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'Elite' sixth forms: Grammar schools for 16-year-olds?

- Study reveals they recruit from neighbouring areas, and have few poor kids
- Level-up plan labelled as 'selection for lucky few and rejection for majority'

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Revealed: The toll of our collapsing CAMHS

JESS STAUFENBERG & SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SCHOOLSWEEK

The devastating toll of failing mental health support systems on families and schools is revealed in a four-month investigation by *Schools Week*.

Based on testimony from scores of families and school leaders, alongside data from Freedom of Information requests to hundreds of councils, multi-academy trusts and the NHS, we found:

- Suicidal children are being turned away for mental health support, with schools instead told to "keep them safe"
- Thousands of children are stuck on waiting lists for expert help, with schools digging into their own pockets to fund support
- Therapists once provided to schools free now cost hundreds of pounds a visit
- Schools accuse parents of "fabricating illnesses" as collapsing support drives rifts
- Parents use life insurance and raid savings to fund legal fights for support, with one parent claiming the stress contributed to her stroke
- Meanwhile, increases in the number of pupils with additional needs has left special schools "bursting at the seams", with youngsters left in unequipped mainstream schools

Helen Hayes, Labour's shadow children's minister, was shocked by the findings, but said the government's mental health strategy "totally lacks ambition".

"There are professionals working all over the country as hard as they can to deliver the best outcomes for children and young people, but they are within a system that simply isn't working and in many places it is falling over."

Schools say they desperately need more counsellors and psychologists for students but "don't have the money" and instead are left to "plug the gap" themselves.

Mary Bousted, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said the crisis had been "unfolding for years. It's



not surprising to me that *Schools Week* has uncovered the depth of the crisis for parents of children with SEND and mental health illnesses."

Parents have said their children are being "left to rot" as neurodevelopmental differences or mental health struggles are not spotted early enough, with children ending up in A&E departments.

In some cases, families say they have "lost all trust" in public services, with parents needing support workers themselves as their own mental health breaks down.

Ofsted inspections exposing failing council services last year found that SEND pupils and their families were often left to fall into crisis before help was offered.

Bosted said "radical change" was needed. "When the government talks about levelling-up and covid recovery, ministers have to understand talking will not do."

Theresa May's 2018 Green Paper on transforming children and young people's mental health committed £300 million to an overhaul of support services.

This included mental health support teams to a quarter of the country by 2023, a figure ramped up to 35 per cent by next year. But MPs have said this ambition is "too low", with schools saying they will not resolve

huge waiting lists for other services.

Robert Halfon, the Conservative chair of the education select committee, said the government must "rocket-boost" the proposals to put these teams in every school.

As *Schools Week* revealed last year, training for a senior mental health lead in schools only got off the ground last term, while promised mental health first aid training for primary schools has been scrapped.

The government vowed its 2014 reforms would put SEND "children and parents at the heart of the system. For too long, families have found themselves battling against a complex and fragmented system."

A major review launched just five years later promised to "improve services available" for families to end the "postcode lottery they often face".

Hayes said the three-year delay in publishing the review – due out in the next few months – was "really shameful".

"We need to see it as soon as possible, so that the government can respond to it and start to deliver for families with additional needs," she said.

The government turned down our requests to interview a minister about our findings.

The Department for Education said the SEND system "needs to be better", which was why the review was "looking at ways to make sure the system is more consistent, high quality and integrated across education, health and care".

A Department of Health and Social Care spokesperson said the government was "expanding and transforming NHS services backed by an extra £2.3 billion per year by 2024, to allow hundreds of thousands more children to access support".

An NHS spokesperson said it was "providing access to mental health support at the earliest opportunity in every part of the country, alongside the invaluable support from schools, parents and young people themselves".



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KIDS IN CRISIS](#)

NEWS

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'Elite' sixth forms have fewer poor students, study finds

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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EXCLUSIVE

"Elite" sixth forms teach few poorer pupils and recruit heavily from neighbouring areas, according to new analysis that challenges ministers' levelling-up promises.

The government said new 16-to-19 free schools focused on getting pupils into top universities would "transform education" in left-behind areas with "weak" outcomes.

But campaigners say they will instead lead to "selection for a lucky few and rejection for the majority" after a new study found similarities among their intakes with grammar schools.

Dave Thomson, author of the Education Datalab study, said super-selective sixth forms "may well prove popular, but they are hardly likely to recruit many disadvantaged students unless entry requirements are relaxed".

The analysis, shared exclusively with *Schools Week*, looked at the characteristics of the five per cent of sixth forms with the highest-attaining year 12 pupils, based on their GCSE results.

It found just six per cent of pupils attending the most selective sixth forms outside London were disadvantaged, compared to a national average of 17 per cent of all year 12 pupils.

Meanwhile, just 60 per cent of students at such schools lived in the same local authority area, compared to 82 per cent across all sixth forms.

Campaigners have drawn comparisons with grammar schools, which select at 11 and are often criticised for their impact on surrounding schools. They usually have lower rates of disadvantage than the areas they serve.

Joanne Bartley, from Comprehensive Future, said education secretary Nadhim Zahawi had "billed himself as the 'evidence-led' education secretary...but we don't see any evidence that grammar school-style sixth forms will work".

Selection at any age would "benefit wealthier families



Michael Gove

and deny opportunity to disadvantaged pupils", and "mean selection for a lucky few and rejection for the majority."

"Elite sixth forms mean local pupils turned away, and more pupils travelling further to school," she added.

Bill Watkin, chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, said the findings showed such sixth forms "may not make a huge contribution to the levelling-up agenda".

He added they "tend to be small and narrowly focused on specific subjects", and are "unlikely to represent a solution for more than a tiny number of students".

Disadvantaged students are already under-represented in school sixth forms compared to the national rate, because they are "less likely to meet the entry criteria", said Thomson.

"Adding super-selective entry criteria for sixth forms would just create another barrier for this group."

Highly selective sixth forms are not without their benefits, however, with pupils more likely to go to university.

Separate analysis by SchoolDash found that in areas where over one-third of pupils attended elite sixth forms, over half went on to university. In places where fewer than one in ten attended top institutions, around one-third went on to higher education.

However, areas with high numbers of top sixth-formers were also more likely to be in more

affluent urban areas, which may contribute to differences in destinations data.

SchoolDash identified 438 "elite" sixth forms, including 163 grammar schools and other sixth forms with high attainment scores among pupils. These make up 18 per cent of mainstream sixth forms in England.

But coverage of these institutions varies between regions. In London, 18.6 per cent of students attend such institutions, compared to 8.4 per cent in the West Midlands and 10.3 per cent in the north west.

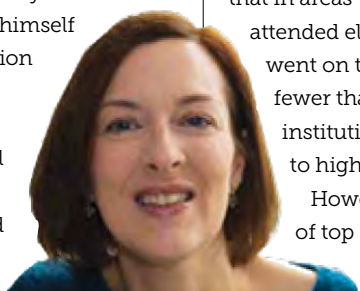
This also varies even more at local authority level. In some boroughs, the majority of sixth formers attend elite institutions, while in others, none do.

Last week, leaders of existing highly selective schools warned the new institutions must not become "cuckoos in the nest".

Bartley called for an impact assessment "on whether elite sixth forms damage surrounding local schools. This government seems to have an obsession with 'elite' schooling, while all the evidence suggests the pupils in this high-attaining group tend to do well wherever they are educated."

Watkin added: "It is sometimes a good thing to introduce a disruption to the system, but only when this leads to a constructive and positive outcome."

The DfE was approached for comment.



Joanne Bartley



Bill Watkin

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Councils cut primary places as baby boom flattens

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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EXCLUSIVE

The number of surplus primary school places is set to soar by up to 140 per cent in some areas of England as the population bulge created by the 2000s baby boom moves into secondaries.

Councils are already reducing school capacity, with empty classrooms being repurposed into SEND units. Staff cuts are also expected.

The number of primary and nursery-aged pupils in England is projected to fall by almost 300,000 over the next five years (6.5 per cent), from about 4.6 million this year to 4.3 million in 2026.

However, objections from parents forced councillors in Brighton to shelve controversial plans to reduce the published admission number (PAN) of seven schools, showing the difficult task faced by decision-makers.

To complicate things, councils only oversee admissions for maintained schools. Academy trusts are their own admissions authorities. About four in ten primary schools are academies.

'Falling numbers already impacting budgets'

James Bowen, the director of policy at the leaders' union NAHT, said falling pupil numbers were "certainly a concern" for heads.

In some inner-city areas, this was "already beginning to have an effect on school budgets".

But he said that rather than allowing primary school budgets to contract, the government should maintain funding so that schools could maintain existing staffing levels and provide "smaller class sizes and more targeted support for pupils".

All councils have some surplus places to deal with unexpected influxes. But large surpluses cause financial problems for schools.

Government data shows more than two thirds of council areas face an increase in surplus places over the next two years. *Schools Week* approached the 23 local authorities that expected rises of more than 30 per cent.

Fewer staff and repurpose empty classrooms

Middlesbrough said it expected schools to "find it necessary to employ fewer teaching and support staff" over the next eight years.

The council is also exploring alternative uses for primary school accommodation, including SEND units.

In Luton, admissions numbers have been reduced at six schools and



a further two are consulting on the change. The council said it was "likely" more reductions would follow.

Southend council has a "primary school reduction plan", and the capacity of seven academies and one maintained school has already been reduced by 270 places.

And Walsall Council said it would be "undertaking conversations with primary schools in the spring term of 2022 to look at the impact of reducing demands".

Nottingham is also reviewing its primary surplus capacity, but said closing schools was "not a favourable option" because the pupil population was likely to grow again.

West Berkshire council said it kept admission numbers under review, "and have reduced some, in agreement with schools".

"Natural wastage" was the most common way to lose staff, it said.

Protestors force council to shelve admission cuts

However, Brighton councillors recently abandoned plans to cut the PANs of seven primary schools from 2023.

The city faces a 24 per cent increase in surplus places in the next two years.

Campaigners argued that the proposals disproportionately affected smaller schools in disadvantaged areas, after attempts to downsize four larger schools were thrown out by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator last year.

Leila Erin-Jenkins, a campaign organiser, said the "burden of the cuts needs to be distributed across the city".

Councillor Zoe John said decisions from the OSA left the council working "with our hands tied behind our backs".

Academy trusts also face tough decisions. The Elliot Foundation academy trust has had to close one school and reduce the PANs of several others in recent years.

Chief executive Hugh Greenway said the decline in pupil numbers "has been coming for some time".

"If you don't reduce the PAN, you get forced into a position where you have to maintain staff in

a school that you don't have funding to support. You burn through reserves maintaining staff for children who might join you in-year."

Surplus spaces for housing boom

In some areas, rises are a result of planning for rises in pupil numbers.

In Trafford, the number of spare primary places is due to rise by 143 per cent between this year and 2023-24.

A spokesperson said surplus places were needed to "accommodate the large numbers of families who move into our area during the school year".

The council is also expanding some schools to create additional places from next year.

Bury's surplus places will rise 65 per cent. A spokesperson said the picture was "complicated", with some schools more affected than others. They also pointed to "high demand" from outside the borough, and plans for "thousands of new homes".

Sandwell, in the West Midlands, is facing a 60 per cent rise. But the council's predicts an overall 5 per cent surplus across the primary school estate.

It said some schools "may choose to make redundancies", but surplus space would initially be used to expand key stage 2 provision.

The DfE said councils should be "reducing or repurposing high levels of spare capacity", in order to "avoid undermining the educational offer or financial viability of schools in their area".

Town halls can also set aside some schools funding for "falling rolls funds" to support schools that need to maintain surplus places.

