

SCHOOLS WEEK

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

Axed:
Beleaguered
Randstad gone
as schools get
tutor cash



SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK | @SCHOOLSWEEK

FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 2022 | EDITION 282

Page 16

Gimmick? The
parent pledge is
sound policy



P23

Let's turn this
green paper
white, urgently



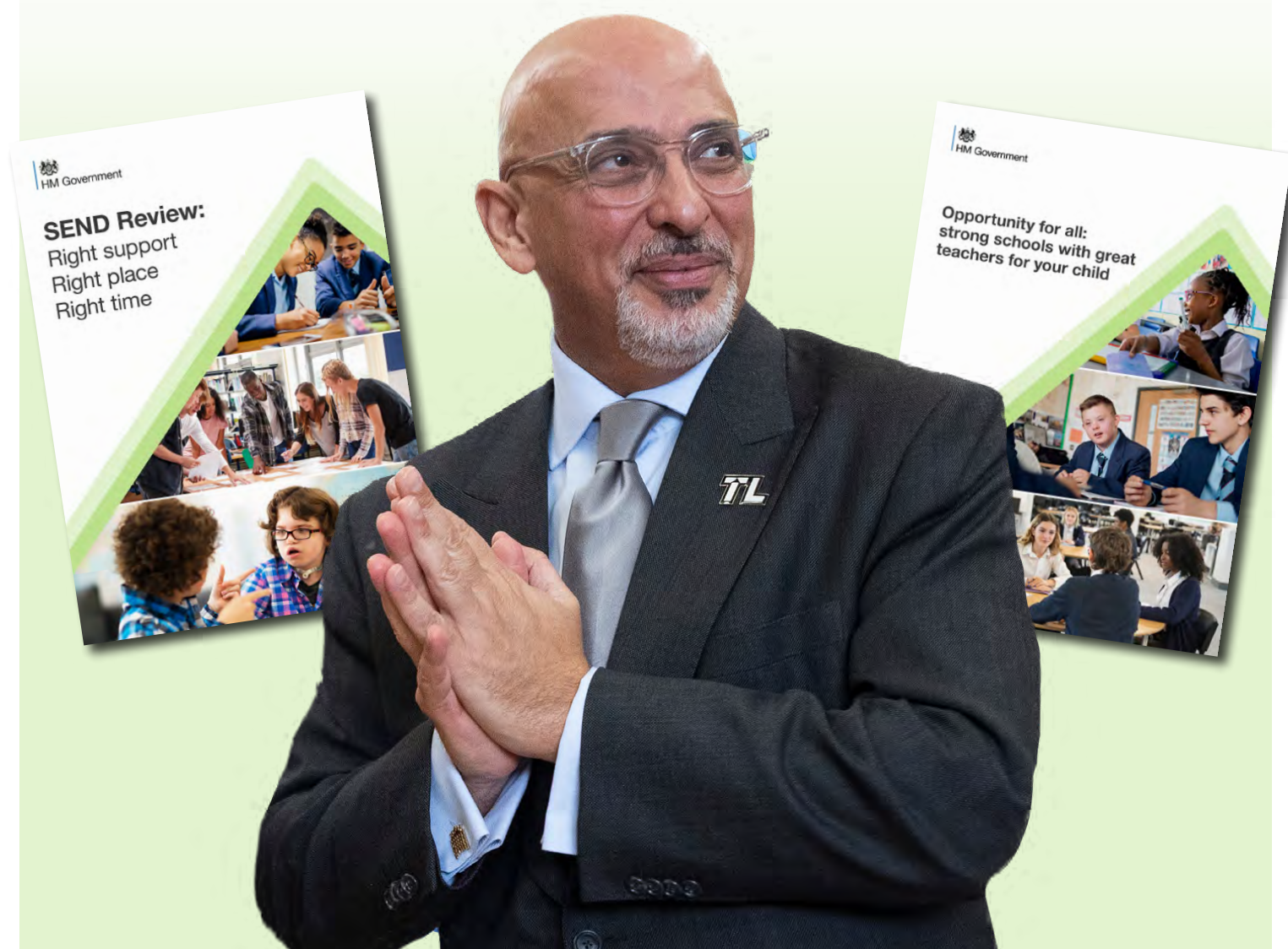
P27

Shameless
misinformation
and few solutions



P24

Zahawi unveils his plans to resurrect Tory education reforms



White and green paper special: pages 4 to 14, and 20 to 28

SCHOOLS WEEK

Meet the news team



John Dickens
EDITOR

@JOHNDICKENSSW
JOHN.DICKENS@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK



JL Dutaut
COMMISSIONING
EDITOR

@DUTAUT
JEAN-LOUISDUTAUT@LSECT.COM



Jess Staufenberg
COMMISSIONING
EDITOR

@STAUFENBERGJ
JESS.STAUFGENBERG@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK



Freddie Whittaker
DEPUTY EDITOR

@FCDWHITTAKER
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK



Samantha Booth
SENIOR REPORTER

@SAMANTHAJBOTH
SAMANTHA.BOOTH@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK



James Carr
SENIOR REPORTER

@JAMESCARR_93
JAMES.CARR@LSECT.COM



Tom Belger
SENIOR REPORTER

@TOM_BELGER
TOM.BELGER@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK



Nicky Phillips
