

CEO diversity:
Gender gap narrows,
but still work to do



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millions investing
City cash



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Labour wants
Ofsted as inspector
and improver



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OFSTED ACCUSED OF LACKING COVID COMPASSION

EXCLUSIVE

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Hundreds of schools told to bring back bubbles – even if they have no cases

- Staffordshire council recommends reintroducing stricter Covid measures as cases surge
- Conservative-led authority believed to be first to advise 'proactive' action across full region
- Move is a test case for ministers' willingness to tolerate backwards steps in restriction easing

TOM BELGER | @TOM_BELGER

EXCLUSIVE

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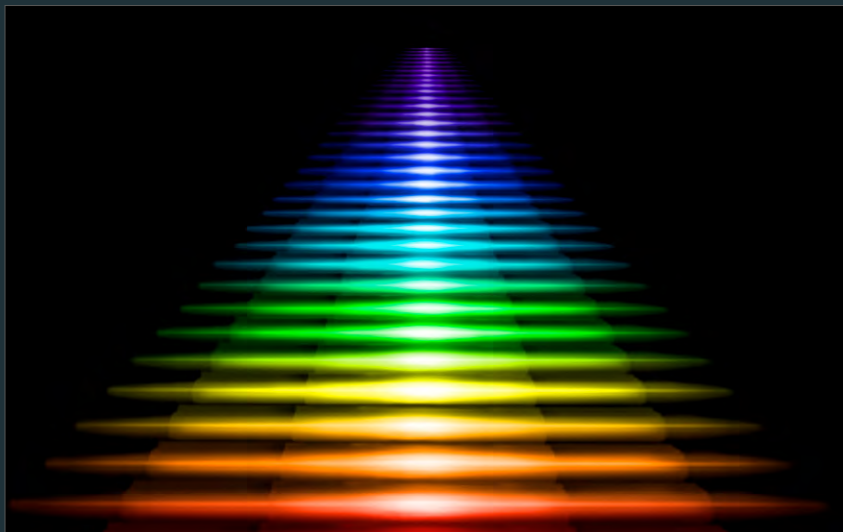
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NEWS

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Council urges immediate stricter Covid controls across all schools

TOM BELGER

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EXCLUSIVE

Hundreds of schools have been told by their council to reintroduce stricter Covid controls including bubbles, contact-tracing and scrapping assemblies as it is "time to be proactive" over rising cases.

Staffordshire County Council is believed to be the first local authority to recommend bringing back such wide-ranging measures across schools en masse. It covers more than 500 primaries and secondaries.

Current government guidance only sets out thresholds for reintroducing stricter measures in individual schools.

Staffordshire's infections surged 28.8 per cent last week, but Covid levels ranked 38th in the UK among councils. The county includes ex-education secretary Gavin Williamson's constituency.

Conservative-controlled Staffordshire said the DfE had been "briefed", but such decisions will test the government's willingness to tolerate backwards steps in easing restrictions.

When asked if they approve of the measures, the DfE would only say "guidance is clear that schools should only introduce additional measures if advised by local directors of public health in response to high case rates within the school".

Any such measures "should be temporary and carefully balance public health concerns with the need to prioritise face-to-face education", a spokesperson added.

A briefing to Staffordshire headteachers issued this week, seen by Schools Week, sets out "recommended controls" as "proactive to prevent outbreak and manage transmission".

Local primaries are urged to reintroduce class bubbles, scrap all-school events such as assemblies and all-staff meetings, consider staggering lunch breaks and promote vaccination to staff.

Secondaries are advised to bring back year-group bubbles, face coverings in social spaces and consider Covid management for PE classes.

The document states the director of public health and cabinet members support the measures.

The council wants all schools to contact trace whole classes or years if they have mixed, rather than "wait for track and trace".

Meanwhile, pupils with confirmed household cases are advised to "stay at home pending PCR



Recommended Controls

Proactive to prevent outbreak & manage transmission

Primary/Special

- Re-introduce class bubbles
- Limit staff cross overs
- No all school events - e.g. assembly
- Consider the benefits of visitors beyond the class bubble.
- No all staff meetings - keep resilience
- Consider staggering lunch and starts
- Consider other pre summer break Covid controls
- Promote vaccination to staff not yet fully vaccinated and boosters as staff become eligible

Briefed - DfE on the recommendations we are making and approach has Director of Public Health and Cabinet Member support.

Middle/Secondary

- Re-introduce year group bubbles
- Face coverings in social and interaction spaces/transport - wider if have an outbreak.
- Staff teach from front 2m distance. Resilience.
- No all staff meetings - keep resilience
- PE - consider Covid management and approach to changing.
- Consider staggering lunch and start and finish times.
- Consider other pre summer break Covid controls
- Promote vaccination to staff not fully vaccinated and boosters as staff become eligible. Plus promotion of vaccination arrangements to parents and post 16 pupils.

test result", even if schools "cannot legally require isolation".

The government had ended school contact-tracing responsibilities in July, and the requirement for contacts to self-isolate in August.

Jonathan Price, Staffordshire County Council's cabinet member, said rising cases locally were largely due to secondary and college outbreaks.

He said mobile testing units were being deployed, and bubbles were among measures schools "may potentially want to consider" - to limit contact, rather than for isolation purposes.

Julie McCulloch, policy director at school leaders' union ASCL, said councils were making area-wide decisions amid "confusion" over responsibility for stricter measures.

"This lack of clarity's not helpful to leaders trying to manage very difficult situations."

DfE guidance says measures are down to local officials to recommend "as part of their outbreak management responsibilities".

But they also say ministers will step in where there are "widespread issues across an area".

Wolverhampton council also asked secondary school staff and pupils this week to resume wearing face coverings in communal areas.

Some Staffordshire leaders are thought to have concerns about reintroducing measures even when they do not have outbreaks. But it appears schools feel they have no choice but to follow the council's recommendations.

Debbie Bailey, head of Queens Croft High School in Staffordshire, told parents she "felt sad" to be announcing new measures.

In a letter seen by Schools Week, she highlights



Jonathan Price, Staffordshire County Council's cabinet member

key stage "bubble boundaries", virtual school meetings and no off-site mixing with other schools. Single-class bubbles are being considered but the school is "reluctant" as it means a "limited curriculum".

The school was approached for comment.

Dr Mary Bousted, joint general secretary of the NEU, said: "I wonder what other compromises heads are making. The government doesn't dare order schools to do or not do anything - they know they can't do another Greenwich."

Ministers caused uproar last year by ordering Greenwich council to withdraw guidance urging schools to move learning online.

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the NAHT, warned the government must "allow local teams to work closely with their schools", and backed councils moving "quickly and decisively" in hotspots.

INVESTIGATION

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Exams 2022: Everything you need to know

The government has finally revealed its plans for how exams will work next year, and beyond. Here's your trusty *Schools Week* explainer on what you need to know.

ADAPTATIONS CONFIRMED FOR SUMMER EXAMS

Exams next year will have adaptations, including optionality and advance notice.

There will be optional topics and content in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography.

For all other GCSEs and A-levels, exam boards will provide advance notice of exam content to support students' revision.

This will be released by February 7, but the timing will be kept under review and could be brought forward if the pandemic worsens.

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of school leaders' union NAHT, said providing this information sooner would "help to reduce the differential impact of the pandemic on students so far".

But the DfE says it's important students cover the curriculum as fully as possible, rather than turn their attention too early to specific content.

Dr Jo Saxton, Ofqual's new chief regulator, added the adaptations "are intended to provide support for all as we emerge from the pandemic".

Overall, 86 per cent of respondents to Ofqual's consultations agreed with releasing information

on exam content in advance.

Meanwhile, a two-week consultation on contingency plans for next summer states exam boards have also been asked to ensure there is at least a 10-day gap between exams in the same subject next summer. This is to reduce the risk of students missing all exams in a subject.

Students who miss one or more exams in a subject will still be able to get a grade through the special consideration process "so long as they have completed the assessment for at least one component of the qualifications".

If new public health restrictions affect exams, the DfE will review its guidance and consider whether to put in place an Exams Support Service – as used in the 2020 and 2021 autumn series – to support schools with access to venues and invigilators.

Education secretary Nadhim Zahawi said the measures will

"help reduce the impact of the significant disruption this group of young people have had to face, allowing them to move on to the next stage of their lives".



Dr Jo Saxton

GRADES WILL BE 'MIDPOINT' BETWEEN 2021 AND 2019

GCSE and A-level students will receive grades that are a "midway" point between last year and pre-pandemic 2019 results, before returning to normal by 2023.

This year's A-level students will not have sat formal GCSE exams as they were cancelled and replaced with centre assessed grades in 2020.

Saxton said the grading approach will "recognise the disruption experienced by students taking exams in 2022. It will provide a safety net for those who might otherwise just miss out on a higher grade, while taking a step back to normal."

There appears to be some acceptance of this year's grading plan. David Robinson, director of post-16 and skills at the Education Policy Institute (EPI), said the midway point "offers some protection" to students and "avoids any sudden shifts in grades".

Dale Bassett, a former director at AQA, said comparable outcomes will actually protect students' grades in 2023, as it will adjust for lost learning.

"Comparable outcomes means in 2023, those students with lost learning would be getting better grades than if the grades

properly reflected their lost learning."

However, the 2023 cohort of A-level students won't have sat GCSEs either, alongside two years of disrupted education. It is the government's intention that exams will go ahead as normal in 2023, without any adaptations.

Sammy Wright, a social mobility commissioner, said there is "logic" to going back to normal by 2023, but there will still be a cohort learning loss, adding: "We shouldn't forget them. The gap is going to widen but it's a hard problem to solve."

Top grades soared in the last two years where exams did not go ahead. The proportion of A-A*s at A-level rose from 25.2 per cent in 2019 to 44.3 per cent this summer.

Meanwhile, at GCSE the proportion of grade 7s and above issued to 16-year-olds in England rose to 30 per cent this year, up from 27.5 per cent in 2020 and 21.8 per cent in 2019.

Autumn series results will be aligned to summer 2021 grading.



INVESTIGATION

SCHOOLS TO START COLLECTING EVIDENCE IN CASE PLAN B ENACTED

Schools will need to collect evidence throughout the year for teacher assessed grades, just in case exams are cancelled, proposals say.

While the government is confident exams will go ahead, they have published contingency plans after facing fierce criticism for not doing so last year and being caught out when exams were cancelled after the Alpha variant caused a surge in cases.

A consultation on the plans, which is open until October 13, outlines that teacher assessed grades would be used again this year should exams be cancelled.

But Ofqual and the government are proposing some changes to the 2021 system, which they admit had "significant workload implications for teachers".

They acknowledge the flexibility given to schools last year to collect evidence saw students in many schools "assessed multiple times in a short timeframe, reducing the already limited teaching time available". There were also concerns about inconsistency of evidence across schools.

Government says this year's "tighter guidance" will alleviate such problems. In draft guidance, schools are told they "should plan assessment opportunities" for TAGs in advance – with before Christmas cited.

To avoid "over-assessment", a "sensible pattern" could be to access students once a term.

Assessing students would also "support students" preparing for exams.

Tests should have the same conditions as summer exams – such as unseen papers, closed book, timed and with supervision – but they can be in the classroom, rather than an exam hall setting.

Schools "may wish" to aim for a total assessment time that does not significantly exceed the total exam time for the subject.

Students should be told beforehand if the test is for a TAG. But teachers shouldn't determine the TAG unless exams are cancelled, nor tell a student what their TAG might be.

The original work should also be retained by teachers, and student can be given copies if it would help support their learning.

Exams would only be cancelled nationally, rather than there being a regional approach. The quality assurance process and appeals processes appear to be largely similar to the 2021 process – but details would be published if exams were cancelled. No decision has been made on the grading standards if TAGs are used.

Paul Whiteman, general secretary at heads' union NAHT, said it is "vital" the evidence collection works "alongside the teaching, learning and assessment which teachers have planned for this year" and does not create "significant additional workload".

PREDICTED GRADES SHOULD GIVE STUDENTS 'BENEFIT OF DOUBT'

Predicted grades should give students 'benefit of doubt'

Ofqual has told teachers to use the familiar 2019 exams standard as the basis for predicting UCAS grades this year.

The exams watchdog said that in recent pre-pandemic years, overall grades have been "generously predicted" by teachers.

But they say borderline students should get the "benefit of any doubt". This means if any student is likely to be on the borderline between two grades, teachers should predict the higher one.

Results days will also return to normal. Over the summer, results days were held earlier and in the same week, two days apart. But next summer A-level results day is on August 18 and GCSE results day on August 25.

PLANS REVEALED FOR T LEVELS

Teacher assessed grades should be used for T-levels if planned exams and assessments cannot go ahead, it has been confirmed.