CHANGES IN SURPLUS PRIMARY PLACES, 2021-2023

Council area	Expected rise in spare places
Trafford	143%
Bury	65%
Sandwell	60%
Wigan	53%
Stoke-on-Trent	45%
Walsall	45%
Warrington	43%
Sutton	42%
Southampton	41%
Sheffield	40%
West Berkshire	39%
Southend-on-Sea	38%
Middlesbrough	37%
Dudley	37%
Bradford	36%
Devon	36%

Source: Department for Education, school capacity data

James Bowen

NEWS

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Top-grade school gets 'inadequate' after 15 years without inspection

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

Ofsted has downgraded a former 'outstanding' school to 'inadequate' over serious safeguarding issues discovered in its first routine inspection in 15 years.

Thomas Mills High School, a single academy trust in Woodbridge, Suffolk, was visited in November last year having been exempt since its 'outstanding' judgment in October 2006.

Routine graded inspections of top-rated schools restarted in September for the first time since 2010.

Inspectors said that processes for safeguarding were weak at the school and leaders did not have the information needed to "know that pupils in school are safe".

The report, published this week, warned "too many decisions rely on informal conversations rather than rigorous procedures", which meant the school could not ensure safeguarding procedures were effective.

The school was judged highly in other areas, earning a 'good' for quality of education and behaviour.

But an Ofsted spokesperson said: "Serious safeguarding issues have always meant that a school will be judged inadequate."

Head calls for annual safeguarding review

Philip Hurst, the school's headteacher, said a new electronic safeguarding system would make monitoring of potential issues easier and more efficient.

However, he said schools should be required to complete an annual external safeguarding review as those not frequently visited by Ofsted could "easily get out of touch".


The report added leaders had not been "clear where the records are", which meant they "do not have to hand the information they need to support vulnerable pupils".

Safeguarding consultant Gill Sommers said there was "little or no" external oversight of a school's safeguarding practice between inspections.

A school's failure to manage safeguarding effectively for a long period could "lead to children being harmed or put at risk", she added.

Rachel Gooch, a former national

School report


Ofsted
raising standards
improving lives

Inspection of Thomas Mills High School

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

leader of governance, said the inspection exemption placed the focus of 'outstanding' schools "firmly on published results" and opened "the risk that other areas of schools life would decline unnoticed".

But such failures could be avoided within well-run trusts or local authorities.

Too early to draw conclusions, say Ofsted

Two other 'outstanding' schools have been downgraded to 'inadequate' since September.

Doverly Down Lower School in Leighton Buzzard, and Busbridge Infant School in Godalming, Surrey, were downgraded following inspections in October.

Neither had received a full inspection since March 2007.

Safeguarding was also highlighted as an issue

at Busbridge. Staff training was not "up to date" and the most vulnerable pupils' records were not "maintained in good order".

Headteacher Darren Heatley said "robust recording mechanisms" had been introduced. Senior leaders had safeguarding training, with more planned for other staff this year.

Doverly was downgraded after the watchdog judged the school's quality of education, early years provision and leadership to be 'inadequate'.

In a letter to parents Ian Haynes, chair of governors, said it was "not acceptable, and we should not have reached this point".

An Ofsted spokesperson said it would be "misleading to draw conclusions about the overall picture so soon after the exemption was lifted", but it was not seeing high numbers of 'inadequate' grades.


When Thomas Mills High School was last inspected in October 2006:

- Tony Blair was prime minister
- Apple was three months away from releasing the first iPhone
- Scissor Sisters *I Don't Feel Like Dancin'* was top of the charts
- Leona Lewis was weeks away from winning *The X-Factor*
- *Casino Royale*, Daniel Craig's first appearance as James Bond, was released the following month



Leona Lewis

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Early GCSEs will not count in Progress 8 scores

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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EXCLUSIVE

Schools that entered pupils early for GCSEs in the past two years face a drop in their Progress 8 scores this year after the government confirmed those results will not count in league tables.

One school number-cruncher predicted an average drop of 0.2 points in Progress 8 scores for those affected. There were about 100,000 early entries in 2020 and 2021.

The government has already said that results from teacher assessed grades in 2020 and 2021 will not count in secondary league tables, which will be published this year for the first time in three years.

However, the Department for Education confirmed this will also apply to qualifications sat by current year 11 students when they were in years 9 and 10.

Progress 8 is calculated based on pupil achievements across eight subject "buckets", with missing qualifications each giving a score of zero.

Peter Atherton, a school data manager and blogger, predicted the average school with early entries would see a drop of 0.2 points in their Progress 8 score.

Schools without early entries "could see their Progress 8 score be boosted by an equivalent amount".

To prevent these issues, the Department for Education should "either reduce the measures that are valid for inclusion in the performance tables or allow schools with early entries to opt out of publication of affected measures", he added.

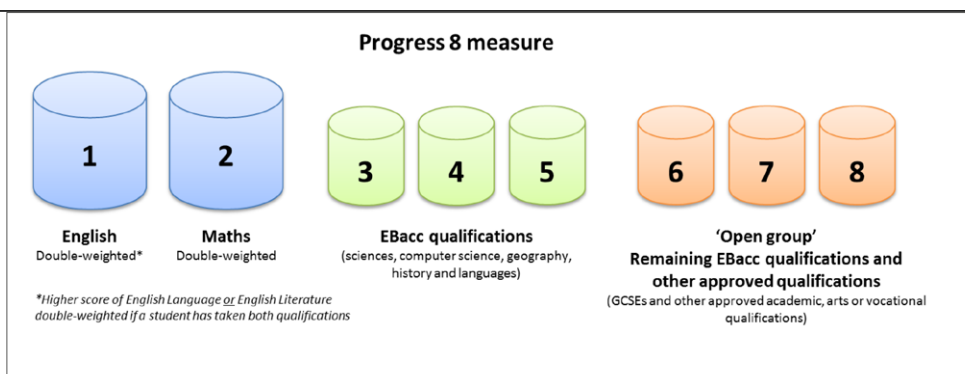
English results won't count, but 2022 exams double-weighted

After religious studies, the most common subject entered early is GCSE English literature, which had 20,930 entries from year 10s in 2021.

English is double-weighted in Progress 8 calculations, meaning pupils' results from their English language GCSE can be used for this year's league tables.

But the government normally allows the other English qualification to be used for one of three "open" buckets, which will not be possible this year.

Atherton said one solution would be to allow the single English grade examined this year to count



in "both the English and open" buckets.

But English isn't the only EBacc subject affected. There were 4,260 early modern language entries and 2,135 in maths last year, while there were 1,000 entries in science subjects, French, Spanish, history, geography and computing.

Rachel Johnson, the chief executive of school network partnership Pixl, said the change would be "a worry" for schools with early entries who were "hovering around a negative Progress 8 score".

But she pointed out pupils themselves had already received their grades and would not be disadvantaged "and I think that, to be honest, is the big thing that schools will be relieved about".

Reconsider scrapping league tables, DfE told

The changes have also led to renewed calls for league tables to be shelved again this year.

Jonny Uttley, the chief executive of the Education Alliance Trust, said league tables were "flawed in a normal year", but "indefensible" in 2022.

"Trying to compare one school with another will be a foolish exercise in comparing apples with pears."

Tom Middlehurst, from the ASCL school leadership union, said the government's decision meant league tables "will not accurately reflect the performance of schools".

The results will "clearly disadvantage those schools that have entered students early, as their position in the tables will be artificially lower than they should be".

The DfE said changes to its methodology "minimise, but cannot eliminate completely, the impact of gaps in data".

Its approach is the "best option available".

Alongside school-level league tables, the DfE has said it will also produce and publish multi-academy trust performance measures for 2021-22.

These will include Attainment 8 and attainment in English and maths at grade 5 or above for the first time.

The DfE will also need to change the way it uses key stage 2 results as a baseline for Progress 8 scores, although it has not set out its final plans yet.

EARLY ENTRIES FOR GCSEs IN 2021

Subject	Year 10 entries 2021
Religious studies	25,350
English literature	20,930
Statistics	6,030
English language	5,315
Other modern languages	4,260
Citizenship studies	3,520
Art & design subjects	3,475
Mathematics	2,135
Geography	1,555
History	1,400
French	1,360
Biology	1,160
Computing	1,110
Spanish	1,070
Chemistry	1,040

Source: Department for Education

NEWS

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Covid boost nearly trebles Harris fundraising cash

JAMES CARR

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EXCLUSIVE

The Harris Federation has nearly trebled fundraising income to more than £3 million this year – with its boss saying the pandemic has made donors “more willing”.

The trust, one of the largest in the country, began fundraising in 2018-19 with £1.2 million to help minimise the attainment gap of pupil premium students.

But fundraising income rose to £3.3 million in the year ending August 2020 and £3.4 million last year, providing tutoring, catch-up summer schools and in-house teams of social workers.

Chief executive Sir Dan Moynihan, who leads the fundraising efforts, said: “We’ve got an enormous backlog of welfare cases, as do all schools. Some of our schools have got triple the number of cases they had before. There’s no way local services can cope with all that.”

“There are so many outside problems that can prevent these children [from succeeding], the purpose of this fundraising really is for us to help with that stuff.”

Harris has raised £3.3 million so far this year and is hoping to hit £4 million – meaning it should bring in nearly £12 million in four years.

“It’s accelerated over the pandemic – people have been more willing,” Sir Dan said.

Annual accounts published last week show the extra cash funded one-to-one tutoring in ten schools, hundreds of laptops and two-week summer schools.

Three schools also have in-house social workers to help join families with local services and “ultimately help education achievements”.

The funds raised are on top of the £1.7 million additional Covid catch-up cash the trust received from the government.

School fundraising is not new, but larger academy trusts now bringing in millions of pounds extra has led to concerns over an uneven playing field.

Recently published accounts from England’s ten biggest trusts show that half engage in the practice and rely on



Sir Dan Moynihan

“Life is unfair, we want it to be fairer”

professional fundraisers to boost their efforts.

But Sir Dan said: “Life is unfair, we want it to be fairer and however much funding schools get we can always use more.”

Harris recently advertised for a head of fundraising and partnerships. The £60,000 role is yet to be filled, but Sir Dan hopes to establish a team of four fundraisers in the coming years.

Harris said their salaries would be paid by the money they brought in. In the meantime, Sir Dan leads the efforts himself.

The trust was founded by Lord Harris, a high-profile and well-connected Conservative party donor.

But Sir Dan – the country’s best-paid chief executive on at least £450,000 – said

the trust’s sponsor was not used to source donors. Instead, he said, Google was “really helpful” to find potential donors who were invited into a school to see how the cash could help.

“There’s a relatively large number of people out there interested in educational disadvantage and our schools are largely in those places.”

Harris deals with 16 charitable trusts, all of whom want to remain anonymous. The largest single donation so far is £3 million over three years to fund tutoring.

Stephen Morales, the chief executive of the Institute of School Business Leadership (ISBL), said there was “nothing wrong” with fundraising. But schools based in the south of England and London were advantaged, and bigger trusts raising cash could “create a level of privilege”.

But Natalie Perera, the chief executive of the Education Policy Institute, said this was not a “new inequality”.

Ark Schools uses professional fundraisers employed by its sponsor charity, Ark.

Last year they raised £8 million for the Ark School Coronavirus Appeal.

Sir Dan’s top tips

1. Identify a specific problem that can be solved through funding
2. Quantify realistically how much it would cost (you’re often dealing with businesspeople with business minds)
3. Work out how you would prove the problem has been dealt with, and set key performance indicators
4. Get pitching – even if it’s just a phone call
5. Don’t worry if you’re starting with small donations: they often grow over time

NEWS

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Schools can afford energy rises, says DfE

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Soaring energy bills will have a "relatively small impact" on a school's budget, the Department for Education has said.

