex learning needs, to join our dedicated and hardworking team. The post is suited to early career teachers who are committed to continuing their professional development or experienced teachers. Teachers should be prepared to work anywhere within the school.



**AYLESBURY
GRAMMAR SCHOOL**
Founded 1598

Head of Computer Science

A truly exciting opportunity to lead and develop the School's Computer Science department from January 2022 following the retirement of the current post holder.

We are seeking a highly motivated, well-organised, innovative leader who will be able to shape, direct and deliver an exciting future for Computer Science as part of the School's commitment to developing and nurturing character.

The successful candidate will be a strong leader able to take the department forward. For the right candidate, there is an opportunity to also lead the Design, Technology and Engineering team, to bring together all aspects of technology in the curriculum.

Aylesbury Grammar School is an academy grammar school for boys. Our uncompromised curriculum and extraordinary care & support create a culture of respect and aspiration.



Principal Designate

Paradigm Trust is working closely with the DfE and Suffolk County Council to build, open and operate a new special free school, Woodbridge Road Academy. We are looking to appoint a Principal Designate from January 2022 and the intention is to lead the opening of the school in September 2022, at which point the postholder will move into the Principal role.

Our vision is to run a special school where pupils can thrive in a stimulating but structured and well organised environment which provides every opportunity for social and academic development.

You will have the ability to establish, develop and maintain professional and effective working relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

You will strive towards ensuring there is a positive ethos in the school in which individuals feel valued, and where you will encourage your team to ensure that the school provides an excellent education for all pupils.

 [Click here to apply](#)



EYFS and Primary Curriculum Writers

United Learning is developing a coherent, ambitious and aspirational curriculum to support our growing number of primary teachers across England. The curriculum and its resources aim to both reduce teachers' workload, and ensure that all our pupils receive an excellent education.

We are therefore expanding our team of curriculum writers, and are recruiting for five roles in EYFS, Art, RE, English and Geography. The EYFS, Art, RE, English and Geography specialists will each take ownership of their subject's curriculum and resources.

As a primary curriculum writer, your main responsibility will be to develop and refine an outstanding curriculum for our teachers to deliver. This will include the careful sequencing of substantive and disciplinary knowledge across the key stages and, where appropriate, across subjects. The sequencing should allow pupils to gradually develop second order concepts, and should have spaced retrieval built in.

You will also develop the resources that can help teachers explicitly teach this curriculum, for example: teacher subject knowledge packs; assessment materials; knowledge organisers; and slides and resources for individual lessons.

You will work alongside primary teachers to test, refine and improve the resources and, where needed, support teachers to implement the curriculum with bespoke CPD.

This an exciting opportunity to work alongside the wider curriculum team to help to shape our vision for our curriculum, and to develop resources that will have a very tangible and positive impact for teachers.

For more information about each of the roles, please visit the [United Learning vacancies page](https://www.unitedlearningcareers.org.uk/current-vacancies):
<https://www.unitedlearningcareers.org.uk/current-vacancies>

Roman Catholic Diocese of Middlesbrough

DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

(Attractive and Competitive Salary for the right candidate)



Required April 2022.

The Bishop of Middlesbrough the Rt Rev Bishop Terence Patrick Draney is seeking to appoint a practising Catholic to the important leadership position of Diocesan Director of Schools. Leading the Diocesan Schools Service Department, you will be an experienced high-quality leader with extensive knowledge and understanding of Catholic education and a proven track record of success. The Director of Schools will work directly to the Bishop to ensure the Bishop's vision for Catholic education is lived out in all Diocesan schools where children and young people will know and love Christ, access excellent Catholic education and share their encounter with others.

Formed in 1878, the Diocese comprises the local authority areas which historically formed the North Riding of Yorkshire namely Redcar and Cleveland, parts of Stockton on Tees, Middlesbrough, York, parts of North Yorkshire, parts of East Riding and Kingston upon Hull. Across the Diocese there are 45 Primary and 8 Secondary Schools. 52 of the 53 schools are voluntary Catholic academies in one of 3 large regional Catholic Academy Trusts.

The Director of Schools will provide guidance and direction on Diocesan policy to schools and Trusts and lead on securing the Bishop's oversight on the performance of all Diocesan schools. The Director will liaise with national bodies on behalf of the Bishop including the DfE, Ofsted, RSC and the CES. The Director will also lead a team of Diocesan Inspectors to undertake the statutory Catholic Schools Inspectorates inspections of all Diocesan schools.

Working with the Diocesan Deputy Director of Schools, the Director of Schools will develop and implement the Bishop's religious education programme by providing direct training and support across all 53 Diocesan schools. With the Diocesan Director for Standards and Catholic Leadership Development, the Director will also support the formation and development of future Catholic leaders, providing guidance and formal CPD whilst fulfilling the role of Diocesan adviser on the recruitment processes for reserved posts.