The first cohort of T-level students are due to complete their qualifications in 2022. Occupational specialism assessments, which test competence, may need to be delayed rather than adapted under the contingency arrangements set out yesterday.

DfE and Ofqual say they will "work to ensure that students are not disadvantaged and can still progress to the next stage" in the unlikely event that students cannot take these tests at all this academic year.





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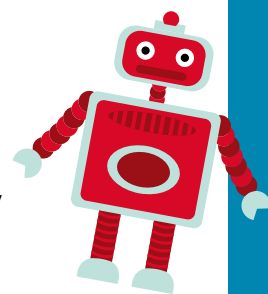


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Pandemic, what pandemic? Heads worry Ofsted is failing to take Covid into account

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

EXCLUSIVE

Headteachers say Ofsted is not following through on its promise to consider the toll of Covid on schools during reinstated inspections, with a leaders' union set to discuss the issue next week.

One boss claimed from the watchdog's point of view "there does not appear to have been a pandemic".

Leaders fear a "heavy-handed, judgmental approach" would be a missed opportunity to forge a positive relationship after Ofsted's more conversational visits during the pandemic won plaudits.

However, other freshly inspected schools report that Ofsted was "genuinely interested" in understanding the ramifications of the pandemic. Ofsted said it does recognise the efforts of schools.

'No consideration for what our staff have dealt with'

Graded inspections returned last month. However, Ofsted tweaked its framework to state that inspectors will "take account" of the pandemic and the "disruption it has caused and may continue to cause".

This included being "sympathetic to schools" that have been unable to fully implement new curriculum, seeking to understand the "specific impact of Covid on the school community" during the preparation phone call.

But some school leaders visited in September say this is not happening.

Rob Carpenter, chief executive of the Inspire Partnership academy trust, told *Schools Week* that during a Section 8 inspection at a primary school within the trust "just one reference was made to the pandemic".

Another trust chief executive who had undergone a Section 5 inspection at one of their schools, and wished to remain anonymous, added: "From Ofsted's perspective, there does not appear to have



been a pandemic."

Carpenter said "very little time and consideration has been given to better understand how schools are preparing for a new academic year with fully opened classrooms".

"Throughout the inspection there was no consideration for what our staff and community have dealt with this past 18 months," he added.

A London education leader, who had a school visited last month and wanted to remain anonymous, told *Schools Week* there was "very little focus on Covid from inspectors as they said the school was back last term – as though it was in any way a normal term".

Union to discuss concerns next week

No reports from September inspections have yet been published. Outcomes for the inspections referenced have also not yet been confirmed.

But Wrangle Primary School, in Lancashire, has published a report on its own website. The school was upgraded from 'requires improvement' to 'good' following an inspection last month.

The report makes limited reference to the pandemic, aside from stating "inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation".

The school did not respond to a request for comment.

LONG READ

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The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) confirmed members had raised issues over a lack of questions and consideration to Covid during recent inspections. The union will discuss the issues at a council meeting next week.

'Opportunity of a generation to forge more positive relationship missed'

Carpenter fears schools are being held to "unrealistic expectations" of the education inspection framework at a time when they are still dealing with the "bereavement, displacement and loss which has affected, staff, pupils and parents".

The anonymous London leader said "applying an inspection framework that was developed before a pandemic in exactly the same way immediately following a pandemic lacks compassion and any understanding of how significant the challenges of the past 18 months have been.

"It is very difficult for schools to be the schools they were before the pandemic so quickly after the pandemic," they added. "Yet publicly they will be judged."

Rob Carpenter said the reinstated inspection experience contrasted with the "understanding bedside manner" approach Ofsted had taken in visits during the pandemic.



"If inspection culture defaults back to a heavy-handed, judgmental approach, we have missed the opportunity of a generation to forge a more positive relationship between schools and Ofsted," he added.

Ofsted 'genuinely interested' in Covid impact

However, others say that Ofsted has been understanding. Stephen Chamberlain, chief executive of the Active Learning Trust, said inspectors were "really listening from the word go" following a section 5 at one of his primary schools.

At the time, five teachers were absent due to Covid and the watchdog agreed not to

observe lessons run by substitute teachers and teaching assistants.

Chamberlain, who is a former Ofsted inspector, added: "There was a real sense of professional dialogue and the team felt that Ofsted was genuinely interested in the quality of education and understanding the impact of Covid."

An Ofsted spokesperson said: "We recognise the huge efforts schools are making to ensure pupils get the education and support they need throughout this pandemic."

Schools will also now not be rated 'inadequate' under any particular judgment if the reason for this is solely due to Covid.

EXCLUSIVE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Labour wants Ofsted to be school improver

Labour's reforms to Ofsted would see the watchdog take on a strengthened school improvement role, with the length and timing of inspections also up for discussion.

Shadow education secretary Kate Green told *Schools Week* her party wanted Ofsted to be "part of the process of initiating improvement" for schools most in need of "extra attention and help".

She claimed school leaders had "really welcomed" Ofsted's more "constructive" role during the pandemic.

"That's not to say I don't want a rigorous inspection regime, but I think there's opportunity not just to focus on reporting, but challenge and improvement."

Labour confirmed this week that Ofsted would be reformed under a future Labour government, and not scrapped, as was proposed in 2019.



Kate Green

Green told *Schools Week* there was an "opportunity" for Ofsted to focus its resources and effort on schools most in need.

This would also mean a "lighter" touch for schools struggling less, she said, though inspection has been "too light" for outstanding schools in recent years, she acknowledged.

Pressed on whether this would mean changes to the length and frequency of inspections for some schools, Green said her party had not "bottomed out" the policy, but that it would be "important to discuss" those issues.

She also pledged to work with Ofsted and school leaders to design the new system, so as "not to confuse the inspection and the improvement functions".

Green would not be drawn on whether Ofsted would

take over the school improvement role for academies currently held by regional schools commissioners, but said there was a "bigger question about the fragmentation of our school system".

"I think there is real need to streamline, to make consistent, the way we treat all schools, whatever their structure."

The announcement is likely to lead to renewed concerns about how a single body can both be involved in school improvement while also inspecting schools to check if they have improved.

Similar concerns about visits of academies by RSCs, branded "shadow inspections", resulted in them being heavily scaled back in 2018. Among those who questioned the approach at the time was former Ofsted chief Sir Michael Wilshaw, who warned of "confused and inconsistent" oversight.

INVESTIGATION

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CEO diversity audit: more women bosses but work to do

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EXCLUSIVE

The proportion of female bosses running England's largest academy trusts has risen to a third, while the number of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) leaders remains static.

The annual Schools Week diversity analysis looked at the make-up of the 117 trusts with 15 or more schools, as well as government education departments' management.

The findings come as the first major study into equality in the sector recognised poor levels of diversity among chief executives, but an optimism "that things have got better".

Campaigners have offered a "cautious welcome", but note there is room for huge improvement still.

Policy-makers now want government to start collecting official figures on school leader diversity.

Diversity audit findings revealed

Our analysis suggests a third of the biggest academies are now run by female CEOs (39 out of 117 trusts) – a five percentage point rise from similar analysis last year. In 2018, just 26 per cent of top trust bosses were female.

Sameena Choudry, co-founder of WomenEd, offered a "cautious welcome", but said: "We are still talking about relatively small numbers and all you need is a few less [leaders] and that situation can go backwards."

Diversity research published by Forum Strategy this week noted a "progressing picture for gender equality", but caveated this was not reflected in pay.

A previous Schools Week investigation found just one of the top 20 highest earning CEOs was female.

The gender make-up lags behind other education roles. Workforce data from 2019 shows three-quarters of teachers were female. Women account for more than two-thirds of headteachers.

Across the Department for Education, Ofsted and Ofqual, 43 per cent of those listed as ministers or in the 'our management' sections of their



website are female.

Ofqual said its diversity and inclusion strategy was a top priority. Ofsted is aiming to improve diversity through shadowing programmes and the Civil Service's positive action programme.

Forum's report found the FTSE 100 has just 12.2 per cent of the top roles filled by females. In policing 35 per cent of chief constables are females while 44 per cent of NHS trust CEOs are female.

Lack of focus on BAME leaders

The same level of progress was not seen among BAME leaders.

In 2018, we found two of the 72 trusts with 15 or more schools were led by a non-white boss.

Despite 117 trusts now making up the sample size, only two BAME leaders remain on the list: Hamid Patel of Star Academies and Ashfaq Rahman of Nova Education Trust.

Rahman said equality, diversity and inclusion was a "priority area" for Nova as it develops leaders "that are representative of the communities we serve". He added all staff "have the opportunity and a professional duty to be critical agents of change".



Allana Gay

The lack of progress comes three years after the Department for Education published a statement of intent to improve diversity in the sector.

Part of this was a £2 million diversity hubs for school leaders scheme, which was ditched last year.

"The DfE hasn't been forthcoming in making change happen", says Allana Gay, headteacher and BAMEed Network founder.

"The DfE has shown it's not willing to invest in these projects – a natural progression isn't going to happen because the culture isn't there to support it."

'Discrimination widespread'

Forum Strategy – a MAT CEO network organisation – found that experience of discrimination among leader and senior management teams is "widespread".

Over 50 per cent of 120 CEOs surveyed disagreed that the education sector is an even playing field.

Choudry added: "There's still a hell of a lot that needs to be done in terms of improving chances and opportunities for BAME colleagues in education."

The Forum report wants a clear commitment from government to addressing the diversity of boards who appoint and promote senior leaders.

They also say CEO diversity should be tracked as current data for school leaders is non-existent.

Gay believes more power for Ofsted and Regional School Commissioners to monitor trust diversity would ring "much faster change".

The DfE said it wants teaching to be an inclusive profession. Diversity has been made "a feature of our Recruitment and Retention Strategy and [we are] investing in programmes that support all teachers to develop and progress their careers."

Forum Strategy's diversity tips for trusts

1. Create the right environment to discuss equality, diversity and inclusion, including time in meetings
2. Make clear what your diversity policy is, and encourage staff to challenge their own preconceived biases
3. Have a clear, public objective and set ambitious goals
4. Consider auditing and improving recruitment processes
5. Ask whether staff from protected groups would benefit from coaching or mentoring
6. Seek out good practice



Ashfaq Rahman

NEWS

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Union calls on Johnson to fulfil catch-up fund promise

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER

@SCHOOLSWEEK

Prime minister Boris Johnson has been urged to "deliver on his promise" to fund schools so that no child is left behind.

The Times reported that education will be hardest hit in the spending review later this month.

The newspaper cited two senior government sources claiming the Department for Education did not submit a formal application for catch-up funding. But this has been rubbished by a DfE source who said the claims were "not correct".

The government has promised to provide £3.1 billion in catch-up cash.

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of school leaders' union NAHT, said Johnson "must now deliver on his promise that no child will be left behind due to learning lost during the pandemic."



"Schools need a radically more ambitious package of investment from the Treasury in order to get the job done."

The government previously refused to provide the £15 billion in recovery cash wanted by Sir Kevan Collins, who later resigned as catch-up commissioner.

A group of leading academy trust bosses have since set out detailed proposals for a £5.8 billion Covid recovery plan.

Whiteman urged new education secretary Nadhim Zahawi to "seize the opportunity

of the Comprehensive Spending Review and convince the chancellor and the prime minister to turn rhetoric into investment".

A spending review submission by NAHT, alongside the National Education Union, claims this year's school funding budget requires an additional £7.3 billion to be restored to 2015 per-pupil levels. By 2025, this deficit will reach £12.9 billion – with capital funding needing another £3.1 billion to be restored to 2015 levels.

Dr Mary Bousted, NEU's joint general secretary, said: "It's the moment of truth for the government. It can either continue the improvement in education funding

started by the 2019 spending round or return to the long days of 2010s austerity."

"Our children deserve a decent future after the chaos of the past 18 months."



Boris Johnson

CST to set out code for academy trust bosses

A new framework to document the purpose and ethics expectations of academy trust chief executives is being drawn up.

The Confederation of School Trusts has launched a consultation to "codify" the role of CEOs in trusts.

It aims to set out the purpose, expectations of ethics and professional conduct, as well as explaining how the six domains a chief executive is responsible for are linked.

The six domains are listed as strategic leadership, finance and compliance, quality of education, people strategy, governance and accountability and system leadership and civic responsibility.

Leora Cruddas (pictured), chief executive of CST, said it will be an "important contribution to

knowledge-building for the school trust sector and will give boards and executive leaders essential support for the recruitment, development and performance review of CEOs."

The core function of school headteachers is defined through the Headteachers' Standards, but there is no similar document for CEOs.

Just over 40 per cent of schools are now in an academy trust, educating 55 per cent of all pupils.

The framework is being developed with input from an advisory group of CEOs, an evaluation of relevant literature and support from the Ambition Institute.

CST now wants to test its definition by hearing from both executive and non-executive leaders from across the sector.