The government has told leaders to shoulder "cost pressures" from recent rises in core school funding.

An investigation by *Schools Week* last year showed many budgeting for a 50 per cent rise in electricity and gas costs.

For some schools, this is starting to bite as fixed-term contracts come to an end.

Stuart Guest, head of Colebourne Primary School in Birmingham, said his school's energy bills would rise by £56,000 next year, taking the total bill to £121,000.

The school took out a one-year contract this month in the hope prices would eventually drop.

Last week, chancellor Rishi Sunak announced a support plan of £350 per household. Energy regulator Ofgem predicts bills in some households would rise by £693 a year from April.

A Department for Education spokesperson said it recognised schools might face cost pressures in the coming months, "particularly where energy prices have increased".

"But even while costs are rising, inflation in this area would have a relatively small impact on a school's budget overall."

Energy costs made up just 1.4 per cent of academy trust spend in 2019-20 and 1.3 per cent in maintained schools.

The spokesperson added core schools funding would increase by £4 billion in 2022-23, marking a 5 per cent real terms

per pupil boost. This would help schools "to meet wider cost pressures, including energy prices".

However education secretary Nadhim Zahawi told Sky News he is "making sure we in the department keep our eye on the cost of energy in the education estate", adding they are "monitoring" the situation.

But Guest said he wanted the DfE to "at least talk to schools", as the increased energy costs could equate to several new teaching assistants or a teacher - and could lead to redundancies.

Energy use is also higher as classroom windows are kept open to try to control the spread of Covid.

"We get our daily emails from the DfE, at least acknowledge this is going to be tricky and giving us information about what's coming up," Guest said.

"We are already fighting a tide of Covid and all the extra costs associated with that. We are oozing money because of Covid, this is the nail in the coffin on schools budgets."

Sharan Matharu, a headteacher at Elizabeth Woodville School, in Northampton, told LBC last month its energy bills had gone up by £67,000 to £205,000 a year.

"And that's the contract we signed based on usage previously," she said.

"I'm worried it might be slightly higher because the usage is up due to all the windows and doors being open all the time."

Schools Week has also heard how one school in the north east faced a 33 per cent hike in its bill, despite being on a fixed tariff with a small company.

The head, who wished to remain anonymous, said its contract's terms and conditions



Nadhim Zahawi

gave the energy company the right to raise prices at any time. "There's absolutely nothing we can do."

The DfE said there were a "range of tools" schools could

use to "help them get the best value from their resources, including recommended deals for energy costs and services related to energy".

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5 policies to roll out the MATs

TOM BELGER

@TOM_BELGER

Ministers should move to an all-MAT model with a new super-regulator and schools able to vote to leave trusts, a former government adviser has said.

Sam Freedman, a senior fellow at the Institute for Government, also backed new powers for councils to hold trusts accountable.

Sector leaders backed Freedman's critique of the "inefficient and confusing" dual system of maintained and academy schools, as well as "incoherent" academy regulation. But some warned more radical proposals could be "destructive".

Freedman's report for the institute comes ahead of a white paper due next month that is expected to contain new measures to get more schools into multi-academy trusts. More than half of pupils are now educated at academies.

1. Merge and empower regulators

Regulatory reforms are key ahead of full academisation, Freedman says. Separated academic and financial regulation make "no sense".

He backs folding regional schools commissioners, the Education and Skills Funding Agency and some Ofsted powers into an arms-length regulator of trusts to "reduce duplication and provide clarity".

The new regulator would need greater intervention powers. This would be based on new criteria that also set formal expectations of MATs – including responsibility for school improvement and supporting the wider system.

But Sir Jon Coles, the chief executive of United Learning academy trust, said there was "no need" to redefine trusts' functions. The report also relied "too heavily on regulation as a cure-all".

2. All-MAT system

The Department for Education should move to a "high-capacity" all-MAT system, with ministers setting a "strong expectation"



Sam Freedman



schools join trusts. This should be consensual, followed by a "more formal process" if needed.

Councils should have extra powers to call trusts to public hearings, permitted only when all schools converted.

But Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said the government should not wait for new structures for its all-MAT drive.

Meanwhile, Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, warned against compulsion and "over-focusing on structural reform". MATs were not the only way to collaborate, he said.

David Collins, the head of the standalone Knole Academy in Kent, said forcing failing schools into MATs had created "stigma" around them. But he believed an all-MAT deadline was looming.

3. Hand councils more powers

Freedman said councils were "stuck in a no-man's land", lacking resources for school improvement capacity or alternative roles.

They should control admissions, he said, and set published admission numbers for academies. MATs should have to discuss growth plans with local authorities – who might also need more powers to champion vulnerable

pupils.

Anne West, professor of education at the London School of Economics, said more council admissions powers would be "welcome". The think tank EDSK has previously backed the measure.

But Cruddas said CST had "concerns", adding: "Growth plans are for the regulator."

4. Cash for trust growth

The current £20 million fund for trust expansion is "just not enough" when it is the key driver of school improvement, Freedman said. He called for more funding for both existing and new trusts.

Further recommendations included paying off unwanted school debts and a government-backed "backstop trust" for less viable small rural schools.

Tom Richmond, the director of EDSK, agreed a MAT drive without investment "could end up exacerbating the problems with quality, complexity and inequality the report is trying to solve".

5. Let schools quit MATs

The National Education Union has previously supported allowing schools to vote to leave their trusts. EDSK has made similar recommendations, subject to RSC sign-off.

But these are the first firm proposals for how such a system could work.

MATs should give each school a local governing body made up of its head, a staff member and at least one parent and member of the community.

Freedman said "special voting rights" could create a "more responsive system". The regulator veto could prevent "vexatious" votes.

But Collins questioned whether schools would have the appetite and capacity to leave, as MATs often appointed new heads and centralised functions. "Once you're in, you're stuck."

And Coles warned powers to secede were "simply destructive". Trust decision-making "would be seriously undermined if threats to leave and 'political' agitation were introduced".

NEWS

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Fresh inspection calls after MAT gets three 'inadequates'

TOM BELGER
@TOM_BELGER

A multi-academy trust has received three warning notices in two months over 'inadequate' schools, sparking fresh calls for Ofsted to inspect whole trusts.

The watchdog cannot inspect MATs when several schools receive poor ratings, despite almost a decade of pressure for it to be handed new powers.

Covid has also derailed inspectors' plans for 12 less formal "summary evaluations" of MATs this term, with a spokesperson confirming it will only do "one or two".

Landewednack Community Primary School, Wendron Church of England Primary School and Crowan Primary School were ranked 'inadequate' late last year. All three are in Cornwall.

The Southerly Point Co-operative MAT, which runs the schools, received termination warning notices for the three in December and January.

But warning notices do not always trigger rebrokering, with trusts able to argue to regional school commissioners (RSCs) to keep schools.

Nor do they trigger a formal examination of trusts' affairs as a whole by either Ofsted or RSCs.

Francesca Fraser (pictured), a senior researcher at the think tank Onward, said questions about governance must be asked in such situations.

It was "difficult to see these as isolated incidents" and was "further evidence of the need for Ofsted to have additional powers to inspect trusts, to spot issues in MATs much earlier and ensure proper accountability to parents and children".

Wendron's notice claimed trustees did not know the school well enough, Landewednack's said monitoring and accountability systems were "flawed", and Crowan's highlighted "weak

external challenge".

The 19-school Southerly Point opened with 15 schools from scratch in June 2017. Another four joined in September 2018.

A trust spokesperson said external expertise would support school improvement and leadership. A new chair and other trustees had been appointed.

"We are having positive discussions with the RSC about these schools so they provide the best possible education for their pupils."

A DfE spokesperson said Southerly Point had been asked to set out improvement plans and assisted to bring in help.

"We are working closely with the trust on next steps to make sure rapid and sustained improvement is made."

Meanwhile, ministers have resisted pressure from Ofsted for MAT inspection powers.

The education select committee demanded reform in 2013. Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector, warned in 2019 that recent academy failures showed how Ofsted's inability to inspect trusts presented "very real risks".

Jonathan Gullis, the Conservative MP for Stoke-on-Trent North, also began trying to push a reform bill through parliament last September, calling the issue a "loophole" that risked leaving trusts "unaccountable".

An Ofsted spokesperson said: "We would still like there to be more accountability for the decisions taken at MAT level, including around the necessary interventions when there are failures."

Ofsted "summary evaluations" of MATs were introduced in 2018. But they are only done with trust consent, offer no gradings, do not cover every trust and do not target those causing concern.

Sam Freedman, a former government adviser, said assessing trust capacity was "very different from checking the quality of a school".



Eight become nine as DfE shakes up commissioner regions

TOM BELGER
@TOM_BELGER

EXCLUSIVE

Academies in six of eight regions could have a new regional schools commissioner (RSC) after the Department for Education confirmed a shake-up of the areas they cover.

London will now get its own RSC, with the eight current regions becoming nine so they align with those more frequently used by government.

As well as the three RSC regions including parts of London, another three regions in the north will be affected.

The North, Lancashire and West Yorkshire, and East Midlands and Humber RSC regions will become the North East, North West, and Yorkshire and the Humber.

The changes are part of a wider internal overhaul, dubbed "Future DfE", that will strip the Education and Skills Funding Agency of its post-16 policy remit.

Documents say the shake-up will provide a "clear sense of purpose" and "renewed organisational culture".

A DfE spokesperson said: "These changes reorganise us to be a department that operates better locally by being aligned to the nine regions used elsewhere in government."

It will also mean the department is "organised in a way that is clear and makes sense to stakeholders" and "help us deliver the department's priorities on skills, schools and families".

Schools Week revealed last month the government's plans to redraw RSC boundaries had left recent advisory board elections in limbo.

A total of 164 candidates stood for election for 32 places on RSC boards across England.

The department had no further update on the solution, which in a worst-case scenario could see elections having to be re-run.

Confirmation of the changes comes ahead of a review of the ESFA's operations, due next week, and the schools white paper, due next month.

NEWS

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Harris looks set to take over troubled free school

TOM BELGER

@TOM_BELGER

EXCLUSIVE

The Harris Federation is set to take over the troubled East London Science School (ELSS), despite calls for a more local trust to take the reins, *Schools Week* understands.

Both the multi-academy trust and free school are well-known for high-profile political connections. Conservative donor Lord Harris founded England's sixth largest trust, while trustees at the specialist science school's have included chancellor Rishi Sunak and Adam Atashzai, a former adviser to David Cameron.

The school, once praised by ministers, was placed in special measures late last year. Its founding principal, David Perks, also quit, a year after strict controls were placed on its "weak" finances.

Regional schools commissioners (RSCs) typically force struggling academies to join other trusts.

Several sources told *Schools Week* the local RSC plans to hand ELSS to Harris, although the school and government said this had not been confirmed.



Sarah Ruiz, the cabinet member for education in Labour-controlled Newham, said: "We'll be writing to the RSC to express our disappointment.

"The best thing would be for the school to join a local, community MAT. There's a huge amount of work to be done. I can't believe Harris will have the same level of understanding."

She feared Harris' approach would be too "centralised".

Harris, which operates across London, did not respond to request for comment.

An ELSS spokesperson said it was awaiting the RSC's next steps. "The process of determining the organisation we will be working with in future is ongoing."

The school had "worked tirelessly" to improve

financially and expected to balance its books "in the very near future".

New accounts show no free reserves and a £26,000 unrestricted fund deficit. It had made "significant savings" in the hope of lifting the government's financial notice, limiting overhead costs to "essential items", the spokesperson said.

Accounts also show "failure to apply regularity, propriety and value for money".

They acknowledge instances of unauthorised debit card spending, breached procedures in one large purchase, and failure to disclose some interests and related-party dealings.