For further information and an 'in confidence' conversation about the role please contact Kevin Duffy, Diocesan Director of Schools on 01642 850515.

A full Job Description, Person Specification and Application Form can be downloaded from the Diocesan website <https://www.middlesbroughdioceseschoolsservice.org.uk/Vacancies/Director-of-Schools-vacancy/>

KEY DATES

Closing Date: Noon Friday 1st October 2021.

Shortlisting: Wednesday 6th October 2021.

Assessment and Interviews: Wednesday 20th October 2021.

The Diocese of Middlesbrough is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An acceptable Enhanced DBS disclosure and references will be sought from the successful candidate prior to appointment.

HEADTEACHER

ALLERTON BYWATER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Salary L16- L22 (£61,166 - £70,745) dependent on experience
 Required: January 2022



The opportunity:

The Board of Trustees at the Brigshaw Learning Partnership are looking to appoint an enthusiastic inspirational new Headteacher to one of our schools - Allerton Bywater Primary School.

The Brigshaw Learning Partnership is a multi-academy trust in outer east Leeds, established in 2016. Allerton Bywater is a Primary School with 430 pupils on roll.

You will provide dynamic and strategic direction and leadership to Allerton Bywater Primary School and the wider Multi Academy Trust and will establish a culture of continuous improvement in our mission to provide transformative education for our children.

The successful candidate will:

- Have a proven record of effective teaching and learning with at least 3 years' senior leadership experience.
- Demonstrate success in raising standards and setting challenging

targets at Trust and/or school level with the ability to embed a rigorous academic curriculum for all.

- Lead by example, to grow a powerful aspirational and values-driven culture which motivates both staff and students.

We would strongly encourage interested applicants to arrange an informal and confidential discussion about the role. Please contact Aidan Sadgrove on Tel: 0113 287 8925/07713234203 or email: sadgrovea01@brigshawtrust.com to arrange a suitable time.

Application packs are available from Katie Hollis, EPM, tel. 07731 082859

or email: katie.hollis@epm.co.uk Applications should be returned to Katie Hollis via email.

Closing Date: 20th September at 12pm
Interview Date(s): 27th & 28th September 2021

This Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to have an up to date DBS disclosure

NOW HIRING LITERACY SPECIALIST & ENGLISH HUB MANAGER

Grzebrook Primary School Lordship Road London N16 0QP | 020 8802 4051



New Wave English Hub is one of the 34 DfE-designated English Hubs and a designated Coordinating Hub and Delivery Hub for the government's post-Covid Phonics Accelerator Fund. Our mission is to support schools in achieving excellence in early literacy, developing children who are confident, enthusiastic readers.

We are looking to appoint an additional outstanding Reception/KS1 teacher to develop phonics and early reading across the region and support schools to access funding for accredited SSP programmes.

The Literacy Specialist will:

- Have an excellent understanding of early language and reading development;
 - Have a proven track record of fantastic teaching in Reception and/or KS1, including age-appropriate phonics;
 - Be passionate about instilling a love of reading in all children;
 - Have experience of delivering effective school to school support.
- The deadline for applications is 24.09.21

We are also looking to appoint an outstanding English Hub Manager to support the delivery of the hub's intensive and medium level support offer, as well as the allocation of accelerator funding.

The Hub Manager will:

- Have an excellent understanding of early language, reading development & phonics;
- Be passionate about instilling a love of reading in all children;
- Have experience of delivering effective school to school support;
- Have experience of collaborating with school leaders and other stakeholders. **The deadline for applications is 8.10.21 for the Hub Manager Role**

The successful candidates will work 3-4 days (to be negotiated) on the leadership scale salary (Inner London, L9-L13). This is initially a fixed-term, one year contract.

For more information and an application pack, please email Lisa Langley at englishhub@newwavefederation.co.uk.





School Performance Director Campfire Education Trust

Responsible to: Chief Executive Officer | **Location:** Office base – Moorland Primary, Milton Keynes
Hours of work: 37 hours per week. There may be a requirement to work outside normal working hours
Holiday: 30 days to be taken outside term time | **Salary:** Competitive

This vacancy comes at an exciting time for the Trust, and the role offers the successful candidate an opportunity to take us through a phase of controlled growth. The challenge will be one of maintaining our current high standards while bringing new schools into the Trust as we seek to build to an optimum mix of schools.

We seek an experienced and innovative senior education professional who understands the power of curriculum and how it can be used to create sustainable success. They will have a record of successful strategic leadership and sustainable school improvement. They will have imagination, be flexible and determination to succeed along with an understanding of the

need to be empathetic to the needs of the schools and their leaders.