HEAD DESIGNER

@GELVETICA
NICKY.PHILLIPS@FEWEEK.CO.UK



Shane Mann
MANAGING DIRECTOR

@SHANERMANN
SHANE.MANN@LSECT.COM

THE TEAM | Senior designer: Simon Kay | Sales Manager: Bridget Stockdale | Senior Sales Executive: Clare Halliday | Sales Executive Tony Hudson | Operations and Finance Manager: Victoria Boyle | Event Manager: Frances Ogefere Dell | Senior Administrator: Evie Hayes | Office Administrator - Apprentice: Zoe Tuffin

EDU WEEK JOBS



HILL TOP ACADEMY - PRINCIPAL - GRADE L18-L24
(£64,143 - £74,295) SCHOOL TEACHERS PAY AND CONDITIONS

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/1NKO](https://httpslink.com/1nko)



BRADFORD DIOCESAN ACADEMIES TRUST - HEADTEACHER -
L36 - L42 (£99,681 - £115,483)

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/54ZB](https://httpslink.com/54zb)



KERNOW LEARNING - DEPUTY CEO - L27 - L31

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/ZMIX](https://httpslink.com/zmix)



THE DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER ACADEMY TRUST - HEADTEACHER -
BETWEEN L12 AND L21

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/WBTM](https://httpslink.com/wbtm)



READING GIRLS' SCHOOL - ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - INCLUSION
(SENCO) - L12 - L17 (£55,338 - £62,570 PER YEAR)

[HTTPS://HTTPSLINK.COM/EP9T](https://httpslink.com/ep9t)