A government investigation last year rapped the school a £1,600 drone it bought to market photos. Individuals linked to Perks were also "improperly" appointed.

A Department for Education spokesperson said it was working with ELSS to "secure the necessary improvements" in the interests of pupils and community.

"This may involve transferring the school to a new trust with the capacity to drive and sustain the necessary changes, though no decision has yet been made."

It is understood any transfer remains subject to RSC advisory board sign-off.

EXCLUSIVE

TOM BELGER | @TOM_BELGER

Education director leaves E-ACT as CEO remains suspended

An award-winning senior leader has left one of the country's largest trusts as uncertainty continues over the suspension of its chief executive.

Fuzel Choudhury has left as national director of education of E-ACT after less than two years in post.

Colleagues had been told last month he would be "absent from work for the foreseeable future".

Previously head of Rockwood Academy, the school at the centre of the "Trojan horse" scandal, Choudhury moved to E-ACT's Heartlands Academy in Birmingham in 2017. It won two awards a year later.

Choudhury rose rapidly through the ranks, becoming regional education director in June 2019, director of secondary in October 2019 and

then national director in July 2020.

A spokesperson said Choudhury wanted "a new challenge".

In November, *Schools Week* revealed that Jane Millward, the trust's chief executive, had been suspended. The trust said this week she "remains away from work".

Tom Campbell, the chief education officer at Greenwood Academies Trust, is currently acting chief executive.

The trust's website calls suspension a "neutral" and "precautionary" measure to allow investigations or protection of staff or children.

Newly-published accounts show Millward's pay – which has previously faced DfE scrutiny – rose to £198,473 in 2020-21, up from £180,959 a year earlier and £155,832 the year previously.

The trust did not confirm if she still received

her full salary.

Meanwhile, the accounts reveal external advisers have been hired to look into payments made to staff members that cannot "be determined as in line with funding rules".

"The academy trust has also identified a contract that needs further consideration of the procurement processes used to ensure value for money was obtained for E-ACT."

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has been notified about the investigation, with "no formal conclusions" so far.

A spokesperson confirmed the review was ongoing, but said the issues were "not deemed to be material in the context of the financial results reported".

There is no suggestion the departures are linked to the account findings.

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EXPLAINER

Disadvantage gap at GCSE fails to narrow

The government has presided over a “decade of failure” to close the disadvantage gap and improve outcomes for poorer GCSE students, a new study claims.

A report by the Education Policy Institute (EPI), funded by the Nuffield Foundation, found that the lack of progress in narrowing the gap “severely constrains” the government’s “levelling-up” ambitions.

Here are the main findings.

1 PROGRESS ON DISADVANTAGE GAP ‘STALLING’ ...

The gap in GCSE results between students eligible for free school meals at some point over the past six years and their better-off peers was an average of 1.24 grades in 2020.

This compares with a disadvantage gap of 1.26 grades in 2019. But EPI said the gap had changed “little” since 2017, “marking a stalling of progress in reducing educational inequalities”.

2... BUT IT’S WORSE FOR THE POOREST

The gap is even wider for students who are in long-term poverty – those who spend at least 80 per cent of their school lives on free school meals.

They trail behind their better-off peers by 1.6 grades on average at GCSE, a gap that has not improved since 2011, despite government interventions.

More students now fall into this category – 39 per cent of all disadvantaged students were in long-term poverty in 2020, up from 35 per cent in 2017.

3 HUGE REGIONAL VARIATION

The five local authorities with the largest disadvantage gaps in 2020 were Knowsley (1.76 grades), Blackpool (1.69), Salford (1.66), Derby (1.65) and Sheffield (1.61).

Of the 30 areas with the smallest gaps in England, almost all were in London, including Kensington and Chelsea (0.10), Westminster (0.29), Newham (0.33), Tower Hamlets (0.34) and Barnet (0.36).

4 POVERTY PLAYS KEY ROLE

Poverty plays a “decisive role” in these gaps, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that pupils are having poor schooling, the EPI said.

Several areas have more than half of their disadvantaged students in this long-term poverty group, including Kirklees (58 per cent), Sunderland (54 per cent), Halton (53 per cent), Tower Hamlets (53 per cent), Middlesbrough (53 per cent), Knowsley (52 per cent), Kingston-Upon-Hull (52 per cent), and Hartlepool (51 per cent).

5 CENTRE-ASSESSED GRADES DIDN’T WIDEN THE GAP

The EPI said the “relative stability” in the gap in 2020 during a “period of major educational turmoil” is in itself remarkable” and suggested fears about widespread bias in teacher assessments against disadvantaged pupils were “unfounded”.

This was similar to an Ofqual analysis that also found poorer pupils were not systematically disadvantaged.

EPI researchers found “some progress” in closing the gap in 2020 for many minority ethnic groups, including black Caribbean and other black students.

But the gap between SEND students with severe needs and non-SEND students rose from 3.4 grades in 2019 to 3.6 grades in 2020.

6 TARGET CATCH-UP AT MOST AFFECTED

The EPI urged the government to target catch-up interventions at groups most affected by learning loss during the pandemic.

It said grade increases of 2020 should not distract from the “urgent task” of tackling “deep-rooted education inequalities”, with any new levelling-up strategy looking at “social determinants” such as poverty.

“There is little evidence in current government policy of plans to confront these underlying causes.”

A Department for Education spokesperson said the new education investment areas, announced last week, would “target support where education outcomes have been weakest”.

Harmful sexual behaviour: Spotting the signs in children and young people

What is harmful sexual behaviour?
Sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people

under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or abusive towards another child, young person or adult. The term encompasses a broad range of issues, including child-on-child sexual abuse or harassment and online sexual abuse, as well as behaviours that indicate the existence of adult to minor sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation.

Although every child develops an awareness and curiosity about sexual matters at their own pace, there are behaviours that fall outside acceptable and expected exploration, and there are those that can be considered warning signs for wider and more serious issues.

There are lots of variables when it comes to identifying harmful sexual behaviour in children and young people. Context is usually key, and any professional who feels concerned, or has an instinct that the behaviour is more severe or repetitive than it first appears, should be encouraged to seek help and guidance. Behaviour that might be cause for concern in younger children can include:

- The child acting in a sexual way or mimicking sexual activity with other children, toys or objects
- Persistent touching or attention to intimate areas (their own, and others) in public settings
- Using sexually explicit language

For older children (aged 10 – 18 years old), harmful sexual behaviour can present differently. It all depends on the physical and emotional maturity of the child, their personal journey with sexual activity and the context the behaviours occur in. Education professionals who work with older children and young people are increasingly aware of the prevalence of harmful sexual behaviour and have reported witnessing and hearing of behaviours such as:

- Possession and sharing of self-generated sexual imagery and non-consensual child sexual abuse material
- Non-consensual sexual contact
- Sexualised and homophobic language used frequently amongst peers.

In 2021, to better understand and tackle concerns of sexual abuse in schools and colleges, [Ofsted conducted a review](#) and interviewed over 900 children and young people along with school leaders, teachers, governors, local safeguarding partnerships, parents and other stakeholders in education settings across the country, ranging from primary to secondary schools. The report found harmful sexual behaviour in children to be an extensive issue; revealing a prevalence of child-on-child sexual harassment and abuse so widespread that, for some children, incidents are 'so commonplace that they see no point in reporting them' and 'consider them normal':

- Over two thirds (68 percent) of girls and over a quarter (27 percent) of boys interviewed said that they felt pressured into sexual activity they were uncomfortable with
- Nearly 90 percent of girls and 50 percent of boys reported that they had been sent explicit pictures or videos of things they do not want to see

- 80 percent of girls and over half (55 percent) of boys said that they have received unwanted or inappropriate sexual comments.

In response to the review's findings, [SWGfL](#) and the [Marie Collins Foundation](#) launched the [Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service](#), to provide advice to professionals across England, who encounter, or have concerns about harmful sexual behaviour among the children and young people they work with. The Service, funded by the Home Office and developed in collaboration with the Department for Education, is hosted by SWGfL, with support from the Marie Collins Foundation is available **Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm on 0344 225 0623 or hsbsupport@swgfl.org.uk**.

For professionals who are concerned, advice from the [Harmful Sexual Support Service](#) is not to wait for 'proof' of harmful sexual behaviour. Although it is a particularly sensitive topic, advice is available to help tackle incidents and behaviours early, which will lead to better outcomes than waiting for the behaviours to increase in severity. Ultimately, action and intervention can lead to the prevention of abuse.



EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Mental health crisis: no more sticking plasters

Enough is enough. We have reached the very brink. Another academic year cannot be allowed to pass in which schools are frontline health workers, and parents and children's lives are destroyed.

Our investigation has uncovered harrowing stories of families in meltdown, teachers in despair and a mental health system well past its limits.

As well as an irreparable emotional and financial toll, it is fuelling a widespread breakdown of trust between many parents and staff, causing even more suffering for extremely vulnerable children.

The 2017 green paper on mental health may have been a step in the right direction, but it's far from enough. Extra funding during Covid is welcome, but the problems have only been exacerbated.

Experts are clear a complete rethink is needed.

Much is riding on the much-delayed SEND review. It has to provide answers for the schools equation.

But problems still need solving on the health front. Do we need school psychiatrists? Why can't we get mental health support teams for all schools?

There must be no more sticking plasters.

'Elite' sixth forms: where's the evidence?

As is so often the case, we have been provided with very little detail about the government's big plans – this one to “level-up” the country.

Ministers want “elite” sixth forms. But they won't say what they mean by elite. They lionise existing highly-selective institutions, but cannot dictate the admissions arrangements of free schools.

What we have is another example of the government setting out vague principles and the sector having to follow its lead.

But with vague pledges come vague implications. And new research today suggests we could be simply creating more of the same problems caused by grammar schools – just at age 16 instead.

Nadhim Zahawi has said he's an “evidence-led” education secretary. But what evidence do we have these institutions work?

And if they are successful, at what cost to other schools? The evidence we report this week isn't promising.

To make such bold promises, the least you would expect is some sort of assessment to back them up.

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Opinion

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JO HUTCHINSON

Director for social mobility
and vulnerable learners,
Education Policy Institute

Primary targets make levelling up mission: improbable

Dizzily ambitious targets backed only by business-as-usual solutions reveal the 'levelling up' proposals as hollow and evasive, writes Jo Hutchinson

It has been a long wait to find out what the government really means by 'levelling up'. With the pandemic capturing everyone's urgent attention since shortly after the 2019 election, getting down to the business of fulfilling manifestos has been left in limbo for longer than usual.

We are now finally here with a published 'Levelling Up' strategy, but don't hold your breath; the public will now have to wait even longer for its delivery.

The government has set a deadline of 2030 for "12 bold national levelling up missions", looking beyond the usual election cycle. While a focus on long-term goals is often frustratingly absent from education policy, eight years seems a short time to achieve the dizzying ambition of the mission for 90 per cent of children to achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths by the end of primary.

A revealing exercise is to work out where these target-year children

are now. The 2030 cohort were born just before or at the beginning of the pandemic and have experienced severe disruption to normal home visiting and baby group activity. It's unclear what the impact of missing

“

Mathematically, the ambition is a stretch

these important opportunities for early intervention will be, and we may not find out until they start school. They are now in the year before free nursery entitlements. Other than some marginal funding increases for family hubs, the white paper does not offer any additional support in the early years.

The aim of the policy programme is to cover one-third of all local authorities in England, designating these as Education Investment Areas (EIAs) on the basis of their average key stage 2 and key stage 4 attainment over the three years before the pandemic. Mathematically, an ambition to take national attainment up by an additional quarter of children reaching the expected threshold by focusing mainly on one-third of local areas is a stretch.