The consultation, which closes on November 1, can be accessed at <https://cstuk.org.uk/policy-research/research/cst-consultation>



Admission appeals to be flexible for another year

Flexibilities in the way school admission appeals work will now remain in place until the end of next September, after the government announced a further extension.

The school admission appeals code was amended last April under emergency Covid legislation to give admission authorities, local authorities and appeal panels "some additional flexibility when dealing with appeals" during the Covid-19 outbreak.

The temporary changes were then extended in January to the end of September 2021, but have now been extended for another year, albeit with slightly different wording.

The Department for Education said the extension would give admission authorities "sufficient time to deal with the annual peak in appeals for children due to start new schools at the beginning of

September 2022".

But parents will "continue to have the right to appeal to any school which has refused their child a place".

The amendments to the code disapply the requirement that appeal hearings against refusal of places must be held in person "where it is not reasonably practicable to follow the normal appeals process due to the Covid-19 pandemic".

Instead, there is flexibility for appeals to be heard "either in person, or by telephone, video conference or through a paper-based appeal where all parties can make representations in writing".

The DfE has also amended the deadlines relating to appeals, giving "more flexibility for admission authorities to set new or revised deadlines for submitting an appeal".



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NEWS

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'Toxic culture' school head to retire as new trustee pledges shake-up

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

EXCLUSIVE

The head of a school under investigation over a "toxic" culture is to retire, as a new chair of trustees parachuted in by government vows to shake up governance.

Colin Hall, one of the best-paid academy leaders in England, will leave his £280,000-a-year post at the end of this academic year.

The 63-year-old appears to be retiring early after 21 years at the school. He will reach state pension age in 2024.

News of his departure comes after Schools Week revealed that the school's chair of trustees, Anne-Marie Carrie, had resigned.

The school, rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted, is being investigated over allegations of safeguarding failures. More than 100 ex-students had written an open letter alleging serious failings. Pastoral care was "inadequate" with "public shaming" of students, the letter said.

A month earlier the Guardian also reported allegations from staff of a "toxic" working environment. There is no suggestion of wrongdoing by Hall or Carrie.

Meanwhile, Schools Week can reveal that Jane Farrell, a specialist in overseeing culture change at organisations, has been appointed chair of governors at the school. She was asked to do the role by the Department for Education, which has

stepped in to provide support.

Farrell said it was "with sadness" she had to inform parents Hall was retiring at the end of this academic year.

"Mr Hall has served the community of Holland Park School for 21 years, with many accolades to the school's name in that time."

Holland Park is rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

A letter to parents said Hall's contribution would be celebrated at the end of the year, but added:

"For now, characteristically for Holland Park School, it is 'business as usual' with a continuing and acute focus on quality of education, pastoral care and extra-curricular activity, keeping the interests of students at the heart of all that we do."

An open recruitment process will begin in the spring, the letter adds.

Farrell co-founded the Equality Works group, which has worked with companies including the Met Police and the BBC, to improve their diversity culture and train staff on unconscious bias.

She is also the chair of trustees at the Mulberry Schools Trust, which includes the Mulberry Academy. The school was attended by Shamima Begum, who travelled to Syria in 2015, when it was known as Bethnal Green Academy and before Mulberry took over.

Farrell told Schools Week she plans to "strengthen the governing body, reviewing skills and "bringing in some specialised people in education

with senior experience".

"It is helpful to have historical knowledge and experience of a school amongst governors – a local voice and diversity of background are also important – strength and experience are critical. We will build a cohesive and strong board with these principles behind it"

The governing body of the school, once attended by education secretary Nadhim Zahawi, had in August also promised an independent probe into the allegations. However, complainants said last week they had yet to be contacted about the investigation.

Farrell said "it is not yet at all clear" to her "what has happened previously with the response to the complaints made" and is "fact-finding very swiftly".

"Once I fully understand where we are in relation to the allegations and the promises made about investigation, the board will make decisions swiftly and we will communicate these decisions openly (as far as we are permitted to) to all concerned with a clear rationale," she added.

The appointment comes after the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea launched a

"learning review" into safeguarding failure allegations. It will "seek to understand the organisational culture within the school and make recommendations to strengthen the areas of safeguarding practice".

Jane Farrell



Colin Hall

EXCLUSIVE

TOM BELGER | @TOM_BELGER

Government delays revealing cost of schools' PFI deals

The government is being urged to "come clean" about the costs of private finance initiative deals affecting hundreds of schools.

Official data is typically published each year on which PFI firms own school buildings, how much deals currently cost schools and councils and how much profit shareholders are making.

But the most recent figures are now more than three years and six months out of date, despite potential swings in costs and profits since Covid and Brexit hit, or changes in building ownership.

The most recent data is from March 2018, but was published a year later. Data for 2019 was due early last year but delayed as the pandemic struck.

The Treasury refused to release the information following a freedom of information request by *Schools Week*. They said the 2019 data would come out by July and 2020 data by the end of the year.

Yet three months after the July due date, the data has still not been released by the Treasury and Infrastructure Projects Authority.

Lord Storey, Lib Dem education spokesperson in the Lords and a former head, raised the delay with ministers earlier this month.

In response, Lord Agnew said the 2019 data will now be published "this autumn".

But he also revealed the 2020 data would not be published at all as "a data collection

was not undertaken" last year. Up-to-date research into the picture this year will "commence shortly" and come out early next year, he said.

Storey said: "The Treasury should come clean about these projects, to see the impact on the education estate in terms of council and other budgets."

A growing number of schools with deals ending over the next few years are re-examining their PFI arrangements.

Successive governments have used PFI to build schools since the late 1990s. Private firms build and typically maintain sites in exchange for mortgage-style payments, often lasting 25 years, before handing them over to taxpayers.

Speed read: Labour's new education policies

The Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer announced a raft of education policy measures at his party's annual conference in Brighton over the past week.

It was the first full conference to take place since Starmer assumed the leadership. The policy pledges come after shadow education secretary Kate Green told *Schools Week* last year that all previous proposals set out under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership were under review. Here's what we learned.

1 Labour will scrap private school tax exemption

Private schools in England do not currently have to pay VAT or business rates. Under Labour, this will no longer be the case.

The party estimates the policy, similar to one pledged under Corbyn in 2019, would raise £1.7 billion a year for the public purse, most of which would fund Labour's other school commitments.

2 A 'National Excellence Programme'

This will be Labour's "ambitious school improvement plan", aimed at boosting the number of 'outstanding' schools in all areas of the country, driving up standards and enabling every child to achieve their full potential.

While few details have emerged, it will focus on improving the prospects of the 4 in 10 young people who leave compulsory education without level 3 qualifications.

3 £347m teacher recruitment fund

Some of the money raised from taxing private schools will be spent on filling "over 6,500 vacancies and skills gaps" across school.

No firm plans for how to attract teachers to fill those vacancies have been set out, but Green told *Schools Week* this would include improving career pathways, continuing professional development and addressing workload issues.

4 £210m to give teachers a 'right' to CPD

A teacher development fund would be set up, to include a £47 million "excellence in leadership" programme for new heads.

The separate £210 million for teachers is the same as estimated by the Education Policy

Institute in July as the cost of providing an annual entitlement to 35 hours of CPD for every teacher in England.

Green said the pledge would amount to a "right to continuing professional development" and time out to undertake it. The party has not confirmed what exactly the entitlement would involve.

5 Reform Ofsted to include school improvement role

Ofsted would be reformed to "focus on supporting struggling schools".

Green said this would involve the watchdog being handed a strengthened role in school improvement, alongside inspection, although it is not clear how this would work.

Issues such as the length and frequency of inspections would also be up for discussion, she said.

6 Extra-curricular activities and '10 by 10' pledge

An essay published by Starmer last week revealed his ambition for every child to have opportunities to do things like learn a musical instrument or visit the seaside by the age of 10.

At conference, this pledge was titled "10 by 10". "As we recover from the pandemic, every primary and secondary child should have access to weekly extracurricular activities and after-school clubs," Starmer pledged.

Further details are yet to be announced, but Green told *Schools Week* this would involve money going to schools to pay for activities during an extended school day.

7 Reform of citizenship to include 'practical life skills'

The citizenship programme within the national curriculum would be reformed to include "practical life skills, such as such as pension planning, understanding credit scores, applying for a mortgage and understanding

employment and rental contracts".

Under the current national curriculum, pupils are already taught about credit and debt, savings and pensions.

8 'Mandatory' digital skills across the curriculum

Labour would also specify "mandatory skills which must be embedded across the curriculum, to ensure a whole school approach to developing digital skills in every lesson". This would become a "fourth pillar" of education, Starmer said, along with reading, writing and maths.

Green also told *Schools Week* she believed the national curriculum should apply to all schools including academies, which currently do not need to follow it.

"Digital skills, digital capability for this and future generations is like being able to hold a pen and write on a sheet of paper was for mine," she said. "We can't make it optional."

Labour would also establish a £33 million fund to "renew" the 1.3 million devices handed out during the pandemic.

9 Two weeks' compulsory work experience and guaranteed careers advice

Labour also announced at the weekend that it would introduce two weeks of compulsory work experience for all young people.

Every school would also have access to a professional careers adviser once a week, at an additional cost of £35 million a year



Sir Keir Starmer

A view from conference: academisation battles rage on

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Labour went into its first full party conference in two years with a new leader and shadow education team, but events in Brighton revealed the leadership is still dogged by the question of what to do about academies.

Announcements about school structures and how the "local democratic control" Sir Keir Starmer argued for last spring will be achieved were conspicuous by their absence from his first conference speech as leader.

And proceedings at two conference fringe events showed the party is still embroiled in a fierce battle with its grassroots over its policy on academies – or lack thereof.

Kate Green (pictured), shadow education secretary, and shadow schools minister Peter Kyle have both already made clear they don't intend to meddle with successful academies. It seems almost certain the next manifesto will not propose whole-system change.

But at an event organised by the Socialist Educational Association, Green was applauded after a speech in which she acknowledged the "downsides" of a "fragmented" school system.

Speakers at the event included former shadow chancellor John McDonnell, who called for academies to be scrapped.

Green warned that competition between schools was leading to admissions and exclusions policies "which discriminate against more disadvantaged children". Instead, collaboration between schools should be "rewarded".

She also criticised the "frankly unacceptable sky-high pay of some of the chief executives of some of the academy trusts.

"I really hope that in terms of the problems that you've rightly identified from the fragmentation and marketisation and competition that's in the system, that we can make haste on some of those, even without necessarily being able to do all of the deconstructing and restructuring that, I think right now as we're coming out of a pandemic, would not be parents' priority."

But tensions ran higher at an event



organised by the Education Policy Institute and the ASCL school leaders' union on "how to boost school collaboration in a partly academised system".

At the event, although Kyle argued against full academisation, he also spoke of the benefits he had seen at Brighton Aldridge Community Academy, which he chaired before entering parliament, following its conversion, as well as the upsides of collaboration in some trusts.

His comments sparked anger among some delegates, including one who accused Kyle of trying to change Labour policy "without consultation".

The 2019 Labour manifesto pledged to "end the fragmentation and marketisation of our school system by bringing free schools and academies back under control of the people who know them best – parents, teachers and local communities".

But Kyle said that "because we lost the last election, we are discussing education as we find it today, in the real world, not the world we would want it to be".

He said Labour's policy was being developed and he was "focused with a blank sheet of paper about what it's going to take to get schools to improve so that no student is left behind.

"I want to look absolutely afresh at the landscape as we find it today. I want to see where excellence is, where the improvement is, and then put forward to the membership

a set of policies that can learn from the best that's out there. But it will be grounded in the reality of the system today."

Kyle also pointed out that as an MP he had "fought Nicky Morgan and her putrid plan for universal academisation" because he had seen the "benefits" of conversion, but also knew the "limitations".

But he said the party should "not get stuck in this perennial debate about this and accept we have learned a lot in ten years. We can't go back in time, we are where we are.

"Let's learn from the best where it's out there and apply pragmatism going forward and rethink the role of local authorities, not just in schooling but the whole experience of young people."

But speaking to *Schools Week* as the conference closed on Wednesday, Green admitted it was "well worth thinking about" the idea of allowing academies to choose to leave trusts when things go wrong and go back to council oversight.

She also supports Ofsted inspections of trusts, something she is "very keen to look at putting that into our plans for government".

But she said there was a "bigger question about what are the underlying issues and how best can we set about a way of putting in place means to solve them that don't involve us in years of deconstructing and restructuring and legal argument".

It remains to be seen what the party will put forward on academies in its next manifesto.

POLITICS

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Ministerial portfolios: who'll be doing what

The Department for Education has quietly updated the responsibilities of its new ministerial team.

While they remain largely similar, there are some notable changes – with social mobility and reducing teacher workload no longer explicitly mentioned. “Reducing teacher workload” is also no longer listed among schools minister Robin Walker’s remit.