If you feel you can bring the experience and credibility this high-profile role requires and you would like further information, or to arrange confidential conversation please contact

Jacqui Collins on: M: 07895 498128 T: 01908 671803:
 E: JCollins@campfiretrust.co.uk

All applications are to be completed no later than noon on **Friday 1st October 2021.**

Interviews Wednesday 13th October 2021

Applications to be made through www.mynewterm.com



Principal

Location:
Whittingham Primary Academy

Closing date:
Midday on 30th September 2021

Interview date:
14th and 15th October 2021

Start date:
1st January 2022 or as soon as possible thereafter

Salary:
£60,000 - £85,000 dependent upon experience, including TPS and the option of private healthcare or relocation allowance if required.

This is an excellent opportunity to build on your previous experience and lead Whittingham Primary to drive school improvement in securing excellence in the quality of educational provision.

Whittingham Primary is one of the six primary schools within

a local cluster based within East London. The East London primary cluster has a highly effective back-office provision and school-to-school collaboration supporting staff development and school improvement.

As Principal, you will model excellence and demonstrate a clear commitment to the school and its communities. Your expertise and enthusiasm for education and the difference it makes to the lives of children and families will be evident each day, in all that you do.

If you are looking for an exciting and highly rewarding role within a Group that offers excellent professional development, and if you have a strong commitment to improving the lives of all young people, we encourage you to visit us.

Find out more and apply here



Associate Education Director - Secondary

Location: All Anthem secondary schools
Contract type: Permanent
Hours: Full time
Start date: January 2022
Salary: L23-L28
Application closing date: Monday 27 September 2021 at 12 noon
Interview date: Week commencing 4 October 2021

An exciting opportunity has arisen for an Associate Education Director – Secondary Phase to join our Anthem School Improvement Team and work alongside the Education Directors who are responsible for a group of five secondary schools in London, the South East and the East Midlands. We are seeking for an inspirational and experienced Educational Leader, with the skills and expertise to contribute to the work of the Anthem School Improvement Team and add significant value to our schools through implementing the Trust's School Improvement Strategy.

For more information about this role and how to apply, please go to <https://www.educationweekjobs.co.uk/job/9633-associate-education-director-secondary/>

Find out more about Anthem at www.anthemtrust.uk



**THE BAY
CE SCHOOL**
Believe • Inspire • Excel

Headteacher (Secondary)

Leadership Range - L27 - 33 / Required for January 2022

The governors, staff and students are looking to appoint an inspirational and passionate leader to join our successful and rapidly improving Church of England School. Working closely with the Leadership Team, staff and governors, the successful candidate will have a key role in shaping the future of the Secondary school building on its success. The post offers a tremendous opportunity for a visionary and collaborative leader to drive the school forward through the next exciting stage of its development within the Cornerstone Federation.

We are looking to appoint a Headteacher who:

- Is dynamic, motivational and has a proven track record of raising standards and creating a learning environment in which staff and students can thrive.
- Is strategic in their thinking.
- Is an excellent communicator who can develop strong relationships with students, staff, parents and the wider community.

- Can articulate a clear Christian vision, founded on Christian values focused on providing a world-class education for the students they serve.

We can offer a welcoming school, committed to providing the very best education and care for the children. The Bay CE is an all through (4-16) school that aims to transform the lives of all our children who attend the school.

Visits are warmly encouraged. For more information please contact Duncan Mills, Executive Headteacher on **01983 403284**.

Closing date:
Friday 1st October 2021

Interviews:
Monday 11th &
Tuesday 12th October 2021

For more information please visit our website bayceschool.org or contact recruitment@bayceschool.org

The Cornerstone Federation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful applicants will be required to obtain an Enhanced DBS clearance.



Head of School

Leadership Scale 7-11
Required for January 2022

The Governors and Executive Headteacher of Niton Primary School are looking to appoint a highly effective and dedicated teacher to lead Niton as our Head of School from January 2022.

The post offers a tremendous opportunity for a visionary and collaborative leader to drive the school forward through the next exciting stage of its development within the Cornerstone Federation.

We are looking for a Head of School who will be:

- Passionate about learning
- Strategic in their thinking
- Resilient and flexible
- FUN!

We can offer a welcoming school, committed to providing the very best education and care for the children at our community school.

Travel and relocation package available.

For further information on the post please contact Duncan Mills, Executive Headteacher on **01983 730209**

For an application pack please email recruitment@niton.iow.sch.uk or download via our website www.nitonprimary.org

Visits are welcomed and encouraged

Closing date: 1st October (noon)
Interview dates: Thursday 14th and Friday 15th October 2021

The Cornerstone Federation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful applicants will be required to obtain an Enhanced DBS clearance.

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