But what will the EIAs consist of? The white paper is pretty coy about guarantees but suggests the potential for new free schools. In particular, it promises new regional specialist 16-19 maths schools and a UK National Academy. Beyond these business-as-usual policy proposals, existing schools will be able to apply

for capital funding for rebuilds or repairs in advance of the usual single-year list – a chance to join the queue early for future years.

Schools in the EIAs are also promised support from hub schools, which again looks to be a continuation of existing policy. Previously announced teacher retention payments will also be targeted at the EIAs, along with a renewed push for schools to join multi-academy trusts, focused on those that have been judged 'requires improvement' twice consecutively.

But of the schools in this '2RI' category nationally, a quarter are already sponsored academies. A further quarter are converter academies once deemed strong enough to stand alone. Since the academies programme was expanded from its initial focus

on sponsored academies, its performance has been consistently undifferentiated from that of local authorities, with some strong, some weak, and the majority showing moderate performance. So first off, this commitment only seems to apply to half of the '2RI' schools and, secondly, academisation is not a school improvement silver bullet.

Perhaps most tellingly, the mismatch between an extremely bold national target and a scattergun of business-as-usual commitments ignores the deep-rooted challenges that must be addressed in order to secure radical and sustainable improvement. The unhurried roll-out of school mental health teams in the face of a wave of increased mental health difficulties is critical for secondary schools, and there are also many additional needs to be met in primary schools.

Two in ten primary children are eligible for free school meals, and a growing proportion of them are living in long-term poverty. Two in ten pupils speak English as an additional language, and three in ten have been recorded with special educational needs or disabilities at some point during primary school.

So the levelling up strategy has at last arrived, but it appears hollow and stubbornly evasive of the challenges that have persisted and increased for over a decade.

Opinion

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VIC GODDARD
Co-principal, Passmores Academy,
Harlow, Essex

What a surprise: teachers are in the firing line again

Simple solutions to this summer's exams were available, writes Vic Goddard. Instead schools are left with complex and confused mitigations that could compound Covid's unequal effects

February 7, 2013 is the day Mississippi became the last US state to officially abolish slavery. (Yes you read that right!) It's also the anniversary of the 1940 release of Walt Disney's *Pinocchio*. This year, most secondary leaders marked the date as the LATEST day they would learn about modifications to this summer's exams.

LATEST. That is what we were promised. It didn't take long to realise that, apart from the odd exception, it meant "on this date" and not "by this date" – a clever use of words to avoid any noses lengthening. The rest of this piece could bemoan why it has taken six months of a ten-month window to release this information but, well, there's no time for that now.

The scene at Passmores was probably typical of lots of schools; heads of departments frantically checking exam board websites for what is and is not going to be

examined. I could see down each teaching wing, and I could tell when information was in: a sudden flurry at the photocopier, lots of head scratching, pages turning, slightly manic conversations. Body language was enough to tell immediate responses.

Science seem happy... Oh! Maybe not. The biology lead looks relieved, but the head of chemistry looks like their rabbit died.

MFL seem a bit confused. What's happening? They're looking across

“A simple restructure of exams would have been ample

the exam boards at each of the languages. Are there... differences?

At least the maths team seems happy with the topics that aren't coming up. What's that? There's a section that says what? The topics may still appear?

You get the idea.

Having exams that people deem to be fair was always going to be challenging, and I don't want to debate the rights and wrongs of holding them this year. The decision has been made.

However, it is nonsensical that the

same subjects from different boards have made significantly different decisions. The defence from Ofqual is that any discrepancies will be rectified with different grade boundaries. But the reality is that our exam boards are profit-making businesses that want to come out of this with their reputations and profits enhanced - the regulator will have its work cut out.

It is also unclear why this information wasn't available earlier, especially when I know

that, for some subjects if not all, these decisions were taken in the summer and have been kept back until now. The rationale seems to have been to prevent schools from narrowing the curriculum too early and to discourage exam cramming. So, instead, those who can afford to spend a lot of money in a short space of time can use the information to access additional tutoring at home. And that is fairer?

Worse, allowing individual exam boards to make decisions for subjects in isolation from

their competitors – and evidently from each other within their organisations – is bound to compound the already unequal experiences young people have had through Covid. I would have preferred that no parts of the syllabus were removed. A simple restructure of exams to allow students more question choice would have been ample.

Instead, the exam board and subject lottery means teachers will once again be in the firing line for decisions that they had no input into this summer. The pattern of late decisions and education having to get on with it continues. In an *Animal Farm*-style rewrite, the oft-repeated dictum from Spider-Man's Uncle Ben that “with great power comes great responsibility” seems to have become “with our great power comes your great responsibility”.

February 7 is also the anniversary of the bonfire of the vanities. Ironically, we appear to have gone the other way and done everything we could to protect our system's vanities.

There was an opportunity to be imaginative and innovative. Instead we have another hodgepodge. And all we can do, Jiminy Cricket-like, is grin and guide our students through it.



Opinion

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



JAMES
HANDSCOMBE

Principal, Harris Westminster
Sixth Form

Elite sixth forms? Let's focus on the really big problems

First let's worry about funding sixth forms properly, and then about all the more pressing problems than what the top 3 per cent need, writes James Handscombe

A teenager sits on a train looking out of the window as the fields of the Midlands whizz by, struggling to concentrate on his book. Train travel isn't part of his daily routine, and in a suitcase just out of sight there's an unfamiliar and expensive suit. He's off to Oxford or Cambridge, excited, nervous, worried about fitting in with those who use trains all the time, wear suits and go to the same schools in London or other Oxbridge hotspots. Those who are already part of the club.

It's important that such teenagers exist, and it's important that they are supported – that barriers between them and competitive universities and careers are knocked down. It's something I think about a lot and it's right that there should be people like me working on it. However, I don't think it deserves to be everybody's main concern. It's certainly not the biggest challenge of sixth-form education, and it should not be the

focus of government and media attention for 'levelling up'. It's not even the focus of this article.

This article is about something more important: the challenges facing the post-16 education of all young people, not just the top three per cent's access to academic nerdery.

The simple, unavoidable truth about sixth-form education is that it's underfunded. Any serious plan to improve it has to fix this. In schools, a full year's teaching is 1,265

“Sixth forms are underfunded. Any serious plan has to fix this

hours, so why is a full-time sixth-form education funded at half that? We don't want to begrudge every farthing above current levels, so let's start with an assumption of 1,265, fund it properly and see where we get to. Perhaps we won't need it all. Then we can make the Treasury happy by giving some back.

The trouble with that easy solution is that we have a responsibility to spend public money effectively and we don't want to pay schools to provide lessons for students who aren't there or don't learn anything.



The ones who are keen to work and do well academically are easy to provide for; the ones who do less well academically but are happy to sit, listen and take notes are also completely manageable within our notional, well-funded framework. The ones who know what job they want and are prepared to work hard at it but don't want the oppression of school will be brilliant on an

And our current idiom is often close to the worst possible caricature of treating them like adults. We allow them to choose to behave like children, when we should be treating them like children and teaching them to become adults.

Creating a curriculum that engages young people who have had enough of school; finding a way to teach the employability skills of hard work, punctuality and reliability; working out what really good vocational education looks like; enabling those with learning difficulties, or disabilities, or a history of exclusion or lawbreaking to access education: these are the difficult challenges that need attention.

I'm afraid that I don't have all the answers; I'm not sure anyone does yet. What I can say is that if we want to help teenagers like the one on the train at the start of the article, then we don't need to create dozens of new 'elite sixth forms' across the country's 'cold spots'. Just fund 900 hours a year of taught lessons, let people like me get on with the things we're doing and spend the remainder of the 1,265-hour budget on the really difficult problems.

Opinion

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



THOMAS MARTELL

Biology teacher and director,
NELT Institute

Research ethics need a new responsibility to teachers

Researchers' lack of ethical responsibility to teachers wastes effort and harms pupils and this needs to change, writes Thomas Martell. So what are we waiting for?

A recent attempt by researchers to reconcile the reading wars has in fact only reignited them. Claims and counterclaims of the most evidence-informed way to teach reading abound, yet teachers are no clearer about how best to help all children learn to read. How did we get here? And what can we do to fix it?

The British Educational Research Association's (BERA) widely used ethical guidance frames ethics as researchers' responsibilities to stakeholders, including participants, funders and other researchers. Their core principle is to do no harm to the former, and this focus is partly due to infamous cases of abuse in human research, such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study between the 1930s and 1970s that deliberately left hundreds of black men untreated so that researchers could study the disease, despite effective treatments being widely available for decades.

In response, research

organisations set up ethical safeguards, including better oversight and training. The legacy is an ethical paradigm that focuses

“ Why not treat this like false advertising?

mainly on the people directly affected by research. But what about the far greater number of people who are indirectly affected by findings?

The failure to acknowledge this indirect impact occurs at every stage of the research process, and in his superb book, *Science Fictions*, Stuart Ritchie categorises four resulting types of malpractice: fraud, bias, negligence and hype. These exist on a continuum, with fraud rightly considered outrageous, but none is victimless.

Thankfully, as Elisabeth Bik has shown, fraud is rare. (Though her work highlights that it's often hard to spot when it does happen.) Bias, negligence and hype, however, are more tolerated. And the fact is that they have the same effect: findings are false, which misleads research users, contributes to

mistrust of science and, in the case of educational research, ultimately harms pupils. As an extreme analogy, we might think of fraud as murder, and bias, negligence and hype as causing death by dangerous driving. Drink drivers do not intend to harm anyone, but their victims don't know the difference.

Growth mindset provides a salutary example. Professor Carol Dweck sensationalised her work, which we now know wasted the efforts of teachers and other researchers worldwide. The latter have tried and failed to replicate the large effects originally reported (including a high-quality EEF-

funded trial) and the latest review hints at only a very small positive benefit. Some have also expressed concerns that Dweck's use of statistics “finds success no matter what”.

Today, Dweck charges over \$20,000 to give a lecture. Her books have sold over a million copies. She is an esteemed professor at an elite university and she won the inaugural Yidan Prize of \$4 million. But what about the schools that followed Dweck's advice, often using their pupil premium funding to chase rainbows?

Over time, attitudes to drink driving have profoundly changed. We need a similar change in attitude to bias, negligence and hype in research. This should start by giving researchers a clearer ethical responsibility towards research users, including teachers and



policymakers.

BERA is currently recruiting a panel to advise on the fifth update to their ethical guidelines. This is an opportunity to re-balance our ethical thinking and get a better return on the millions we spend annually on education research.

The second step is re-shaping incentive structures. Currently, there are no consequences for polluting the research literature with findings that are unlikely to be true. In fact, it is arguably encouraged by the current ‘publish or perish’ context of academic career-building. Dweck has been gracious when challenged, but why do we research users accept being treated so badly? Why not treat this like false advertising, or stringent product recall regulations?

We should reward researchers for focusing more on relevant questions, conducting their work to the highest standards, communicating it responsibly and verifying the work of others. This would unlock the potential of research evidence for teachers and ultimately improve the life chances of children.

Who knows? It might even reconcile parties before any wars are ignited!

A new ethical responsibility – reinforced by tasty carrots, and pointy sticks – is needed.

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Reviews

BOOK
REVIEW

Let That Be A Lesson

Author: Ryan Wilson

Publisher: Chatto & Windus

Reviewer: Emma Williams, teacher of Latin, Woking High School

A pleasant and heartfelt account of one man's brief journey into and out of education, *Let That Be a Lesson* left me feeling sad that our profession is failing to hang on to teachers like Wilson. By his own account, he was frantic to enter the profession from childhood, yet he rocketed through the ranks and out the other side in a frenzied haze of marking and accountability.