TO ADVERTISE YOUR VACANCY WITH EDUCATION WEEK JOBS AND
PLEASE CALL 020 81234 778 OR EMAIL ADVERTISING@SCHOOLSWEET.CO.UK

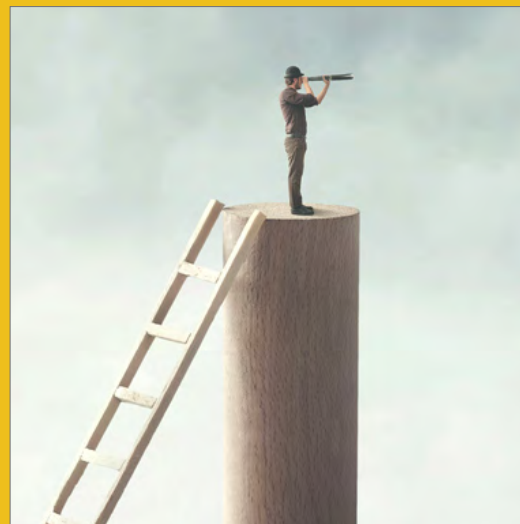
Contents

EDITION 282



How Zahawi plans to use anti-vaxxer experience to win over academy sceptics

Page 6



Why the white paper is the right paper at the right time

Page 25

**New
Schools
Network**

Flagship free school support charity out of work

Page 16



Schools sending year groups home again as Covid cases keep rising

Page 15

Disclaimer:
Schools Week is owned and published by Lsect Ltd. The views expressed within the publication are those of the authors named, and are not necessarily those of Schools Week, Lsect Ltd or any of its employees. While we try to ensure that the information we provide is correct, mistakes do occur and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of our material. The design of the digital newspaper and of the website is copyright of Lsect Ltd and material from the newspaper should not be reproduced without prior permission.

If you wish to reproduce an article from either the digital paper or the website, both the article's author and Schools Week must be referenced (to not do so, would be an infringement on copyright).

Lsect Ltd is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites linked to. Please address any complaints to the editor. Email: John.Dickens@Schoolsweek.co.uk with Error/Concern in the subject line. Please include the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is.

ADVERTISE WITH US

If you are interested in placing a product or job advert in a future edition please click on the 'advertise' link at the top of the page on schoolsweek.co.uk or contact:

E: advertising@schoolsweek.co.uk
T: 020 81234 778 or click here

SCHOOLS WEEK IS PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF

besa | 
BRITISH EDUCATIONAL
SUPPLIERS ASSOCIATION

LEARNING & SKILLS EVENTS,
CONSULTANCY AND TRAINING LTD
C/O MINDSPACE, 9 APPOLD STREET, LONDON
EC2A 2AP
T: 020 8123 4778
E: NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

SUBSCRIBE

For an annual subscription to *Schools Week* for just £50 visit www.schoolsweek.co.uk and click on 'subscribe' at the top of the page.
schoolsweek.co.uk or call 020 8123 4778 to subscribe or [click here](#).

WHITE PAPER *SPEED READ*

Targets, a new test and a few policies

The “Opportunity for all” schools white paper has been published this week. Here’s what you need to know...

Two new ‘ambitions’ ...

The government has already set a target for 90 per cent of children leaving primary school by 2030 with the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, up from 65 per cent currently.

The white paper now sets out a new “ambition” to increase the national GCSE average grade in English language and maths from 4.5 in 2019, to 5 by 2030.

These are national targets, so schools won’t be held to account on them; instead they will be the “measure of this white paper’s success”.

The new white paper policies...

1. Ofsted will hold schools to account for a new “parent pledge” that “any child that falls behind” in English and maths should receive “timely and evidence-based support to enable them to reach their full potential”. Leaders must communicate this to parents.
2. An expectation that all mainstream schools run a 32.5 hour week by September 2023. This will not apply to special schools.
3. A sample of year 9 pupils will take a new online literacy and numeracy test to help to track performance nationally. It will not be used for accountability or intervention in schools. Those asked must take part.
4. The Education Endowment Foundation will get at least £100 million so it can “continue its crucial work to build the evidence base” for “at least the next decade”.
5. A scholarship to attract talented language graduates, a new ITT course for more engineers to teach physics and a new digital service will recognise teaching qualifications “from all over the world”.
6. A new network of modern foreign language hubs and a cultural education plan are promised by 2023.
7. A new careers programme for primary schools in areas of disadvantage.
8. Legislation to “modernise” rules on recording attendance, with a new “national data solution”.

The all-academy plans by 2030...

9. A target by 2030 for all schools to be in strong multi-academy trusts, or have “plans to join or form one”. There will be a “monopoly” cap limiting the number of schools a trust can run in a particular area, but no overall trust size cap.
10. A consultation proposes new powers to force “coasting” maintained schools and academies to convert or change trusts.
11. A review in May will consider new intervention powers over academy trusts if they fail to meet new statutory standards for being “strong” MATs.