But officials stressed it had not been de-prioritised and instead fell under his continued role of “supporting a high-quality teaching profession”.

Meanwhile the academies minister Baroness Barran is no longer responsible for “school efficiency”, despite a cost-cutting crusade being what Lord Agnew

was best known for when he held the post until last year. It now sits under Walker’s responsibilities.

The children’s minister’s role under newly-appointed Will Quince sees ‘disadvantage and social mobility’ being ditched for “disadvantage and vulnerable children”. It comes after oversight of the government’s social mobility commission was transferred from the DfE to the Cabinet Office earlier this year.

New education secretary Nadhim Zahawi’s remit remains unchanged from his predecessor.

Nadhim Zahawi

EDUCATION SECRETARY



- EARLY YEARS
- CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE
- TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
- THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM
- SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
- ACADEMIES AND FREE SCHOOLS
- FURTHER EDUCATION
- APPRENTICESHIPS AND SKILLS
- HIGHER EDUCATION
- OVERSIGHT OF THE DEPARTMENTAL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) RESPONSE

Robin Walker

SCHOOLS MINISTER
(MINISTER FOR SCHOOL STANDARDS)



- SUPPORTING A HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING PROFESSION INCLUDING QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- SUPPORTING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS INCLUDING INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING
- TEACHING REGULATION AGENCY
- QUALIFICATIONS (INCLUDING LINKS WITH OFQUAL)
- CURRICULUM INCLUDING RELATIONSHIPS, SEX, AND HEALTH EDUCATION; AND PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION
- STANDARDS AND TESTING AGENCY AND PRIMARY ASSESSMENT
- SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY AND INSPECTION (INCLUDING LINKS WITH OFSTED)
- SUPPORT FOR RAISING SCHOOL STANDARDS
- SCHOOL REVENUE FUNDING, INCLUDING THE NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA FOR SCHOOLS
- SCHOOL EFFICIENCY
- PUPIL PREMIUM
- BEHAVIOUR, ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSIONS
- DIGITAL STRATEGY AND TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION (EDTECH)
- CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) RESPONSE FOR SCHOOLS

Baroness Barran

ACADEMIES MINISTER
(MINISTER FOR THE SCHOOL SYSTEM)



- ACADEMIES AND MULTI-ACADEMY TRUSTS
- FREE SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITY TECHNICAL COLLEGES AND STUDIO SCHOOLS
- FAITH SCHOOLS
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
- HOME EDUCATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLS
- INTERVENTION IN UNDERPERFORMING SCHOOLS
- SCHOOL CAPITAL INVESTMENT (INCLUDING PUPIL PLACE PLANNING, NEW SCHOOL PLACES AND SCHOOL CONDITION)
- ADMISSIONS AND SCHOOL TRANSPORT
- SAFEGUARDING IN SCHOOLS AND POST-16 SETTINGS
- COUNTER EXTREMISM AND INTEGRATION IN SCHOOLS AND POST-16 SETTINGS
- DEPARTMENTAL EFFICIENCY AND COMMERCIAL

Will Quince

CHILDREN’S MINISTER



- CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE
- FAMILIES
- CHILDREN IN CARE, CHILDREN IN NEED, CHILD PROTECTION, ADOPTION AND CARE LEAVERS
- EARLY YEARS
- SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, INCLUDING HIGH NEEDS FUNDING
- ALTERNATIVE PROVISION
- DISADVANTAGE AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN
- SCHOOL FOOD INCLUDING FREE SCHOOL MEALS
- SCHOOL SPORT
- CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S MENTAL HEALTH, ONLINE SAFETY AND PREVENTING BULLYING IN SCHOOLS
- POLICY TO PROTECT AGAINST SERIOUS VIOLENCE
- OPPORTUNITY AREAS PROGRAMME AND OPPORTUNITY NORTH EAST PROGRAMME
- CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) RESPONSE FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES AND CHILDCARE

Alex Burghart*

APPRENTICESHIPS AND SKILLS MINISTER



- T LEVELS AND QUALIFICATIONS REVIEWS (LEVELS 3 AND BELOW)
- CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE INCLUDING THE CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE COMPANY
- REDUCING THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING
- STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION
- INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STRATEGY INCLUDING EDUCATION EXPORTS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Michelle Donelan*

UNIVERSITIES MINISTER



- STRATEGY FOR POST-16 EDUCATION

*only responsibilities related to schools listed

NEWS

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DfE budgets £12m for Queen's jubilee book

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

A free book for every primary school pupil celebrating "our great nation" to mark the Queen's platinum jubilee will cost the government up to £12 million to produce.

As first revealed by *Schools Week*, the Department for Education wants youngsters to receive the commemorative book to celebrate the Queen's 70th anniversary as monarch next June.

It is understood more than 4 million books will be produced. The government wants them to be "inclusive" and "patriotic", plugging into the "spirit" of the London 2012 Olympics. It will also be made into an audiobook.

The book will look at the monarch's role and what the jubilee represents "so primary school children across the country can understand and engage with the celebrations next year, while broadening

their education".

It will also teach primary school children about "recent and historical events, inspirational people, landmark innovations and inventions and a selection of our best art, design and culture".

A tender published on Tuesday says a maximum of £12 million has been budgeted to produce the books, which will be funded by the DfE.

That is the same amount the DfE invested in a scheme to help protect vulnerable children who were at risk of neglect, violence or exploitation during the pandemic.

An earlier notice said that DfE wanted to commission teaching resources for primary and secondary school teachers to help them deliver a lesson or assembly on the Queen and

her reign. However this isn't mentioned in the recent tender, and DfE has not responded on whether it will still go ahead.

Polling by Redfield and Wilton Strategies found that 65 per cent of 2000 people surveyed agreed the jubilee should be celebrated in all UK schools. But the figure drops to 53 per cent when it comes to support for DfE creating the book and sending it to all primary school children.

Education secretary Nadhim Zahawi said the Queen has "played an instrumental role in the events, people and places that have helped shape the United Kingdom and Commonwealth."

"From the hundreds of charities and organisations of which she is patron, to the 14 Prime Ministers who have served during her reign – thousands of children will be able to read about our great nation, its history and future."



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

GLOBAL Girl LEADING

An online conference
CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL 2021
Monday 11th October 2021



"Digital generation. Our generation."

In celebration of the United Nations initiative **International Day of the Girl**, the Mulberry Schools Trust in collaboration with Ursuline High School Wimbledon present **Global Girl Leading**, an online conference bringing together girls from across the world.

Global Girl Leading will provide a platform for young people to stand shoulder to shoulder with others to address this year's theme "Digital generation. Our Generation." in a truly global way.

Schools joining us from countries across the world including the UK, Israel, Malaysia, Nepal and Singapore

Throughout the day, students will take part in interactive activities and sessions related to activism and hear from trailblazers representing a variety of sectors.

For further information please contact:
Insirah Taylor- Kamara, Women's Education Officer
✉ itaylor-kamara@mulberryschoolstrust.org
☎ 020 7790 6327 (ext 230)

Follow us on Twitter on the day for regular updates: [@MulberryTH](https://twitter.com/MulberryTH)

Speakers confirmed include:



Josefa González Blanco Ortiz Mena
Mexican Ambassador to the United Kingdom

Rozella Marie Mahjrin
Speaker and advocate for body diversity, beauty inclusion and mental health

Tobi Oredin
CEO and Founder of Black Ballad

Nusrath Hassan
WOW Trustee and Girls' Education Activist



Baneska Kayembe
Director and Founder of Naked Politics

Grace Davies Redmond
Senior Account Executive, John Doe PR

Nishma Robb
Director of Brand & Reputation Marketing, Google

Mary Ann Sieghart
Journalist, author, non-executive director and broadcaster

Mulberry Schools Trust

Mulberry School for Girls

Mulberry Schools Foundation



Ursuline High School WIMBLEDON

www.partnershipofequals.org/globalgirlleading2021

SCAN ME



INVESTIGATION

Do the benefits of wealth management outweigh the inequalities?

TOM BELGER

@TOM_BELGER

EXCLUSIVE

A handful of larger academy trusts and those backed by wealthy donors have generated millions of pounds through stocks and using wealth management firms.

One trust with City of London backers has generated £2.3 million from investments in six years, while another received £290,000 in payouts from companies co-founded by its sponsor.

Analysis of accounts data reveals trusts made a combined £11.75 million by investing surplus cash in 2019-20. But stark divides in income even among large trusts have sparked warnings of “inequity”.

‘It’s like Victorian philanthropy’

Official figures reveal returns made by both academies and their trusts, as some chains pool funding so they are held centrally.

Academies made a combined £7.06 million from investments last year, and a further £4.7 million from cash held centrally by trusts.

But the sums accrued to 1,831 academies and 509 trust central teams respectively. More than four in five academies and the same proportion of central teams recorded no such income.

Dr Mark Gibson, a senior education lecturer at Oxford Brookes University, highlighted the “inequity” of better sponsorship and returns giving some schools more cash.

“It’s like Victorian philanthropy,” he said. “State-funded schools should be state-funded. They shouldn’t be reliant on these issues.”

But Fran Fraser, a researcher at think tank Onward, said donations helped academies “innovate” and offer enrichment programmes, which it would be a “waste” to block on ideological grounds.

The Thomas Telford School has the highest reserves of any individual academy at £9.44 million.

It is sponsored by the Mercers’ Company, a former guild of London merchants now engaged in philanthropy, and building supplies firm Tarmac Holdings.

Its large reserves may explain why it landed the largest investment returns of any academy last year, earning £388,933. Accounts show it uses Brewin Dolphin, a leading wealth



management firm.

The second and third highest-earning academies are backed by the same sponsors, and also boast a combined £8.15 million in reserves. Madeley Academy and Sandwell Academy earned £177,000 and £119,000 respectively last year.

The Thomas Telford School and linked MAT did not respond to a request for comment.

Trust’s shares in founder’s own firm tank

The David Ross Education Trust has also received generous sponsor backing from its founder of £12 million in cash and shares since 2007.

By 2014, it had investments worth £2.7 million, with the majority stocks in firms co-founded by David Ross, Dixons Carphone and TalkTalk.

They have generated £290,000 in dividends since. Schools are “deeply grateful” to Ross, with dividends funding capital investment and “world-class” music and sport, according to a spokesperson.

But accounts also show the trust hung onto its sponsor’s firms’ stocks despite six consecutive years of downward revaluations, with its total investments shrinking £1.45 million in value.

A DRET spokesperson said trustees alone made decisions over shares, and both stocks had now been sold.

Large trusts cash in – but not all of them

Six of the largest 15 trusts generated six-figure returns, likely reflecting larger resources and access to expertise.

United Learning earned most at £319,000. Brewin Dolphin also manages its medium-to-longer-term investments, accounts show, while

temporary surpluses are invested in a pooled fund with other charities and bank deposits. It did not respond to request for comment.

Academies Enterprise Trust’s £222,000 income was second highest, and an 18 per cent jump year-on-year. A spokesperson said it reflected “more active management” to improve returns.

Yet size does not guarantee greater returns. The 39-school Diocese of Ely MAT’s £9,000 income equates to £231 per school, and the 40-strong GLF Schools’ £23,000 haul is £275 per school.

By contrast the average academy generated £745, not including central investments. Several big trusts’ returns exceeded £1,000-a-school, including United Learning at £4,431.

A DEMAT spokesperson said its investment policy, using long-term and overnight deposit accounts, provides “adequate” returns at “comfortable” risk levels. A GLF spokesperson said it was “looking into better ways” to pool and invest cash.

Returns down, with some raiding reserves to fund Covid

Trusts’ incomes were also 1.5 per cent down on 2019’s £11.92 million haul, despite academy numbers and reserves increasing.

“It’s hard to get good returns at the moment. Rates of interest have fallen,” said school finance expert Micon Metcalfe.

Reach2 was among trusts affected, and its reported income was -£3,000.

A trust spokesperson said cash instead went to schools, and blamed Covid for switching funds into more accessible but less lucrative accounts.

Trusts must put security of funds above maximising revenues, the Academies Handbook says, but they can invest to further “charitable aims”.

No comparable maintained school-level investment data is available. DfE rules only say they can keep bank interest.

But some authorities’ investment in collapsed Icelandic banks and more recent commercial property deals have sparked controversy – and tighter regulation.



Fran Fraser

EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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A sensible exams plan, but problems may come later

While it took longer than necessary, the exams plan for the next few years seems sensible.

First of all: exams should go ahead. They are the least unfair way of assessing pupils.

Second: there are no easy options to solve the covid disruption pupils have experienced this year and last, and the unequal learning loss accompanying it.

A recognition that grades this year should be higher than normal to recognise that disruption is fair.

However, the pledge to drop back to normal grade standards in 2023 is likely to be more contentious.