From teachers behaving badly to students' frankly mind-boggling misconceptions, Wilson's memoir is unquestionably funny. In fact, it's worth reading just for his hilarious anecdote about inadvertently cupping the headteacher's wife's breast. But while that's a pretty unique situation to end up in (I assume), there is much that will be familiar to anyone who has worked in their local comprehensive. From inadequate training through to achieving local celebrity status, Wilson's observational humour takes in the gold bullion-equivalent value of glue-sticks, agonising 'wellbeing' sessions, speed dating-style parents' evenings, wasps in the classroom and a kid making you an offer you (almost) can't refuse of some knock-off DVDs.

Yet for all that there is personal pain in Wilson's journey. The loss of a much-respected colleague and very close friend to cancer clearly had a profound effect on his feelings about the job, and perhaps his conviction that life is too short to spend it strapped to a desk laden with exercise books.

Wilson also charts his own personal coming-out story. But that comes

through as something of a gift in terms of his experience in education. He explains how he found inspiration in the openness of some of the youngsters he met and how this gave him the confidence to embrace his own sexuality.

Wilson does not attribute any of his growing disenchantment with the profession to the students; yet he does catalogue plenty of poor behaviour – what he refers to as "fights, bullying and general thuggery". In my opinion, that our system somehow persuades someone like Wilson that putting up with this as an inevitable part of the job is an indictment. His positivity about young people is laudable, but would we still count him in our ranks if he'd been trained – and supported – to take a different approach?

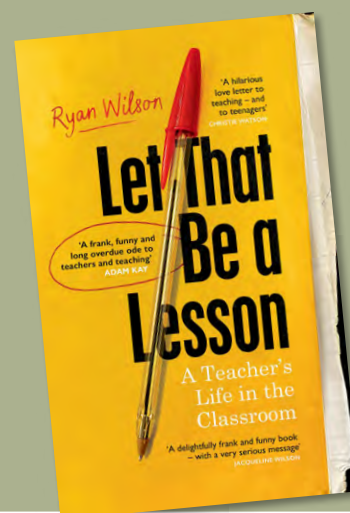
Wilson's journey is also a salutary lesson about early promotion. He seems at every point in his career to have been put under too much pressure, and not simply from excessive workload or accountability. During his first weeks in training, he was left unsupervised with difficult classes; he was asked to teach texts he hadn't had time to read, let alone study; just five years later, he was in charge of a department of 18 people in an unfamiliar setting as head of English in an inner-city school. Beyond that lay senior leadership. Each moment in his career left me with the feeling that in the long-term this was never going to work.

Although the book reads like a series of anecdotes, divided into chapters with headings rather than numbers, there is a story arc here, and it is Wilson's own alarmingly rapid trajectory from

idealistic newbie to jaded senior leader. He explores some frankly corrosive thinking, culminating in a thoroughly depressing conversation with another senior leader who agreed that the school should hold a minute's silence for the victims of a terrorist attack on the grounds that "Ofsted like that kind of thing".

Wilson's anger is palpable. And to an extent it's rightly political, too. But ultimately the politicisation of his message is something of a disappointment. His stance that 'The Two Michaels', Gove and Wilshaw, have wreaked untold havoc upon our education system is simplistic to the point of naivety. It dates the book, and left me feeling somewhat dejected. The notion that those dastardly villains, the Tories, were behind it all along feels like a Scooby Doo-level analysis for what is otherwise a poignant and very personal account.

Surely a more useful lesson could have been drawn – for us and for Wilson alike.



Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is Ruby Bhatti, national leader of governance, Yorkshire and the Humber

@Ruby_Bhatti_OBE

Talking our school into existence **@MrNickHart**

In this blog, Nick Hart explores the importance and the impact on leaders – and their people – of having the ‘right’ conversations. And with references to the work of Chris Mowles, Peps Mccrea and Daniel Coyle, there is a great deal here that leaders and governors can learn.

I’m a chair and trustee, and Hart’s piece really resonated with me. Good conversations, however short or infrequent, can take a whole team with you and support building a positive culture of trust. But more than that, good conversations bring out passion, lead to personal and professional development and raise everyone’s standards and expectations.

How many hours MUST teachers work to be excellent?

@TeacherTapp

The data presented here juxtaposes teachers’ thoughts on workload against the actual hours they report to be working. The post notes that only 39 per cent of primary teachers think it’s possible to provide quality education while working under 45 hours per week. In secondaries, it was 49

TOP BLOGS of the week

per cent – still less than half! Meanwhile, when asked how many hours they taught last week, 41 per cent across both phases said they worked over 50 hours.

As a chair of governors, I regularly raise questions about teachers’ workload and this has caused me to ask myself a few, too. Do teachers really believe it is possible to reduce workload? Are our leadership conversations supported by the reality on the ground? And how do we get away from this being another accountability question and really make it about wellbeing?

The Clerk’s Elbow: A Sense of Belonging

@thesarkyclerk

This is very insightful blog highlighting the need to support new clerks, especially in a system changed by the pandemic. The lack of face-to-face meetings, for example, makes it harder to ensure board members are properly welcomed. The post highlights ways we chairs can do that for our clerks and raises important points for chairs and clerks alike to consider.

This is a post that has made me reflect deeply on my responsibility as chair – not just about the practical aspect of ensuring clerks feel part of the discussions, but also about the wellbeing aspect of what can be a lonely job. Both are made more difficult by virtual meetings which many of us have quickly learned to take for granted as a new and welcome normal.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children: our role, their way

@edpsyuk

Here, former teacher Husna Kasmani shares some of her reflections on supporting inclusion and promoting equal opportunities for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people in our schools. She starts by identifying the types of support they need (from parental contact and involvement to overcoming language barriers and cultural norms) and then moves on to more systemic concerns.

The post highlights the need for a joined-up approach with other professionals and the importance of listening to what the children and young people themselves say they need. And it’s hard not to share her concern about the lack of training provided for schools supporting these young people, many of whom are experiencing significant social, emotional and mental health needs.

Kasmani’s insights into the challenges and barriers and her summary of suggestions at least help to rectify some of that. An important reminder of our moral duty and a useful post for colleagues trying to find their way to improving outcomes for these children.

What is the UK education climate like for learners with disabilities?

@DSAInfo

Based on attendance and academic achievement of 15-year-olds, the UK ranks 13th in the world for reading, writing, mathematics and science. But at what cost? Here, inclusive education officer Chris Barnes takes a highly critical look at whether the school system is working for the one to 1.3 million UK children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Barnes believes neurodiverse learners are being failed by a system overly focused on standardised assessments – making classroom inclusion very difficult. With suggestions as to what can be done to improve the situation, this blog’s analysis is a stark reminder of how important inclusion is and an urgent call to revisit our principles.

Research



Teacher Tapp will review a research development each half term.
Contact @TeacherTapp if you have a topic you'd like them to explore

How is the cost of living crisis affecting teachers and schools?

Iain Ford, senior data and reporting analyst, Teacher Tapp

With rising food costs coming amid a surge in energy prices, the increase in the cost of living will be forcing many to tighten their belts even further. It comes after 14 years during which the IfS says early-career teacher pay (M1-M6) has effectively fallen by between four and five per cent, while more experienced teachers have seen a real-terms pay cut of eight per cent.

So what does that mean for teachers, and what could it mean for schools? To create a picture of the impact of rising prices on the profession, Teacher Tapp asked over 7,500 teachers about the factors that are a drain on their incomes.

First and foremost, in spite of the IfS figures, the average teacher actually feels like they currently live reasonably comfortably, with 86 per cent saying they have enough money to live on and to save throughout the year. In fact, the pandemic appears to have slightly helped teachers' funds, as this represents a small increase from the last time we asked, in January 2020.

However, If we've learnt anything from the mutant algorithm fiasco it is that it would be remiss just to look at averages. That would ignore the 13 per cent who say they are just scraping by and one per cent who report that their incomes fall well short of what they need. If this holds true across the population, almost 150,000 teachers are scraping by!

As discussed in these pages recently, many teachers have to resort to driving in order to get to school each day. This reliance on the car drives up costs, particularly for those in more rural regions, and it's made worse by rising fuel prices. In Yorkshire and the north-



east, 38 per cent of teachers report spending over £200 per month on travelling to school and back alone.

London's teachers report the lowest travel costs, with eight per cent not spending a penny on their commute, but their average is still over £100 per month. And what Londoners save in travel expenses, they more than make up for in mortgage or rent payments. Almost one-third of teachers in London spend over £1,000 per month on these, compared to a national average of around £650 per month.

Considering these two expenses alone, it's no surprise that a significant percentage of teachers are living uncomfortably. And we haven't even mentioned the 22 per cent of teachers who pay for childcare costs, or the monthly cost of bills. Living in a high-rent, high-travel area is enough to cause a huge strain on take-home pay.

Teachers who are struggling are making sacrifices elsewhere, and many are opting to make themselves potentially poorer later in order to make ends meet now. As many as ten per cent say they have at some point in their career opted out of the Teachers' Pensions scheme because they couldn't afford it, and those who say

they are scraping by are more likely to opt out of it.

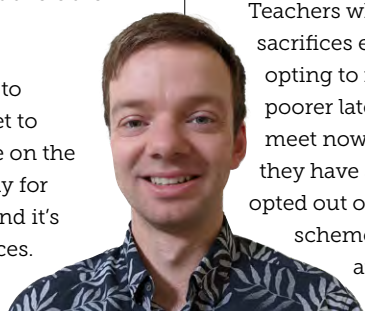
Some teachers may go even further to make ends meet as prices increase. Ten per cent already report earning some extra money through tutoring. And with classroom teachers routinely working on average around 45 hours per week and already reporting high levels of anxiety, adding on extra responsibilities can only be interpreted as a measure of last resort.

This picture is only a snapshot and it seems inevitable that the percentage of teachers who say they are scraping by or not earning enough (an already quite shocking 14 per cent) will increase over the coming weeks and months.

And the impact is unlikely to be just on them. Those same IfS figures I mentioned earlier drew a direct link between declines in teacher pay and worsening recruitment and retention.

With the rest of the economy recovering, and wages across the piece now higher than before the financial crisis, it's no surprise that the NFER's Jack Worth is reporting that this week's DfE figures show recruitment down, "and not on a healthy trajectory".

The cost of living crisis may put a real squeeze on already struggling schools too.



Week in

Westminster

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

FRIDAY:

The Invicta Academy last year had to drop its description of top Conservative MPs as "sponsors" of its online lessons. Co-founder Stephen James had given a rather controversial interview in a national newspaper saying some state schools hadn't provided enough lessons during the first Covid lockdown.

One of those supposed "sponsors", education committee chair Robert Halfon, was not happy and wanted the description clarified (they are now called "supporters").

But it looks like Invicta can bring the word sponsor back with its co-founder, Conservative councillor Anna Firth, now a Tory MP after winning the Southend West by-election.

MONDAY:

Jonathan Slater was made to carry the can for the exams fiasco when he was ousted as permanent secretary of the Department for Education.

He took the chance to get his own back at a policy event this week, saying the academies system has given politicians too much power.

Name-checking former schools minister Nick Gibb as "extremely influential", he added: "Whatever you think" of his views there "does seem to be a question in my mind, in this balance between national and local, as to whether it makes sense to give one person quite so much power over what children learn in school". Zing.

TUESDAY:

The Ministry of Truth, we mean the Department for Education, has sent

schools a template newsletter to reassure parents that all is hunky dory in classrooms as Covid continues.

One of the lines is: "We have found that opening windows when classrooms are empty/partially opening windows, rather than opening them fully is sufficient to ensure that all/most of our classrooms are well ventilated when lessons are taking place, helping us to balance good ventilation with keeping classrooms warm".

Erm, that's not what schools are reporting at all – with many saying kids are having to wear coats in class to stay warm!