12. In “exceptional circumstances”, good schools may be able to request moving trust.
13. Councils will be able to launch MATs “where too few strong trusts exist”. The minister will have powers to mass convert all a council’s schools at its request.
14. A three-year £86 million pot for trust capacity funding, with extra “financial support” for dioceses to launch trusts.
15. Legislation will protect faith schools’ “statutory freedoms and protections” on conversion.
16. The DfE will “consider” bids for high-quality standalone trust-free schools, but “avoid converting schools as standalone academies”.
17. A £40 million fund for 24 “priority” areas, among the 55 disadvantaged “education investment areas”, to address particular needs, such as literacy, numeracy or absence. These areas will also be first in line for new “academically focused” 16-19 free schools.
18. All trusts to have “local governance arrangements for their schools”.
19. Regional schools commissioners to be rebranded regional directors.
20. A new chief executive development scheme.
21. Councils will get “backstop powers” to force trusts to admit children, and to object to schools’ published admissions numbers. They will take responsibility for in-year admissions.
22. A new system of proactive assurance with local safeguarding partnerships commissioning safeguarding audits every three years.

The policies we already knew about...

The white paper contains a load of policies that have already been announced.

Oak National Academy will become an arms-length curriculum body, offering free, adaptable digital resources and video lessons.

Up to 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities will be available by 2024, a flagship Institute of Teaching will be established and teacher trainers will be reaccruited.

Old policies with money attached include the pledge to raise teacher starting salaries to £30,000 by 2023 and the £3,000 retention payments for maths and science teachers in disadvantaged areas. Plus, there’s a £55 million Accelerator Fund to help scale-up the best literacy and numeracy interventions.



SEND REVIEW *SPEED READ*

10 things you need to know about SEND changes

A 13-week consultation has launched on the much-delayed special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) review.

The green paper, *Right Support, Right Place, Right Time*, commits to identifying children's needs more quickly to keep them in mainstream schools, with a new national system taking control from councils.

The reforms are backed by £70 million of new money, spread over three years.

1 New national SEND standards

The Department for Education is proposing legislation to create new national SEND standards, as there has been "too much local discretion".

They would be a "common point of reference", detailing what support should be made available in mainstream settings and when an education health and care plan (EHCP) is needed.

New local SEND partnerships, made up of staff from education, health and care sectors, would work with parents to assess needs and provision.

2 Digital, standardised EHCPs

The government wants standardised, digital EHCP templates to reduce bureaucracy and variations between councils. They may include photos or videos to give a "holistic picture" of the child.

This would allow for "better data collection" – including "anonymous tracking of progress towards outcomes" and prevalence of need – to "review and update the national standards".

These standardised reports would create a requirement to "discuss and record whether a step down to targeted support, and cessation of an EHCP, is more appropriate".

3 Parents to have school choice 'tailored'

Where a child is identified as needing a specialist placement, parents will be provided with a "tailored" list of settings based on newly created local inclusion plans.

The council will then allocate the first available place in order of parental preference.

As a "safety net", local authorities would be given new "backstop powers" to direct academy trusts to admit children, with a right for the trust to appeal to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

4 Mandatory mediation

Families and councils would have to engage in mediation on disputes over EHCPs before registering an appeal to the sometimes costly first-tier tribunal. The DfE said it will keep this under review and, if needed, consider creating an "independent review mechanism".

5 Tighter rules on SENCo qualifications

DfE wants to bring in a new leadership SENCo national professional qualification to replace the current NASENCo.

Headteachers would also have to be "satisfied" that a SENCo is in the process of obtaining the qualification when taking on the role, rather than the current three-year window to achieve it.

6 National funding bands and tariffs

There will be a new national system of banding and price tariffs for funding, matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in new national standards.