It's a steeper drop than many predicted. A slower roll-back to pre-pandemic standards over a greater number of years would have caused less of a drop-off. Grades this year will be a "midway" point between last year and 2019.

How will next year's exam cohort react to such a large drop? We don't really know.

But grade standards do need to go back to some semblance of normal – or their credibility could come under serious challenge.

There are no easy solutions. But at the very least, schools, as well as employers, universities and colleges, now have certainty.

Everybody's talking about Ofsted (again)

Is it time to talk about Ofsted again? After what appeared to be largely welcomed "visits" during the pandemic, we're now back to full-throttle inspection.

Ofsted's role in the sector is important, and under the current government it is not up for debate.

But schools have, and still are, going through huge disruption. Covid has ripped through school life. This has to be acknowledged in inspections.

Ofsted continuing like it's business as usual is not acceptable. The watchdog has promised to take Covid disruption into account in its inspections.

But just a few weeks after inspections restarted, leaders are already complaining this is not the case.

School leaders who felt they've been harshly judged are more likely to complain of their treatment.

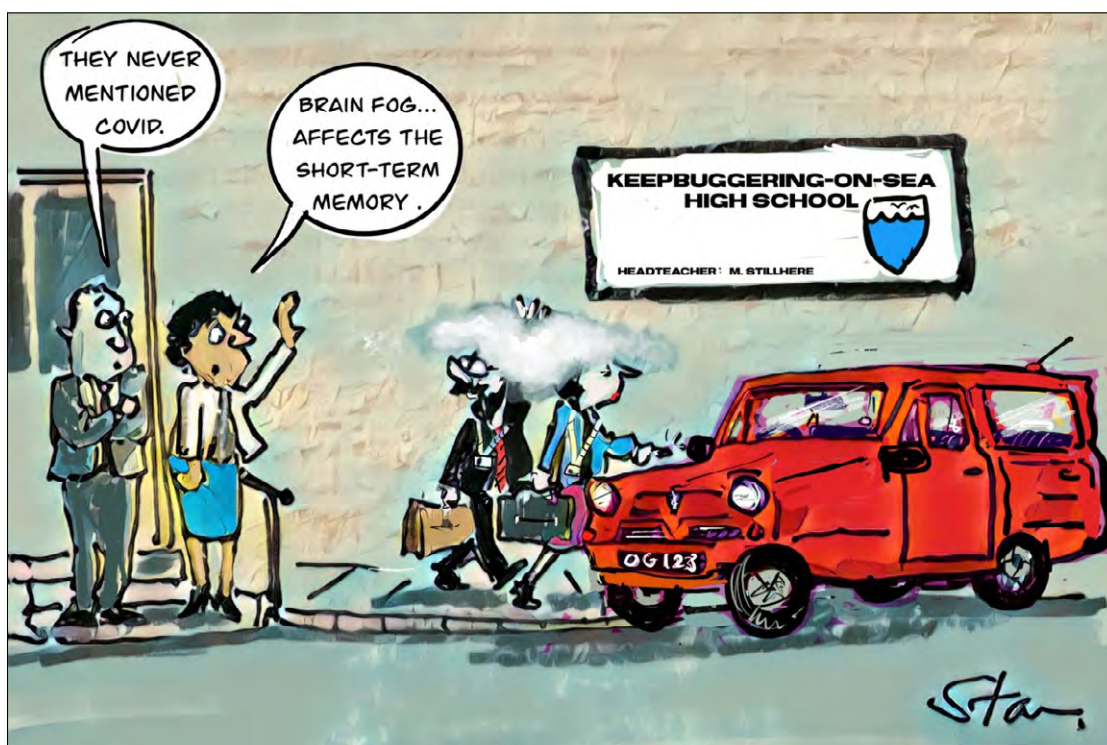
Whether this is a few rogue inspectors not following guidance or indicative of a wider problem is yet to be seen.

Ofsted should be back inspecting schools, but it has to stick to its word on showing compassion.

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Profile

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ



“I want Nasen in every school in the country”

Annamarie Hassall begins as chief executive of the National Association for Special Educational Needs exactly today. The former DfE adviser and social worker tells Jess Staufenberg why she wants ‘more visibility’ for its voice

Gavin Williamson has had a lot of sweaty conversations with me,” announces Annamarie Hassall, the new boss at Nasen, rather to my surprise. “I’m known for chasing after the [former] secretary of state when I’m out running...”

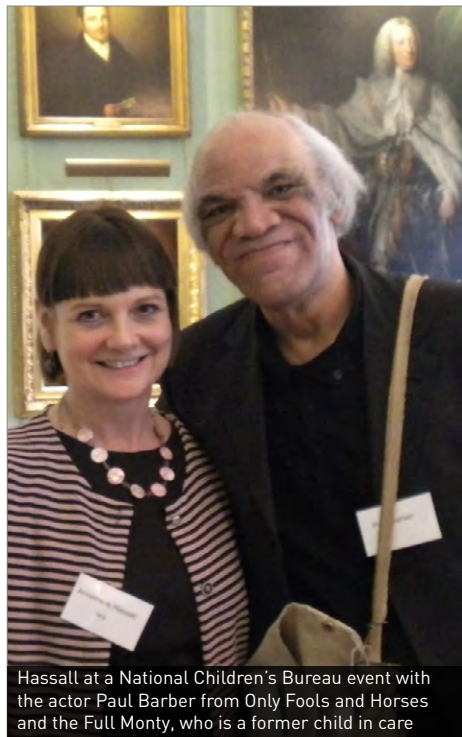
Hassall officially starts her new role today, but it turns out she’s an old hand when it comes to making the Department for

Education listen – both as a former DfE adviser herself, and as a pesky neighbour. Williamson lives close to Hassall in Staffordshire, not far from her home city of Birmingham, and over the past couple of years she has regularly accosted him when they crossed paths out jogging.

Today is her very first day in her new role at Nasen, a national organisation that

provides advice, training and support to education professionals in supporting students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND); Nasen does this both by working directly with schools and with local authorities. Until yesterday, Hassall was strategic director at the National Children’s Bureau (NCB), which campaigns for children’s rights, including talking to

Profile: Annamarie Hassall



Hassall at a National Children's Bureau event with the actor Paul Barber from *Only Fools and Horses* and *The Full Monty*, who is a former child in care



Hassall in 2004 working as an adviser for the Department of Children Schools and Families (the former DfE)

Hassall as a young girl

the DfE. So did Williamson listen to the NCB's concerns about students with special educational needs and disabilities?

"Hmmm, I think he had a number of priorities. And I'm not sure SEND was far up there."

It's a pretty damning conclusion – and one shared by many in the sector. An Ofsted report published in June found some SEND children were left without a school place during the first lockdown because they did not have an EHCP (a statement of special needs) – a quite unbelievable finding.

Other forms of missed support during the pandemic have "had a seriously detrimental and, in some cases, potentially permanent, impact" on those students, Ofsted said. Youngsters were left "out of sight of safeguarding professionals" and the needs of some "may not have been properly assessed or even noticed".

But problems predate the pandemic, with parents and carers telling of "frustration", "exhaustion" and "despair" with the SEND system in England. "It's a huge challenge," Hassall grimaces.

It's also of personal importance to her. Hassall, the daughter of Irish parents, is the oldest of four siblings – and one of them, her brother, was born with a vision impairment

"I had a mum who really challenged the system?"

and later suffered complete sight loss. "So from an early age, I just remember having an awareness of disabilities and differences in terms of access," explains Hassall. "Even really simple things like having to always keep a clear pathway through the clutter of toys on the floor so he didn't trip over."

Aged 17, Hassall also suffered the terrible loss of her father to a brain haemorrhage. Her mother, herself brought up in children's care homes, had to fight for the family alone. "I had a mum who really challenged the system, and negotiated constantly on my brother's behalf, because she wanted a mainstream education for him."

As now, proper support could be hard to come by. Eventually her mum secured specialist support for her brother, but it came at the price of him missing his PE lessons. However, within a year, her brother "went from being labelled lazy" to coping well in mainstream, says Hassall. The lesson has

stayed with her.

Inspired by her mum's upbringing, she left school to train as a social worker and soon found herself under Sir Tim Brighouse, the famed architect of the London Challenge and at that time chief education officer at Birmingham City Council. After one meeting, in which she had managed to be particularly effective, Hassall was sent a congratulatory note by Brighouse.

"My lasting memory of Tim was his illegible thank you notes that he would personally write," she chuckles. "When I got mine, everyone was saying, wow. But whichever way I turned it, I couldn't work out what it said." Aside from his handwriting, she is full of admiration for her former boss. "He was definitely inspiring. It influenced the type of leader and manager I wanted to be. I learnt that an individual affirmation of good work done is so important to do."

There followed a four-year stint as an adviser to the DfE, focused on early years, then a year as a children's service executive at services firm Capita, and six years developing children's centres for public services contractor Serco.

During her recent eight years at the NCB Hassall also worked on "children in care

Profile: Annamarie Hassall



NASen conference last weekend



“It’s not as straightforward to collaborate on SEND provision as it used to be”

councils”, in which students feed back their experiences of the care system (more than half of looked-after children have SEND). Former children’s minister Ed Timpson was very supportive of the councils, she says, and here again (unlike Williamson) she warmly praises a former boss. “He was remembered at that time for being the minister who wanted to listen,” says Hassall. “He was probably one of the best I worked with.”

But she has serious concerns about issues facing the system. Hassall admits to being “philosophically” suspicious of academy trusts when they first arrived, worried that they splintered local authority oversight and she watched closely from the NCB for any poor practice. “But I reserve the right to change my mind,” she tells me, saying that she’s seen excellent inclusive practice in both academy trusts and maintained schools.

She has since become a trustee of the Shaw Education Trust based in Staffordshire, which unusually formed from six special educational needs schools and has 25 schools including mainstream. “I wouldn’t be on the board if I didn’t think the trust was doing its utmost to be collaborative and inclusive.”

Nevertheless, the way in which regional schools commissioner areas and academy trusts don’t map on to local authorities has “added an extra layer of complexity” for SEND provision. “It’s not as straightforward to collaborate” as it used to be, says Hassall.

It’s why she calls one of Nasen’s flagship projects, Whole School SEND, the “jewel in its crown”. Under former chief executive Adam Boddison, Nasen won a £3.4 million contract in 2018 to create a network of 10,000 schools by March 2020 which would “spread best practice” on supporting pupils with SEND. Eight regional leaders and their 16 deputies get time out from the classroom to push the project. However, the original target has been pushed down the road: Nasen is currently in 8,733 schools and now expects to reach 10,000 schools by early 2022.

This month Nasen has also launched “personal development networks” for individual teachers to improve their SEND expertise. Staff are clearly keen, as about 600 expressions of interest were sent in for about 80 spots (ten per regional schools commissioner area). This all feeds into Hassall’s main aim: to hugely increase Nasen’s reach in schools. It’s a priority she

shared at Nasen’s annual conference last Friday, where new education minister Will Quince gave the keynote speech.

“I want Nasen in every school in the country,” she enthuses. Currently, about 23,000 school staff are Nasen members, in about 8,700 schools (roughly 40 per cent of all schools). The aim is for a Nasen member in 43 per cent of schools by the end of March next year, and in 50 per cent by March 2023. “Let’s get that membership up, because if you’ve got significant membership, we’re much more likely to be listened to.”

To encourage the sign-up, Nasen’s trustees also waived the annual membership fee for staff (between £99 and £149) earlier this year. It puts the pressure on Hassall, but she’s clear it was the right move. “It means we’ve lost a big chunk of money, but we’re just going to have to work harder at the fundraising piece,” she says, adding, “more can be gained by having more members in a school.” Hassall also wants to get funding for SEND research into schools, led by teachers. The result, she hopes, will be “more visibility” for Nasen’s voice.

Hassall’s superpower, I would say, is her determined positivity. “Rather than talking about a deficit, can we find really good practice and share it around,” she concludes, beaming. Just like her mum before her, challenging and negotiating the system on behalf of young people with additional needs clearly seems to be in the blood.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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PAUL
WHITEMAN

General secretary, NAHT

Plaudits from Mr Zahawi need to be matched by pounds from Mr Sunak

Ahead of the Conservative Party conference, Paul Whiteman says real signs of change at the DfE will come from the chancellor's speech

"I will listen to you," pledged Nadhim Zahawi in an open letter to the sector published on the day he assumed the role of education secretary. An encouraging start. And the success of the national vaccine rollout which he oversaw is also encouraging. Education needs the same level of pace and commitment if the country is to truly emerge from the pandemic stronger for the long term.

Because the scale of the challenge is equally daunting. The UK stands increasingly alone in the world. It will need its next generations of school leavers to be the best-educated on the planet in order to compete.