Mental health and wellbeing was the hot topic at the education select committee today when one of those giving evidence was Mouhssin Ismail, a former City lawyer who now runs Newham Collegiate Sixth Form Centre (NCS).

The centre boasts some of the best results in the country and sends scores of kids to the best universities.

Perhaps one easy way to boost kids' mental health and wellbeing is not to boot them out of school halfway through their A-levels if they don't hit grade targets (which *Schools Week* revealed NCS did in 2017 and 2018 by exploiting a loophole in rules that bans sixth forms attached to schools doing this).

WEDNESDAY:

Since unexpectedly winning the flagship National Tutoring Programme contract last year, Randstad has kept pretty shtum in the press (despite several articles exposing big problems with the scheme).

But now perhaps we know why. NTP senior director Karen Guthrie – breaking the silence on *World at One* – refused to answer ten times about whether schools can swap kids on tutoring sessions. On the eleventh time of asking, she said they can!

Nadhim Zahawi's department is busy telling universities not to cancel free speech on campuses. with an "historic" new bill promising to "help stamp out unlawful silencing".

When he announced the plans last year, his predecessor Gavin Williamson said: "It is a basic human right to be able to express ourselves freely and take part in rigorous debate."

Not, it seems, if you're criticising our dear prime minister.

Zahawi this week berated a school whose pupils had written critical letters during a writing exercise saying Johnson was a "hypocrite who should resign" over partygate.

But free speech is a human right, right? Er, no. Zahawi instead said "no school should be encouraging young people to pin their colours to a political mast".

THURSDAY:

Meanwhile, Zahawi visited Pinewood Studios today for a "behind the scenes" look at a "big blockbuster production", as well as their apprenticeship programme.

But he told Sky News he has "signed an NDA [non-disclosure agreement] so I can't talk about what they're going to show me". Surely the apprenticeship programme can't be that bad?





Department
for Education



School Teachers' Review Body Member - Educationalist (Primary Education)

The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) is an independent body which makes recommendations to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Education on the pay and conditions of school teachers in England.

The STRB assesses evidence from Government and organisations representing schools and the teaching profession, and visits schools and local authorities to develop its understanding of issues facing teachers. In addition to providing recommendations on annual pay awards for teachers and school leaders, the STRB has been asked to report on a variety of matters in recent years, including moving toward a pay structure with higher starting and early career salaries and relatively flatter pay progression and providing additional guidance to schools through advisory pay points.

The STRB also meets schools and local authorities to talk directly to teachers and school leaders and so develop its understanding of the issues they face.

Further information on the STRB is available at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/school-teachers-review-body

The STRB is now seeking to fill a vacancy, and is looking to recruit an educationalist member that demonstrates the following criteria:

- Knowledge of providing effective leadership at a senior level within a maintained primary school or within a multi-academy trust including one or more primary schools.
- A good knowledge and understanding of pay, remuneration, performance management, labour market and reward issues and a strong understanding of the policy, financial and operational constraints that impact on remuneration decisions.
- The ability to analyse and interpret a large amount of complex and sensitive information, providing insight and a working knowledge over the impact of any potential decisions on the workforce.
- An ability to communicate effectively in collective decision making, assessing/debating conflicting opinions across a wide range of perspectives and attitudes to form a coherent set of recommendations.

Appointment

This position will provide an influential and intellectually stimulating challenge for the right individual, who will contribute to the recruitment, retention and motivation of an effective teacher workforce. As a member of the STRB you will bring your own expertise, alongside a high degree of analytical ability, strong communication skills and, ideally, an appreciation of public sector reward issues.

The time commitment for this position is approximately 25 days per year, for which an attendance allowance of £300 per day is payable, no additional fee is paid for any time spent in preparation or travelling.

This is a ministerial appointment and will initially be for up to three years.

The competition opens on 11 February 2022

The closing date for applications is 14 March 2022

For more information about this role and how to apply, please visit the public appointments website at: | [Current Vacancies](http://CurrentVacancies.cabinetoffice.gov.uk) (cabinetoffice.gov.uk) and search 'School Teachers' Review Body'



St Joseph's Catholic
Primary School

Academy Principal (Full-time role)

Grade: L11 (£54,091) to L15 (£59,581)

St Joseph's Primary, Broadstairs is a Catholic primary academy and part of the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership (KCSP), a multi-academy trust (MAT) established by the Archdiocese of Southwark for Catholic education across Kent. KCSP is seeking to appoint an inspirational and dedicated Academy Principal from September 2022 due to the retirement of the current post-holder.

The successful applicant will take the lead role in providing inspirational Catholic education based on our shared Gospel values, and will be seen by pupils, parents and carers, and the wider parish as the academy's pastoral leader. We are therefore seeking to appoint a practicing Catholic to this role.

St Joseph's is a one-form entry primary academy serving the Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Broadstairs. Its most recent denominational inspection in October 2016 judged it as 'Outstanding' and its most recent Ofsted inspection in March 2017 judged the academy to be 'Good' in all areas.

Please visit <https://www.kcsp.org.uk/academy-principal/> to view the full job description and person specification for this role and to download an application form and all of the related documents and information.

Please send your letter of application and completed forms to the school's Executive Principal at: vohalloran@kcsp.org.uk

St Joseph's, Broadstairs and KCSP are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and require all staff, helpers and governance committee members to share this commitment. Offers of employment are subject to an enhanced disclosure and barring service check and a section 128 check.

Closing date: Friday 25 February 2022 at 5pm

Interviews to be held during the week commencing:
Monday 07 March 2022

Start date: 01 September 2022

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, St, Peters Park Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 2BA

www.st-josephs-broadstairs.kent.sch.uk

Rocklands



Manor Hall
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Due to the promotion of our very well- respected Deputy Headteacher we have an exciting opportunity to offer the right candidate. We are looking to appoint a passionate and forward- looking Deputy Headteacher to assist the Headteacher in leading our dedicated and skilled staff and support team from September 2022.

Rocklands School is looking for someone with the:

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- **Ambition** to sustain a rich and varied curriculum which engages and inspires every child
- **Ability** to further develop outstanding educational provision, whilst securing what works well, that results in outstanding outcomes
- **Compassion** to support all members of the school community
- **Character** to exemplify the school's vision and values
- **Willingness** to understand what the team has to offer and get the best from them
- **Inspiration** to take us with them on the journey
- **Insight** into the challenges specific to special educational needs provision
- **Vision** to cultivate collaborative relationships with all stakeholders

We can offer you

- A dedicated and professional body of staff and support workers
- A lovely group of children who love coming to our thriving school
- A supportive community and parental body
- A supportive Local Advisory Board
- Our current Ofsted rating is Good (2014) however the school has undergone a period of growth and innovative improvement since then and the school has aspirations to be outstanding at the next inspection
- The support and resources of being part of a multi academy trust
- A well provisioned school in an attractive location that is financially sound

Please send applications to Phil Clayton:
bursar@rocklands.manorhall.academy

Further information about Rocklands School can be found on our website
www.rocklands.manorhall.academy

Closing date: 1st March at 12 noon

Shortlisting: 3rd March.

Interviews: Week Commencing 7th or 14th March





HEAD OF ESTATES AND ENVIRONMENT

Salary: L7-13 (£49,019 - £56,721) (negotiable for an exceptional candidate)
Pro rata: 37 Hours Per Week, Flexible to meet the needs of the Trust

Required to start as soon as possible

BDAT is a Trust, a family of 17 schools. The 17 schools have close working relationships supporting each other every day, you will become an integral part of the family. This post offers a unique opportunity for an ambitious applicant to join a growing and well-established Trust.

We are seeking to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced person to join our busy team and oversee the buildings and digital estate. The role includes responsibility for Health and Safety and supporting academies in this critical area of our operation. As Head of Estates and Environment you will be leading and supporting a team of academy business managers, site managers and Headteachers on a broad range of building and digital projects to support education environmental improvements which will facilitate improvements in learning.

To learn more about this exciting role and BDAT, or for an informal discussion please contact the office on **01274 909120**. Please return your completed application form via email to: recruitment@bdat-academies.org.

BDAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All staff are subject to an enhanced DBS check which will form a condition of any employment offer.

Closing Date: 12.00pm, 28th February 2022
Interview Date: 10th March 2022
Starting Date: TBC

SEPTEMBER 2022



HEADTEACHER

Salary L31-L35

King Ethelbert School is seeking a dynamic, knowledgeable Headteacher to maintain and build on the excellent progress we have made to date.

We are proud of our "Good" Ofsted rating but continue to be ambitious, forward thinking and keen to develop ways in which we can further improve. Our staff are committed, motivated and eager to work with you on realising a vision for King Ethelbert.

King Ethelbert is a mixed non-selective school of approximately 890 students. In 2013 Coastal Academies Trust was formed which is made up of four Thanet secondary schools and one Primary school. The schools operate independently and have unique characteristics. Good practice is shared, helping to drive forward standards at every level. As part of the CAT you will be joining a supportive network of schools.

The Trust began as a federation between King Ethelbert and Dane Court Grammar in 2009 and still shares a governing body. Officially an 11-16 school, through federation it meant that we were able to

start a Sixth Form. King Ethelbert was the first school in the country to offer the IBCP.

King Ethelbert is one of the most popular non-selective schools in the county and is filled with first choice students and waiting lists for each year group. We have a wide range of abilities studying with us including some students who have passed the Kent Test; such is our reputation.

King Ethelbert School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This position is, therefore, subject to a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service application.

Further information can be found at: www.kingethelbert.com or contact Laura Pease laurapease@kingethelbert.kent.sch.uk to arrange a visit.

King Ethelbert School, Canterbury Road, Birchington Kent CT7 9BL

Closing Date: 23rd February 2022



THE BLACK CURRICULUM

Education Lead LONDON

The Black Curriculum is a social enterprise founded in 2019 by Lavinya Stennett to address the lack of Black British history in the UK Curriculum. We believe that by delivering arts focused Black history programmes, providing teacher training and campaigning through mobilising young people, we can facilitate social change.

Our programmes are for all young people aged 8-16 and aims to equip young people with a sense of identity, and the tools for a diverse landscape. We are working towards changing the national curriculum and building a sense of identity in every young person in the UK.

Key dates:

March 2022 Start date

Please email latest CV and cover letter to:

hr@theblackcurriculum.com with subject line 'Education Lead'

<https://theblackcurriculum.com/vacancy>



Vacancies

Woodbridge Road Academy (WRA) is a new special school which is opening in Ipswich, Suffolk in September 2022.

Typically, our pupils will have complex communication and interaction needs which create significant barriers to learning in a mainstream environment. Many pupils are likely to have Autism Spectrum Disorder and others have a profile with a similar presentation.

Paradigm Trust is looking to appoint the following founding team members:

- **Class teachers**
- **Assistant principal**

This is an amazing opportunity to have a real impact on the new academy and its pupils.

If you have a passion to make a difference, we would love to hear from you.

Director of Primary Education

Grade: L28 – L32 (£81,942 - £90,379) | Full-Time 52 weeks per year

Generous 40 days Annual Leave Entitlement

Location: Trust Central Team Office with travel required to all ELP academies

Reporting to: Chief Executive Officer

Responsible for: Academy Principals and Academy Improvement Roles



Exceed Learning Partnership
• EVERY CHILD • EVERY CHANCE • EVERY DAY •

The Directors of Exceed Learning Partnership are looking to appoint an outstanding strategic leader to develop and articulate the vision, values and ethos of the Trust and to inspire and empower others to share in achieving these. This is a great opportunity for an exceptional individual to join a highly successful and rapidly- expanding Team, taking accountability and responsibility for academy performance and with a commitment to creating optimum educational opportunities for all pupils across the organisation.