Bandings would cluster specific types of provision together, while tariffs would set the rules and prices paid for specific elements of provision.

A national framework would provide more consistency, the DfE said.

7 £6k threshold review

At the moment, councils set "notional" special educational needs budgets for their mainstream schools. The DfE said it would move to standardise these, with central government setting budget allocations "through a single, national formula".

The DfE said mainstream schools should continue to be expected to meet some of the additional costs of supporting pupils with SEND. But the green paper pledged to consider whether the current amount of £6,000 remains the "right threshold".

8 DfE can parachute in new leaders

The DfE's new "regions group" will hold councils and multi-academy trusts to account for delivery through new funding agreements between local government and the DfE.

The group will act as a "single risk-based regulator" for MATs and provide oversight of local authorities.

In "extenuating circumstances", the DfE may impose a "change in leadership".

9 New 'inclusion dashboards'...

New "inclusion dashboards" for 0 to 25 provision will offer a "timely, transparent picture" of how the system is performing at local and national level for "strengthened accountability and transparency to parents".

The dashboards will also help the DfE capture data on outcomes and experiences, identification of need and value for money.

10 ...and 'contextual' league tables

Performance measures will also be updated to allow for "contextual information" about a school alongside its results data. This will "make it easier to recognise schools and colleges that are doing well for children with SEND".



WHITE PAPER

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

Can Zahawi win over MAT sceptics after admitting reform failures?

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

EXCLUSIVE

Education secretary Nadhim Zahawi has compared the challenge of winning over multi-academy trust sceptics to converting Covid jab doubters – saying he cares about outcomes, not which badge is above the door.

The government published both its schools white paper – which sets out ambitions for all schools to be in multi-academy trusts – and the SEND green paper this week.

Both aim to right the problems caused by the Conservative government's own reforms. The white paper admits the school system that has “evolved over the past decade is messy and often confusing”. The Conservative Party has been in power since 2010.

The white paper adds that “unclear expectations” of academies and councils “permit grey areas which have sometimes allowed vulnerable children to fall through the gaps”.

Meanwhile, Zahawi said in parliament the SEND system – based on his party's 2014 reforms – is “failing”. He said outcomes in alternative provision were “shockingly poor”.

Speaking to MPs, Zahawi said the government would also “pay close attention to implementation, so that the mistakes of past reforms are not repeated”.

But when challenged on this, he denied they were admissions that flagship reforms had not worked.

He said getting to 10,000 academies is “real scale” and a “huge achievement”. He also pointed to rising Ofsted grades, phonics results and international league standards.

“What I'm saying, though, is when you circle back in any system – this worked for me in business when I built YouGov, and with the vaccine – not everything works perfectly.”

He explained how as vaccines minister the government won the trust of vaccine sceptics in Tottenham, north London, by “working doubly hard to go back and gain their trust”.

“This is the same thing. It's right to go back and actually, you know, some multi-academy trusts just weren't high performing, and they didn't deliver those results.”

He points to the new “coasting” proposals which will allow government to intervene in any school with successive less than ‘good’ Ofsted ratings.



"I'm not interested at all in playing politics with this, I'm much more interested about outcomes"

The white paper's flagship proposals of a “parent pledge” and extending the school day for the few schools that don't already do it have been widely criticised.

There are ambitious pledges too – for 90 per cent of children leaving primary school to have reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (it's currently 65 per cent); and for all schools to be in “strong” trusts. But these are to be reached by 2030 – eight years' time.

The 2014 primary assessment reforms, introduced in 2016, set an ambitious target of 85% of pupils leaving primary with the expected standards. We're still at 65% six years later.

So how is he personally held to account for reaching these?

“I'd like to stay in the job for as long as possible,” he said. But he admitted the ambition for the next two and a half years is to “demonstrate how we do this and do it well, with thousands of schools

joining those high-performing families of schools”.

Zahawi styles himself as the “evidence-led secretary of state”. He points to figures showing the highest performing trusts outperform maintained secondaries on pupil progress.