But there's good news for Mr Zahawi too, because if the past 19 months have taught us anything it is that schools deliver. The profession knows what it is doing and it is trustworthy.

Sadly, the DfE's pre-reshuffle attempts at "listening" seldom included hearing from critical friends. This political echo chamber

was a problem even before the pandemic. It led to mistakes and U turns, leaving many in the profession exhausted and downright angry. There is little good will left, and if this promise to listen is just more window dressing,

that too will soon be exhausted.

But if it's genuine, then school leaders and their teams are ready to work with the new DfE leadership. Change is desperately needed, and we know it can only be achieved by working together. It was on the rare occasions when we were consulted properly that things went well. And as much as it might

offend DfE sensibilities, when it came to implementation, things went even better when education professionals took the lead.

So it's time to park those sensibilities. The public accounts committee declared that the DfE has become institutionally unable to learn the lessons of the pandemic in real time. It is absolutely essential that this changes under Mr Zahawi's leadership. The country simply can't afford for the DfE to remain a "department of concern". For the sake of every young person currently in the system, it must become a post-pandemic success story.

The prime minister promised

“Education is an investment, not a drain on finances

that no child would be left behind due to learning lost during the pandemic. That's now Mr Zahawi's responsibility, and if that sounds like setting the bar unrealistically high, in fact it's probably too low to secure the nation's prosperity.

He has talked about "academic excellence and skills that lead to brilliant jobs". Everyone working

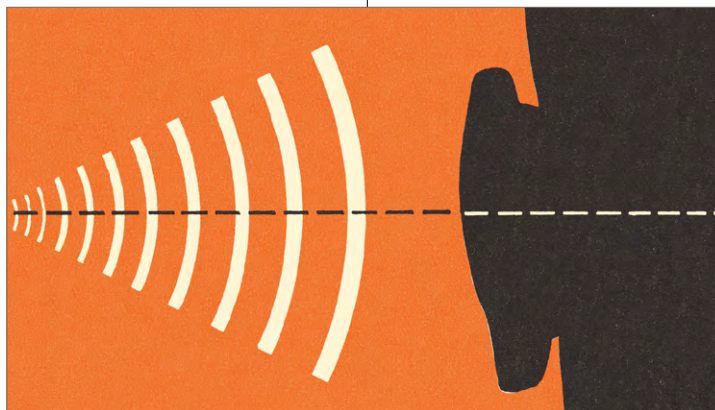
in schools knows how much that matters, but they also know their role is about so much more than that. Children's wellbeing and social cohesion are fraying. School is one place a young person can find security, support and a sense of purpose.

And Mr Zahawi knows this personally. He has talked about arriving in the UK from Iraq as a child speaking little English, and the important role teachers played in helping him to adapt. If he is given time on the Conservative Party conference platform this week, I hope he will use it to hold out an olive branch to school leaders and their teams. We will be listening avidly.

But in truth, educators will also have their eyes and ears on a second speech. Worryingly, we've heard this week that the chancellor is preparing to rein in government spending, with education rumoured to be hardest hit. There's really no other way to say it: plaudits from Mr Zahawi need to be matched by pounds from Mr Sunak. The education secretary's challenge is to make the case that funding nurseries, schools and colleges is an investment in this country's future, not simply a drain on its finances.

Let's be honest: talk of recovery is really symptomatic of a lack of ambition. What our young people deserve is for us to build a system that is stronger and fairer than the one we know. That's more than recovery. To borrow the Conservative slogan, it's about "building back better". And that's about much more than money, but it will take some.

So while Mr Zahawi listens to the profession, this week the profession will also be listening to Mr Sunak.



Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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As the UK government rolls out Operation Warm Welcome, Dr Ems Lord says compulsory values lessons are a far less welcoming prospect than a good maths curriculum

The UK government has announced Operation Warm Welcome for the thousands of Afghan refugees resettling in Britain. And for the children who are part of that group, the welcoming embrace of our education system is to take the form of compulsory “British values” lessons, without recognising their own contribution to our culture.

But of course, schools already have a legal duty since 2014 to promote British values of mutual respect and tolerance through their curriculum, so the announcement seems surprising to me, and to many.

The idea of values lessons says more about our feeling of cultural distance from those we are supposedly welcoming than about our genuine desire to welcome them – to value, rather than simply tolerate, them.

More than that, it ignores the latent potential of our entire curriculum to celebrate those values. I’m a mathematician and a childhood evacuee, so let me take my subject and my personal experience as examples. The challenges I faced aren’t of the same order as the refugees we are welcoming, but they do offer some insight.

My father was in the services and posted to RAF El Adem in Libya, when I was born. My family lived in the coastal town of Tobruk, and my dad would sometimes film the nearby ancient ruins around Cyrene, capturing its wonderful Roman mosaics.

Then Gaddafi’s coup led to the swift withdrawal of British troops from



DR EMS LORD

Director, NRICH, University of Cambridge

Maths can give a warmer welcome than any ‘values lessons’

the country, and my family were evacuated. I was just a few weeks old when we landed at RAF Brize Norton. I’ve never seen Cyrene, and I may as well have never laid eyes on Libya, but it has nevertheless heavily influenced my life. Among my parents’ legacy is a deep respect

[available here](#)).

For mosaic artists, the ability to hold and manipulate an image in our minds is key. And research has shown that visualisation is also deemed important for supporting students to successfully transition from the demands of primary to

“**Maths gives all students the chance to experience moments of awe**”

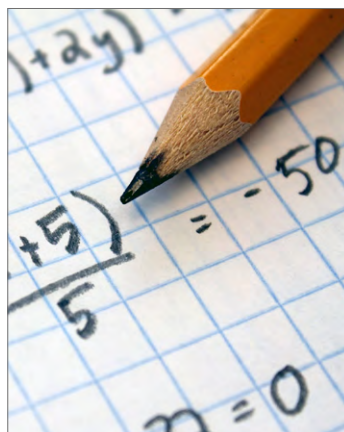
for its culture (and all cultures) and a fascination with art.

Mosaics combine mathematical precision and geometry with creativity and imagination. Those my father filmed in Cyrene were typically Roman, created by fitting numerous small, square tiles together without overlapping, to produce a tessellating pattern. He was awed by them, and the visual record he produced is something I still cherish to this day.

As a child, I cherished my beautiful wooden tessellation set, which included a much wider range of 2D shapes than the squares or rectangles typically tiling UK homes. It meant I could become much more creative with my early designs. (An online version of this childhood game is

secondary mathematics. For Afghan children whose primary maths curriculum focuses only on number and includes no geometry, it’s doubly important.

Encouraging students to explore and create their own mosaics not



only enables them to develop this skill; it also enables schools to celebrate the role of mosaics and tessellating shapes across different cultures.

Comparing the stunning Islamic mosaics of the Alhambra Palace with the Roman mosaics from Cyrene, for example, you notice how followers of Islam use abstract geometrical shapes to promote spiritual contemplation, where the Romans reproduced the world they knew in the forms of animals and humans.

This kind of work enables schools to develop mutual tolerance and respect between cultures. But more than that, celebrating the contribution of Islamic art to our lives seems an ideal way to welcome these refugee children, who are adapting to a very different culture.

Add local mosaics from homes and offices, churches and mosques, and all students have the opportunity to experience the moments of awe and wonder that bring us together across time and space. Developing mathematical knowledge and skills and exploring the arts and beliefs from different ages and traditions are not mutually exclusive.

It is worth noting that Afghan schools teach subjects separately from a young age, so refugee children may be unfamiliar with making cross-curricular connections. But with the right support, what need is there for separate values lessons?

A broad and balanced curriculum is the warmest welcome our schools can give.

Opinion

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GEORGE
RYAN

Policy adviser, UCAS

Education's next steps towards even greater LGBT+ inclusion

A new report reveals how much the LGBT+ school experience has changed, writes George Ryan, and sets out the remaining challenges on the journey to full inclusion

The start of a new academic year should be a time for excitement as well as reflection, for looking forward, but also for glancing over your shoulder.

For me, this year marks a decade since I finished school and left for university. And my reflections on that formative time in my life have been made more poignant by a new UCAS report I have been involved in, looking at the experiences of LGBT+ students as they prepare to take their next steps.

Like so many others, coming to terms with my sexual orientation would have been far easier had the first instance of hearing the word "gay" been in a positive context rather than as a slur. Encouragingly, our results show that this is the case for more of our students today. LGBT+ students in the class of 2021 have, by and large, had a positive experience in school and college.

In May, UCAS surveyed almost 3,000 LGBT+ students – over ten per cent of the nearly 30,000 students

who shared their sexual orientation or gender identity when they were applying to university or college.

Of those who responded, 47 per cent said their experience of being LGBT+ at school or college was good or very good, and another 41 per cent said their experience was neutral. Of those who had a good

enough to share their identity and orientation and to answer our survey, and even among this group, 12 per cent said their experience was bad or very bad, rising to 17 per cent for trans students. It's reasonable to suspect that number is higher.

For those LGBT+ students who did not have a good time at school or college, 70 per cent said the reason was that their identity was not reflected in what they were taught in the classroom. Further proof that a truly inclusive curriculum that celebrates difference could improve countless young lives, and a clear vindication for the hard-won reforms to sex and relationships education reforms that came into force last September.

The power of this obligation on schools to include "sensitive and

“**A truly inclusive curriculum could improve countless young lives**”

experience, over three-quarters said this was due to being accepted by their peers.

But these are a self-selecting group who were confident

age-appropriate" content about LGBT+ people and identities cannot be underestimated. In another decade's time, the next generation to tell their story will not be



telling one of taboo but of seeing themselves and being seen.

Today, although things are getting better for many young people, this is not universally the case. Our research shows that trans students are more likely to have had a bad time at school or college, to struggle with mental health issues and to have lower academic attainment overall.

To address this, the education sector must ensure there is specific support for trans students as they progress through education. As well as putting anti-bullying policies in place and creating fostering environments that promote inclusion, visible strategies to support all LGBT+ students should have a specific focus on trans students. At present, they are the most vulnerable of a still-vulnerable community.

There is much to cheer as we mark the start of this new academic year, with 77 per cent of LGBT+ students venturing on to their higher education journey in the expectation that their experience will be good or very good.

These students intend to be more open about their sexual orientation and gender identity in higher education than they were at school or college, with overall levels of openness increasing from 64 per cent at school to an expected 82 per cent at university.

There is always more to do in the battle for acceptance, and schools continue to be central in driving those vital changes in our social norms. Things are better than when I left ten years ago, but how will they be better still for the next school leavers in ten months' time? I hope this report guides school leaders as they take their next steps.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Concerns about learning loss are especially current but they may be misplaced when it comes to the summer break — and teachers have enough to worry about, writes Kate Kelly

Some debates in education come around time and time again. They seem to follow the ebbs and flows of the school calendar, and one that rears its head every September concerns the impact of the long summer break on student learning.

Teachers welcoming their classes back in the autumn term may observe a decline in their students' spelling test scores, or find that some students struggle to re-engage with reading texts they breezed through in June. By October half-term, however, most children are likely to be back in the swing of school life, even as debates on the impact of 'lost' learning continue.

Concerns around learning loss became particularly pertinent during the pandemic, with schools closed to most students for months at a time. However, we need to be careful when comparing the usual, and often highly anticipated, summer break with the significant interruptions caused by Covid-19. The nature of the time away from school was different, and we should expect the effects to be different too.

Perhaps we can think about the summer holiday as an opportunity for a different type of learning — one that supports a child to develop outside of the structure of school life. But while it might be easy to see the learning benefit for students who spend the summer travelling, visiting museums and exploring art galleries, it's important to recognise the merits of other types of activities.

Summer holiday clubs can teach



KATE KELLY
lead researcher, AQA

Let's stop talking about summer learning loss

collaboration, build character and foster creativity. Time spent with extended family and older relatives can also play a valuable role. There's increasing work into intergenerational learning that highlights the potential value of encouraging and nurturing such interactions.

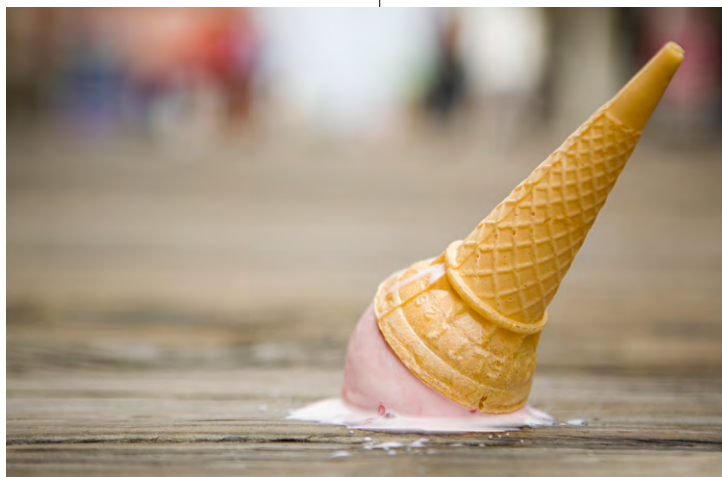
autumn. Just as children may need time to shift their focus after PE or art before they can approach maths or English, they may also need time to shift from family-based and independent experiences to the structure of the school day.