The ideal candidate will have:

- A record of outstanding and inspirational strategic leadership
- A strong background in Teaching and Learning
- The drive and commitment to improving the life chances of all pupils across the Trust

The Director of Primary Education will work closely with:

- CEO
- Deputy CEO
- Academy Principals and teaching staff
- Central Trust leadership team
- Directors and Local Governing Bodies
- Local Authority, Department for Education and other educational partners

The Trust will offer:

- A dynamic, driven and supportive team of colleagues across the Trust
- A comprehensive programme of professional learning opportunities
- A commitment to providing the very best possible opportunities for the pupils within our care

For further information including the Recruitment Pack and Application Form please visit the Trust Website

<https://www.exceedlearningpartnership.co.uk/vacancies/> or contact the trust office via admin@exceedlearningpartnership.com or 01709 805175

Informal meetings can be organised with the CEO prior to applying by contacting Janine Tuke (PA to CEO) on pa@exceedlearningpartnership.com or by telephone on: 01709 805175

Closing Date for Applications:
Monday 21st February 2022 at 12.00 noon



Deputy Headteacher

We are seeking to appoint a Deputy Headteacher to work within our federation of three schools and join the Senior Leadership Team. In 2016, Grazebrook, Shacklewell and Woodberry Down Primary Schools formally federated with the New Wave Federation being established. We now have a joint pupil roll of 1600 pupils across three sites and hold Apple Distinguished School Status. We are looking to appoint a Deputy Headteacher who is passionate about teaching and learning and is able to lead our schools to further success.

The key focus for the new Deputy Headteacher will be;

- To work in partnership with the Executive Headteacher and Headteachers in a strategic capacity, to drive the school forward
- To line manage middle leaders, enabling them to lead their own phase groups
- To demonstrate inspirational and outstanding teaching by developing excellent teaching across the schools in line with the National Curriculum and Ofsted Framework
- To ensure the best possible outcomes for all children
- To strengthen and maintain community links

- To lead on the development of assessment across a school, strategically analysing the next steps for the school
- To deputise for the Headteacher in their absence

We have a passion for high standards and want all of our children to achieve their potential and be inspired to go beyond that. The successful candidate will have the challenge of making a substantial contribution to the continued development of our schools. This is an exciting opportunity for the right candidate.

HOW TO APPLY: Application packs are available at <https://education.hackney.gov.uk/jobs>

or from the Federation Business Manager, Ms Alia Choudhry: achoudhry@newwavefederation.co.uk or 0207 254 1415.

Visits to the school are warmly welcomed and encouraged so please contact Ms Choudhry to make an appointment.

Closing date: Wednesday 9th March 2022 at 12pm

Interview date: w/c Monday 14th March 2022



Headteacher

Thomas Fairchild is a community driven school based in the heart of Hoxton. We embarked upon a partnership with New Wave Federation in September 2021. In our school we have a passion for high standards and want all our children to achieve their potential and be inspired to go beyond that. We aim to provide the best possible primary education in a stimulating and creative environment. The school works to develop a love of learning that is inspired by high-quality teaching that develops and builds upon individual strengths and talents. We expect all children in our school to reach age related levels, in line with national expectations, as a minimum and ensure that the barriers to learning are removed so that every pupil reaches their full potential.

The Thomas Fairchild Governing Board are looking to appoint a permanent Headteacher to work with them and the Executive Headteacher to deliver our vision, raise standards for our pupils and ensure Thomas Fairchild Community School is the best it can be.

Prospective candidates will need:

- Experience of leadership in schools in challenging circumstances at a Deputy Headteacher level
- Experience of processes and strategies which support school improvement
- Commitment and enthusiasm and aspirations for achieving successful outcomes for our pupils
- A thorough, in depth understanding of teaching and learning and assessment for learning strategies
- Excellent leadership skills and qualities to develop and motivate staff and engage the wider school community
- Excellent communication skills

HOW TO APPLY: Application packs are available at <https://education.hackney.gov.uk/jobs>

or from the Federation Business Manager, Ms Alia Choudhry: achoudhry@newwavefederation.co.uk or 0207 254 1415.

Visits to the school are warmly welcomed and encouraged so please contact the school office to make an appointment.

Closing date: Wednesday 9th March 2022 at 12pm

Interview date: w/c Monday 21st March 2022

**PRIMARY ASSOCIATE**
HOME BASEDwww.pixl.org.uk**WHO ARE WE?**

PiXL is known for its aim of wanting to improve life chances and outcomes for young people and its focus on equipping school leaders to make that happen. Whether it is a focus on reading, oracy, writing, numeracy, character education or establishing strong cultures, PiXL is committed to providing practical support and strategies to make an impact.

Our company culture is based on integrity, kindness, humility and pursuit of excellence, and those four things are at the heart of what we do and how we behave. The central leadership approaches that we talk about to schools are the ones we also use ourselves.

THE ROLE YOU WOULD PLAY

As a PiXL Primary associate you will provide high-quality support to a designated group of partnership schools, working with school leaders and their teams to implement PiXL strategies and resources to support their identified Wildly Important Goal and school priorities.

In addition, you will support the Regional Leader and the work of the Regional Teams to further strengthen and personalise the offer to our partnership schools.

WHAT YOU WILL BRING

Experience as a senior leader, demonstrating a high-level of skill in communication with the range of stakeholders you will work with.

An ability to work flexibly, creatively and with skills to lead and support associate meetings both face to face and online.

A willingness to 'buy in' to the PiXL principles and work with the wider PiXL Team to be actively involved in further advancement of One PiXL in schools.

A demonstration of interpersonal skills that focus on building positive and effective relationships with evidence of PiXL's Character and Competency Markers of Integrity, Kindness, Humility and the Pursuit of Excellence.

REWARD PACKAGE

- Salary: £46,000 (full time equivalent)
- Annual leave: 32 days annual leave, plus bank holiday days
- Flexible working
- Pension scheme – employer contribution 13%, employee contribution 6.5%
- Life assurance
- Health and Wellbeing initiatives including internal support, employee assistance programme and health cash plan
- Virtual GP service
- Discounted gym membership

If you want to find out further information, or to apply for the role, please email hr@pixl.org.uk.

The closing date to apply is **Monday 28th Feb 2022**.

Role to start September 2022.

**BETTER FUTURE BRIGHTER HOPE**



EFA Mentor

Due to the success of SSAT's Embedding Formative Assessment (EFA) programme with the support of the Education Endowment Foundation and DfE Accelerator Fund, we are looking to expand our EFA mentor team.

This is an exciting opportunity to work with schools across the country and we are offering a range of flexible roles. These roles include:

- Colleagues working within their current school position on a consultant basis for a minimum 6 days per year (4 days working in schools) over two years.
- Contracted work of up to 90 days per year for two years.

Roles have a daily rate of £350 per day, plus travel expenses. Full job description can be found [here](#)

As an EFA Mentor you will work with schools to support in the effective implementation of the programme. Over the course of two-years you will provide initial training, yearly face to face visits and ongoing remote support.

Candidates for this role must have proven experience for leading CPD programmes in schools. We will support you to further develop your expertise in the Embedding Formative Assessment (EFA) programme. If this opportunity sounds exciting, complete the application form.

Key points to consider:

- All EFA Mentors will be required to attend two days of training in March or April 2022.
- Approximately one third of your contracted time will be required in June, July, and September 2022.
- EFA mentors must have the capacity to commit to, and work with schools over a two-year period.
- Visiting schools will require travel across the country and overnight stays.

If you would like to have an informal conversation about these roles, please contact EFA@ssatuk.co.uk

Applications close **Monday 21 February**.

Interviews will commence on **Tuesday 1 March and Tuesday 8 March**.

Initial training dates are on **Wednesday 23 March and Thursday 24 March**.

DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING (PRIMARY)



Duration of Post: Permanent | Probationary period: Six months
Salary: L10 (£52,723) – L20 (£67,364) per annum, depending on experience
Reporting to: The postholder will be line managed by the Director of Primary Education.
Work pattern: The hours of work shall be in accordance with the provisions set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document

BDAT is looking to appoint an inspirational Director of Teaching and Learning. This is both a challenging and exciting leadership role. We are seeking to appoint a strong and proven senior leader who will build on the strengths that have been established across our 17 schools, so that they can continue to improve the educational and pastoral provision for all their students. Our goal is to transform the lives of our students, staff, and community and to inspire each other to continue to develop and improve.

BDAT is a Trust, a family of 17 schools. The 13 Primary schools have close working relationships supporting each other every day, you will become an integral part of the family. You will both lead and support teaching and learning across the schools. This is an exciting opportunity for a talented and forward thinking professional to make a sustained and substantial contribution to the growth and development of the academy and the wider BDAT family. You will supported by, and become, an interictal part of the central team

We hope the enclosed information is helpful and encourages you to apply; we look forward to meeting you.

Closing date: Monday 28th February 2022 at 9am
Interview date: Tuesday 8th March 2022
Start date: 1st September 2022



Classroom Teacher

Salary: Main Pay Scale

Contract: Permanent

Start Date: Summer term (19th April)

Application Deadline: Monday 21st February



We are looking for experienced class teachers to join the New Wave Federation who:

- > Are excellent practitioners with creative and innovative approaches
- > Are committed to the delivery of high quality teaching and learning
- > Inspirational and dedicated to making a difference
- > Possess excellent communication and interpersonal skills

We can offer you schools which:

- > Are well resourced and have high quality curriculum plans and materials
- > Have friendly, dedicated staff with high expectations
- > Have good opportunities for professional development
- > Offer Opportunities to excel in becoming a Subject specialist or Specialist Leader of Education
- > Are Outstanding and hold Apple Distinguished School Status

HOW TO APPLY: Application packs are available at <https://education.hackney.gov.uk/jobs> or from Miss Renee Binns: rbinns@newwavefederation.co.uk or 020 8802 4051.

Visits to the school are warmly welcomed and encouraged so please contact us to make an appointment.



Chilmington Green School
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

Principal Designate/Principal

Location: Chilmington Green School, Ashford, Kent

Closing date: 25th February

Interview dates: 22nd and 23rd March 2022

Start date: September 2022

Salary: Competitive salary and benefits package

Chilmington Green School will be a co-educational, non-selective Secondary school, opening in 2023 as part of United Learning. It will open to a first cohort of 120 Year 7 pupils and grow to become a 6-form entry school with a sixth form of 240 pupils.

We are looking for an exceptional leader to be our principal, someone with the inspiration and commitment to create a vision for our new school and build the community that delivers it. We are looking for a leader who will create a culture of excellence and who shares the Trust's determination to bring out the best in young people. This is a unique opportunity to lead a new school from its opening day to its first set of A level results and beyond.

Find out more and apply <https://unitedlearning.our-careers.co.uk/>



Further information

To arrange an informal discussion about the role and to speak to the school's Regional Director Christine Raeside, please contact Beth Walker on beth.walker@unitedlearning.org.uk.



BRADGATE
Education Partnership

Head Teacher

Permanent 60%

L12 – L18 – £55,336 to £64,142

This is a very exciting time to join our Trust and we can offer a wealth of support and collaborative opportunities.

Whilst the task of leading a school is a challenging one, at Newtown Linford you will not need to do this alone.

Start Date: April 2022

We are seeking an excellent leader to join us at Newtown Linford Primary School. The new Co-Head Teacher will work collaboratively alongside our existing Co-Head and together you will continue to lead the school's current journey towards excellence. There is also the opportunity to lead the school full time for a temporary period to cover maternity leave until December 2022.

This is a very exciting time to join our Trust and we can offer a wealth of support and collaborative opportunities.

To apply for one of the positions and for further information please visit our careers website: www.eteach.com/careers/bepschools and search for the vacancy.



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