But figures published by the Department for Education, in a document entitled *The Case for a Fully Trust-led System*, acknowledge that top single-academy trusts do better, and the “worst, poorest performing MATs do worse than the poorest performing” councils.

In his pitch to academy sceptics, Zahawi said: “In the same way as saving lives with the vaccine, when something is that important – take away the politics, let's just do the right thing.

“Follow the evidence and let's deliver it. And that's my message to anyone who's willing to listen to me, whether it's other politics or the unions.”

However, the National Education Union has already accused government of “misreporting” data to back its reforms. The union said the data “systematically misreported Ofsted grades for many schools”, with data not taking account of schools that have converted since their last inspection.

“I'm not interested at all in playing politics with this, I'm much more interested about outcomes, because I've got to build a system that has the trust of parents,” Zahawi said.

“And you only do that by being honest with yourself and following the evidence.”

ENTER THE 2022

BTEC Showstopper Challenge

The BTEC Showstopper Challenge is an annual competition that gives learners the chance to perform at the BTEC Awards ceremony in London.

Why should you enter?

- ▶ Showcase your BTEC learners' creative talents including music, dance, singing and dramatic performances
- ▶ A chance to perform on stage in front of more than 250 people including winners, industry stakeholders, employers and BTEC ambassadors
- ▶ A public vote during the ceremony, which will also be live streamed globally, for the award of overall Showstopper Challenge winner 2022.

Please visit ▶ btec.co.uk/awards for more information or email us at btecawards@pearson.com

#BTECShowstopperChallenge2022

International nominations are welcome, but winners will be shown via video at the live event



Pearson
BTEC

WHITE PAPER

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

Most 'coasting' schools already academies

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

Two-thirds of "coasting" schools earmarked for potential government intervention from September are already academies, new analysis shows.

On Monday, the Department for Education launched a consultation to force schools "not making necessary improvements" into becoming academies or joining a new trust.

Any school rated 'requires improvement' at its most recent Ofsted inspection and with a previous less than 'good' rating will be eligible for intervention.

Analysis of Ofsted's February management information data found 869 schools with successive less than 'good' ratings that have been inspected at least once under their current sponsor or local authority.

Of these, 65 per cent (564) are academies.

However, the government will initially focus on "coasting" schools in the 55 education improvement areas, and those with a "long-term history of underperformance".



These are described as schools with five consecutive less than 'good' Ofsted judgments.

The analysis from Education Datalab found about 210 schools in this category – 81 per cent (170) of them academies.

But the consultation states intervention will not be "automatic". Regional directors – formerly regional school commissioners – will decide on a case-by-case basis if action is required.

The government said 4.2 per cent of state funded schools – which teach "over 400,000 pupils" – have successive less than 'good' grades, rising to 5.7 per cent in education improvement areas.

Regional directors (RDs) will "not normally intervene" before an academy has received a full

inspection under its current trust.

However, the consultation says "inspection histories" of academies will be taken into account – meaning the school's previous grades under the local authority or old trust will be counted.

The consultation adds: "This will allow RDs to hold academy trusts to account for improving their academies rapidly once they have converted or transferred."

Schools which have fewer than five less than 'good' judgments will only be eligible for intervention if their most recent inspection is after May last year.

It means the proportion of academies eligible for intervention may change by September.

The DfE expects the "vast majority" of maintained schools and standalone academies "will be transferred to a MAT".

But "coasting" academies already part of a MAT "may" be transferred to another trust only where the RD is "not confident that the current MAT is likely to secure necessary improvements".

"Coasting" schools are currently defined by pupil performance and progress, but the DfE will "revoke these regulations" in favour of reference to consecutive Ofsted judgments.

The consultation closes on May 23.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

It's about time: the 32.5-hour week

Schools will be "expected" to offer a 32.5-hour week by September 2023.