This is why we must take care to distinguish between learning

“Teachers are under enough pressure with Covid catch-up

If we acknowledge the value of the summer break, the September regression can be seen as a time to switch modes between the experiential learning of the summer and the classroom learning of the

loss associated with the summer and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Lockdowns didn't just remove students from school, they disconnected us all from the wider world and cut us off from our

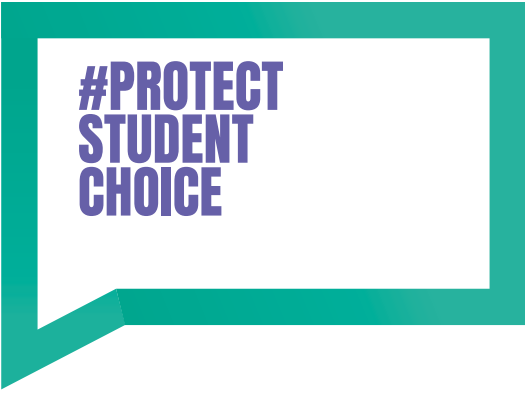


extended families. A recent report from the Nuffield Foundation highlights just how difficult life has been for many families during the pandemic, with individuals balancing childcare, home schooling and work commitments without any access to their usual support networks. This experience has been a far cry from the usual summer break.

We must also remember that there are students for whom absence from school is a bigger challenge. It's clear that for some children, the summer holidays are not a time of relaxation and enjoyment. School provides them with structure and security, as well as access to resources and free school meals, all of which can have an incredibly positive influence on their lives. For these students, pandemic-related school closures, or time away from class when bubbles were isolating, may also have had a much bigger effect.

The impact of Covid-19 on the education and wellbeing of all students is something we will be unpicking for generations to come. Research is already under way around the world, and at AQA we have our own programme of work contributing to this, to understand the impact and decipher the next steps for schools, universities, teachers and students.

But as we settle back in to the autumn term, let's not forget that learning can come in all shapes and sizes and is not something that only happens at school. Teachers are already under enough pressure to ensure students catch up after the Covid closures, and it seems unnecessary to add to their concerns as they try to focus their students — and themselves — on the challenges of the new school year.



#PROTECT
STUDENT
CHOICE

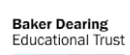
DON'T SCRAP BTECS

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

Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



Habits of Success

Author: Harry Fletcher-Wood

Publisher: Routledge

Reviewer: Stephen Lockyer, primary teacher

It's funny how much an accumulation of tweets over time form a character of someone, isn't it? When I opened this book, I was picturing its author like I knew him. Harry Fletcher-Wood. So calm, so measured, so bloody thoughtful. He's the guy in *The Hangover* who has a plan. He's the one in the group task who quietly mentions that gravity might break the spaghetti. The guy in Early Lockdown who extolled the importance of masks when the rest of us still thought they were the garb of paranoid tourists. (This last part is true!)

However, that thoughtfulness isn't without its down side. *Habits of Success* took him three years to write. Yeah, he had other things on (jobs, babies, blah blah blah), but seriously? In my prime, I was firing out a few books a year, and I am only two members short of a volleyball team in the child department. Three years for a 132-page book. That's eight days per page, or two longish sentences a day – an output that some year one teachers would delight in, to be fair.

Luckily, it's worth the wait. The book has very distinctive formatting – each chapter has an opening roadmap, discussion prompts, worked examples and tweet-length call-outs. Only missing are Spotify playlists and recipe cards, but you can't have everything.

One of Fletcher-Wood's previous books focused on checklists, so there's some serious "break-it-down-into-its-individual-parts" fetishisation going on. I bet he loved LEGO as a child! And

just like LEGO, you can't fault the model. Each section would be easy to share with a mentee, or to use as a study prompt.

What the book gains in accessibility, you could argue it sacrifices in readability. Each component section works really well, but the staccato structure breaks the overall flow. But then it's not designed to be read cover to cover like that.

The chapters are intentionally and cleverly separated, breaking the central theme down into seven questions all teachers are likely to ask themselves at some point. Unsurprisingly, Fletcher-Wood does well to recognise that his readers will be confined by the strictures of their schools' policies, so his suggestions centre on class-based remedies. There are copious illustrative examples from practising teachers and real-life classrooms, all carefully curated to support the book's central message.

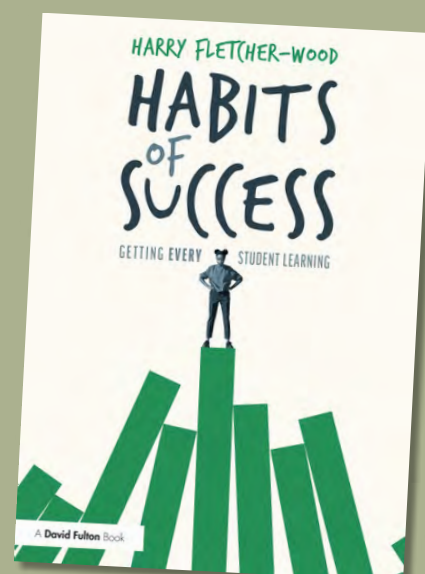
That message is that learning better is a matter of habit, and that habits can be taught. Interestingly, the points often feel valid for teaching better too, something Fletcher-Wood alludes to several times.

Sadly though, the one habit that seems to me to be a precursor to all the others gets short shrift. I imagine poor behaviour and low-level disruption are the first things a new teacher turning to this book would be looking for help with. Yet the chapter in question, "How can we help students to stop?", is only a few pages long and tucked near the end of the book. With fewer than 20 references, in comparison to the 40+ that complement the other chapters, it's a pity this section wasn't either dropped or considerably fleshed out.

So, if I were forced into a corner about who to recommend this to, I'd have to say it was best for someone who has a few years under their belt. A level of confidence in behaviour management seems assumed in the pursuit of becoming a habit-former.

But all things considered, *Habits of Success* is an excellent prompt for looking at all the stages it's necessary to go through in order to improve students' habits for learning. It made me consider how I address different learning scenarios in my own teaching, and I'm quite a creature of habit myself.

I was helped in that by the fact that Fletcher-Wood has fully included primary teaching, which is a refreshing change. And with a tone that's realistic, honest, and grounded in classroom practice, it's no less than you'd expect from the Twitter character we know and love. With more books like his, we might break a lot less spaghetti.



Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is **Robin Conway**, director of research and innovation at John Mason School

@JMSREFLECT

Curricular Thinking Has Made Me a Better Teacher

@DrHSkelton

This is a wonderful, positive piece with which to start the new school year. It crisply captures the journey many of us who were trained under the National Curriculum have experienced.

From limited understanding of, or thinking about, the way a curriculum was put together, Skelton has been driven to start asking important and powerful questions. Here, she generously provides a handy list of these for anyone working with new team members or teachers new to thinking about curriculum.

She goes on to argue that this process has made her a better teacher and makes a persuasive case for ongoing curriculum discussions. As Skelton argues, "Curriculum is fundamental to what schools do", and our focus on it "should be here to stay".

How Can School Leaders Create Great Staff Culture?

@joe_kirby

This is an interesting piece and one I'd recommend to leaders new or experienced. Kirby is focused on a simple but powerful question, because as he rightly identifies,

TOP BLOGS of the week



getting staff culture right has many potential benefits, not least in terms of retention and student outcomes. In this research-informed blog, he offers a succinct and compelling summary of the research, and goes on to identify the key practices that leaders can use to create a positive culture.

Like Helen Skelton's blog above, a really useful feature of this post is the series of questions Kirby poses. This allows readers to reflect on their own workplace and leadership habits in a really meaningful way. For those who haven't had the chance to do much of this recently, Kirby also makes a good case for leaders to take an honest look at their own practice in this way because "truth does not always rise to the top".

While Kirby recognises that staff culture is interconnected with other challenges schools and leaders face, I agree with his main conclusion that this is a "promising avenue for improving our school leadership."

Strictly Come Teaching: Giving Feedback to Novices

@UoNSoEHHistory

I always find this a very exciting point in the year, with the start of our new PGCE interns imminent. It is a tremendous privilege to be involved in training a new generation of teachers and, for anyone else lucky enough to be a part of their journey, I highly

recommend this read.

Victoria Crooks skilfully draws on her reflections of the "mentoring style" of the *Strictly* judges, linking this into educational research on teacher feedback. The experience and insight shared here is clearly very strong and identifies a clear best-practice approach (Shirley) while explaining why other approaches may be disempowering and less effective.

If you find, as Crooks argues, that "giving feedback to beginning teachers making their first attempts in the classroom is a real skill" then this piece is well worth your time. And for those who, like me, have never seen *Strictly* (and have no idea who 'Shirley' actually is), fear not! The metaphor is not used with a heavy hand and the piece is clear, readable and incredibly useful. I shall be sharing widely.

Recitation and the Charge of the Always Right Brigade

@PhilBeadle

When a Twitterstorm blows up, I always enjoy reading pieces that tackle the underlying debate and assumptions and provoke much more thought than any 280-character epistle can. For those who missed the "debate", a certain amount of controversy arose when a school posted a video of a mass recitation of *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

Here, Beadle considers different perspectives both on the activity and the poem itself. Although he does reach a judgment, the blog is balanced and espouses a mission to engage in intelligent educational debate. He criticises the "I'm right... you're wrong" approach to educational discussion. Beadle models a much more helpful approach.

Despite being inclined against recitation due to his own childhood experiences, he offers an effective summary of both the 'positives' and 'debts'. On one point though, I must disagree. "It's a shame we can't have a balanced debate that acknowledges that there is good and bad in everything," writes Beadle. With pieces like this, I think we can.

CLICK ON REVIEWS TO VIEW BLOGS +

Research



Iain Ford will regularly review a research development throughout the year. Contact him @TeacherTapp if you have a topic you'd like him to explore

What do teachers really think of CPD?

Iain Ford, Senior Data and Reporting Analyst, Teacher Tapp

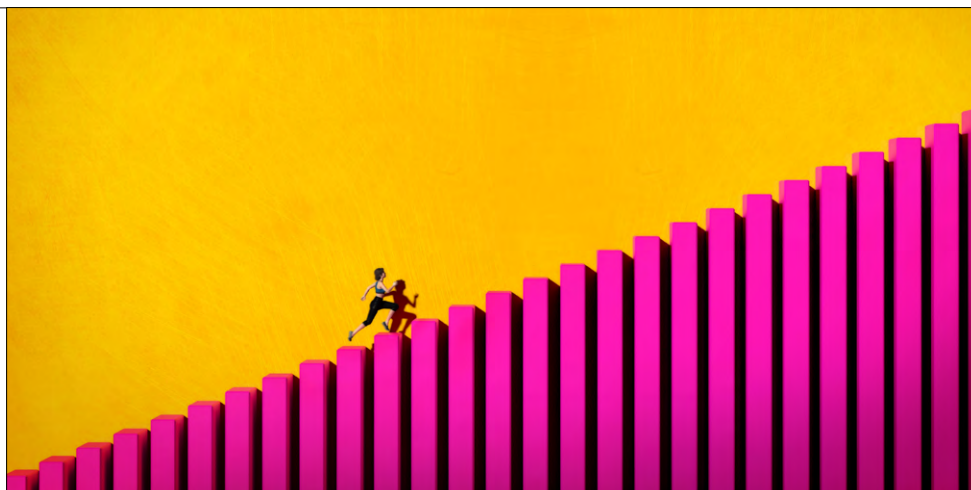
When it comes to the old adage that "education is not the filling of a vessel but the kindling of a flame", it seems teachers are broadly people for whom the flame burns brightly. Recent Teacher Tapp research confirms that many, and particularly those new to the profession, show a consistent and strong desire to continually develop their craft. And for most, that fire never goes out.

This is good news, not only because of the positive impact that quality continued professional development (CPD) can have on students, but also because of the introduction of the early-career framework (ECF) this year. From September 2021, the ECF will provide additional training in the first two years for early-career teachers to develop their practice and knowledge, including access to mentors and resources.

In order to build a picture of teachers' attitudes towards CPD, we asked over 6,000 of them a series of questions on the topic. These questions ranged from how much they believed CPD would help them, to how useful such sessions have been in the past.

Overall, we found that nearly 75 per cent of teachers responded by saying that CPD sessions have had at least a moderate influence on their teaching. Furthermore, 93 per cent of teachers believe that CPD would make them a better teacher. Teachers are uniformly positive about the importance of such sessions and the impact they can have on their teaching.

Of all teachers, less experienced teachers seemed the most positive about the effect that CPD could have on their careers. Ninety-four per cent of teachers with less than five years' experience agreed with the statement "I believe professional development sessions will help develop my career". Eighty-five per cent of



those with more than 20 years' experience said the same, too!

What's more, 78 per cent of teachers with less than five years' experience said that CPD sessions have already had at least a moderate influence on their practice. And when we asked the same question to teachers with more than 20 years' experience, this value was still high, at 69 per cent.

This pattern is consistent across many of the development questions asked through Teacher Tapp. Combining the results of all questions asked, we find that less experienced teachers are significantly more likely to rate CPD more highly and respond more positively about the impact it had on their teaching.

This may seem obvious, but we are thorough researchers! We wanted to check and to find out what factors might be responsible for this. Why do early-career teachers consistently rate CPD more highly?

One theory is that later-career teachers don't find CPD useful, but this was simply not evidenced in subsequent responses. When we asked how useful their last CPD session was, 52 per cent of teachers

with more than 20 years' experience said it was "somewhat" or "very useful", compared to 42 per cent of teachers with less than five years' experience.

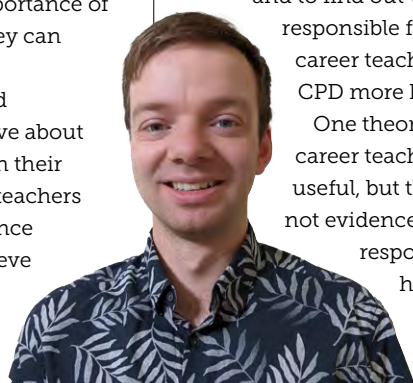
Another theory is that teachers later in their careers are already experts in their field. Back in 2020, we asked whether teachers believed they had sufficient background knowledge to deliver their timetabled lessons. Seventy-one per cent of experienced teachers strongly agreed with this statement, compared with just 36 per cent of less experienced teachers.

Encouragingly, the research also shows that this knowledge gap is not daunting to early-career teachers – they embrace the challenge it brings.

To these two facts (the enthusiasm of new teachers and experienced teachers' sense of expertise) add a dash of the law of diminishing returns and you may have your explanation.

Less experienced teachers are more positive about CPD because, having comparatively more to learn, they make greater strides with each session.

All of which can only be a good omen for the early-career framework. If this research is anything to go by, new teachers will respond enthusiastically to its introduction and it will be an effective addition to the toolkit for training new teachers.



Week in

Westminster

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

FRIDAY

No more chance of Gavin Williamson sliding into Boris Johnson's DMs asking for his job back then!

It turns out that the spurned Gav has apparently unfollowed his ex-boss on Instagram, in what the *Sun* coins "the ultimate stropo revenge".

In another blow, Boris still follows Gav. Totes awks!

With rumours of the Gavstar having bagged a knighthood for his services to education (LOL), maybe he's satisfied his needs and is just ghosting old Bozza.

SUNDAY

The chancellor of the exchequer was reportedly incensed at the mere suggestion, during a recent meeting with union bods, that schools need more money and that a teacher pay freeze will make the profession less attractive.

NEU general secretary Dr Mary Bousted told a Labour conference fringe that she was in Number 11 Downing Street for a meeting recently and had "about two seconds to say to the chancellor that 0 per cent on teachers' pay meant the teacher recruitment and retention crisis would worsen, and that there was still a funding crisis in schools".

According to Bousted, at this point the chancellor became "really aerated".

"He wasn't having it, you know, [he said] he'd brought funding back up to 2010 levels, and that teachers were very

well paid."

None of this bodes well for the upcoming spending review. And how could this be the case when the Department for Education has made such a solid case for schools needing more cash? Oh, hang on...

The Times reported this week that according to government sources, the DfE DID NOT SUBMIT A FORMAL APPLICATION for more catch-up funding in the forthcoming review.

Mind. Blown.

No wonder Sunak thinks everything is tickety-boo!

WEDNESDAY

It's been a tough few years for poor Ofqual. Overseeing the biggest exams debacle of recently history, being (wrongly) blamed for it all by the Gavstar, and then at the last minute having to ditch exams last year has left the regulator needing a bit of a cuddle.

Luckily, it turns out new Ofqual boss Dr Jo Saxton has said she is smitten with... the watchdog itself!

In an interview with the *Times Education Supplement*, Saxton, a former Ofqual board member, said: "I don't think anyone thinks when they are a little girl they are going to grow up to be a regulator... [But] I fell in love with Ofqual the first time I walked across the threshold of its office when I was on the board."

Aww, cute. Let's hope they have a long, successful relationship as after

two years of monumental cock-ups we all need a bloody break.

**

Conspiracy theorist Piers Corbyn took a break from falsely telling terrified school pupils that having the Covid vaccine could make them infertile to protest outside the Labour conference this week.

The brother of former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn even found himself a strategic location from which to bellow unintelligibly through a megaphone outside the Hilton on Brighton seafront.

At least with the absolute crank occupied in Brighton, school leaders might be able to enjoy some respite from his nonsense rants and get on with the day job.

THURSDAY

Confused about whether the grading situation for 2022 is good or bad? You're not the only one.

The Times reported that the number of top exam grades will fall next year. Whereas the *Telegraph* said that GCSE and A-level results will be inflated next year.

Both are true (exam grades will be lower than this year, but still above normal pre-pandemic levels).

Maybe this is the new approach from a government fed up of being slated for whatever Covid education policy it comes up? Just let the sector choose whatever it thinks works best!





City Learning Trust
Inspiring Outstanding Achievement

Vice Principal - Curriculum & Assessment or Teaching & Learning

Applications are invited for the above post. We are seeking an ambitious and proactive leader with a proven track record of excellence to join Haywood Academy & City College and work closely with the Principal and Senior Leadership Team in the delivery of outstanding Teaching and Learning or Curriculum & Assessment to support with the quality of education on offer.

This is an excellent opportunity for the right candidate to take a pivotal role in helping drive the future of this 11-18 Academy on its journey to becoming a 'great' place to learn. The successful candidate will have enjoyed a range of experiences to date that will have prepared them for this role. You will be an outstanding teacher who can demonstrate a track record of raising standards and importantly you will be child centered and able to inspire young people to be the best that they can be.

If you want to work in a 11-18 Academy where you can make a real difference to young people's life chances while working as part of a partnership of Academies that are committed to cooperation and collaboration to unlock talent and fulfill potential, then this post is just right for you. In return, you will be supported and encouraged to develop further and enjoy a long and rewarding career working across the City Learning Trust.

As we strive for a 'great' experience for all our learners, you will have the highest of expectations for young people and staff at Haywood Academy and City College.

The City Learning Trust is committed to raising the aspirations and achievements of all young people within our learning community and is a 3-19 partnership of schools and academies. We aim to create a world-class education system across our community of schools.

We are looking for someone who:

- Has vision, energy and enthusiasm for teaching and learning
- Is proactive, innovative and focused on student outcomes
- Is an aspiring, ambitious leader with excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Has a proven track record of delivering and shaping high quality outcomes for young people

- Is an advocate of partnership working and community engagement
- Is a highly effective classroom practitioner
- Has sixth form experience
- Is committed to raising standards for all students and securing and driving excellence in inclusion

In return we can offer you:

- The opportunity to work in an excellent academy with a talented and committed team of staff
- A dynamic and thriving student body which deserve the best
- The support and shared purpose of the wider CLT Senior Leadership Team
- A competitive salary structure
- Excellent career opportunities and access to a comprehensive programme of personalised professional learning and development
- National and international networking opportunities
- A commitment to your own personal leadership growth
- A comprehensive benefits package

The closing date is 11th October and you will be informed if you are successful for interview by 12th October and interviews will take place on 18th and 19th October.

If you are interested in having an informal conversation about this opportunity, please contact Marie Faichney who will arrange such (01782 853535). It would be helpful if your letter in support of your application is no more than 2 sides of A4. You may if you wish submit a CV with your application but not instead of it.



Headteacher

ABOUT HARROGATE HIGH SCHOOL

Our school is a vibrant 11-18 high school with around 750 students on roll, located in the town of Harrogate. We enjoy brand new school buildings with great learning environments, opened in 2017, set in large grounds with excellent sport facilities.

Students come to us in Year 7 from a number of local primary schools – with as much as half of our intake coming from primary schools also in the Northern Star Trust Partnership.

Our school vision is based upon the school motto of Learning First – committed to good quality teaching and a flexible curriculum within a culture of mutual respect and responsibility.

We are large enough to provide a broad and balanced education, but small enough to give individual attention and care to all our students with an emphasis on personalised learning.

We are proud of our

- Sustained academic improvements
- Flexible curriculum and innovative teaching.
- Personalised approach to personal development and well-being.
- Outstanding careers advice and guidance.
- Excellent transition programmes at every key stage and beyond.
- Collective responsibility towards our own and wider community.

We are a school that has achieved a great deal already, with the potential to become a truly great school as we embark on our next stage of development with a new headteacher.

Visit our school website: www.harrogatehighschool.co.uk



Chief Executive Officer

Washwood Heath Multi Academy Trust
Birmingham

- **Salary:** circa £120,000
- **Contract Type:** Full Time
- **Organisation Type:** Academy Trust
- **Subject Area:** Education
- **Contract Term:** Permanent
- **Expiry Date:** 11-10-2021

Washwood Heath Multi Academy Trust is a family of seven serving diverse and multicultural communities in East Birmingham. We currently comprise 710 employees who work across our 7 academies, including a centralised Core Team.

You must be able to demonstrate a proven track record as a senior executive leader in a complex education, commercial or charitable setting, where you have delivered on the organisation's vision and strategy with clarity and conviction.

Our Trust is a fantastic place to work, made up of colleagues from diverse backgrounds. We pride ourselves on a culture that embraces inclusivity, wellbeing, professional growth, and collaboration, to help our colleagues invest discretionary effort, which leads to positive pupil outcomes.

Closing Date: 11th October 2021 10.00 a.m.

For a candidate information pack, visit the school website:
<https://www.whmat.academy/225/ceo-recruitment>



LANCASTER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS



Lancaster University School of Mathematics

Head of School

This is an exciting and unique opportunity for an individual with a passion for the teaching of mathematics to shape and lead a first-class specialist Maths School.

Opening in September 2022, the Maths School will be the fourth in England - joining those set up by King's College London, the University of Exeter and the University of Liverpool.

The successful candidate will play a pivotal role in bringing the vision of the Maths School to life, enabling the most gifted mathematicians from all backgrounds to realise their potential within an inspiring, inclusive and supportive learning community.

Under the successful candidate's direction and leadership, the Maths School will provide exceptional teaching, an intellectually stimulating

and challenging curriculum along with first-class facilities and high-quality resources for 16-19-year-olds who love maths.

We welcome applications for this leadership post to commence 1st May 2022.

Hours: The role is a full-time position.

Salary paid at L14 to L19 of the SFCA Leadership spine, currently pro rata to £66,285 to £74,628 per annum.

Closing date for receipt of applications: 9.00 a.m. Tuesday 2nd November 2021.

Please apply using the application form provided, CVs will not be accepted.

Further details are available at <https://lusom.ac.uk/job-vacancies/current-posts/> or by telephone on 01772 460181. Interested applicants are invited to have an informal discussion with the Executive Principal, Nick Burnham. To arrange this please contact the HR department on 01772 460181 or email HR@lusom.ac.uk

All offers of appointment are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service Clearance as well as a range of other safer recruitment checks

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.



**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.



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.

FOUNDING PRINCIPAL - HOUSTONE SCHOOL

£70,307 - £89,357
FULL TIME, PERMANENT

The trustees of Advantage Schools are seeking to appoint a Principal Designate from Easter 2022 (or earlier by negotiation) for our brand new secondary school, Houstone School.

Houstone School is due to open in September 2022 in Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire.

We are interested to hear from experienced school leaders with an established track record, who possess the knowledge and expertise to lead a school in line with our trust ambition of offering a world-class education to pupils of all backgrounds.

Informal and exploratory conversations are welcomed – please contact Sophie Heron – sheron@advantageschools.co.uk for an informal and confidential conversation with Stuart Lock, CEO. We encourage in person or virtual visits to the schools in our trust in line with the most recent school risk assessments.

To apply, please download and complete the application form available on our school website: www.houstoneschool.co.uk

Closing Date: 9.00am, October 11 2021



DID YOU KNOW?



As a recruiter for an MAT of 34 Academies, I have been very impressed with the professional support we have received from Schools Week and the quick turnaround time they provide for our advertised vacancies.

David Ross Education Trust

As a Schools Week subscriber, your organisation receives a
20% DISCOUNT
on recruitment advertising.

Online listings, classified advertising, and package options available.

Click here to contact our team