The minimum hours will be an expectation rather than a statutory duty, but Ofsted will be asked to report on schools that miss the target if they are also found to be providing a poor quality of education.

A 32.5-hour week is the equivalent of five 6.5-hour days, or opening from 8.45am to 3.15pm, Monday to Friday.

The target refers to the number of hours pupils are in school, rather than just teaching hours.

Department for Education data suggests 52 per cent of primary schools and 62 per cent of secondaries already offer a 32.5-hour week or more.

Another 41 and 35 per cent, respectively, have a school day that is within 15 minutes short of the new target, while just 8 per cent of primary schools and 5 per cent of secondary schools

have a school day that is more than 15 minutes short.

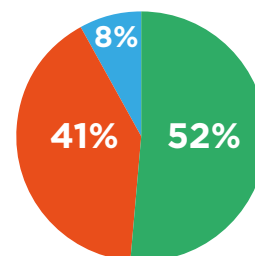
Ministers accept that "most school weeks" nationally are already the required length, but there is "discrepancy across the country".

There will be no extra cash for schools below the threshold to extend their day, and there should be "no additional cost to parents or pupils".

The expectation will not apply to special schools, pupil referral units, alternative provision, early years or post-16 education.

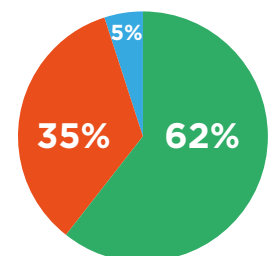
Although the target is non-statutory, Ofsted will look at whether the expectation is being met if they have concerns over the quality

PRIMARY SCHOOLS



6.5 hours or more

SECONDARY SCHOOLS



6.25-6.5 hours

Less than 6.25 hours

of education, and "may reflect this in the inspection report".

From September this year, schools will be expected to publish their opening hours online. The Department for Education will also start collecting data on the total compulsory time pupils spend in school as part of the school census from 2023.

WHITE PAPER

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

New 'parent pledge' for schools – and Ofsted will check

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

Just half of English and maths teachers say their schools tell parents about interventions to stop their children falling behind – a key element of the new “parent pledge”.

The Department for Education said this week that any child that falls behind in English and maths should receive “timely and evidence-based support to enable them to reach their full potential”.

The government also pledged that schools would communicate this work to parents, but warned against “over-testing children” or “labelling them as ‘behind’”.

One union leader dismissed the pledge as a “gimmick”, while many teachers said schools already did what the government has promised.

A Teacher Tapp survey found 76 per cent of secondary English teachers and 66 per cent of maths teachers said their school already provided specific interventions for pupils with low attainment in their subjects.



But a smaller proportion – 54 per cent of English teachers and 48 per cent of maths – said they told parents about the extra help.

Jonathan Simons, a director at policy consultants Public First, said many parents thought schools were “insufficiently responsive”. “They [parents] don’t want to replace the school. They trust teachers. But they want to understand what’s going on and be a partner in making it better.”

Teacher Tapp surveyed just over 6,400 teachers, around 1,700 of whom taught English or maths.

Overall, primary schools were more likely than secondaries to provide interventions (88 per cent

v 67 per cent) and tell parents about them (72 per cent v 49 per cent).

And although 70 per cent of all teachers polled said the policy would not be effective, just 21 per cent opposed it.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the school leaders’ union ASCL, said it seemed like “a policy gimmick designed to grab headlines”.

“In reality, any child who falls behind in English and maths will receive timely and evidence-led support. This is communicated to parents via existing channels such as parents’ evenings.”

Ofsted will inspect whether schools are meeting the pledge, and examples of good practice will be published.

The white paper said the pledge should not “lead to schools over-testing children, labelling them as ‘behind’, or withdrawing them from a rounded school experience in order to focus on English and maths”.

When asked for clarification on “labelling”, a government source said this meant not labelling pupils in class, such as in seating plans, rather than avoiding the word with parents.

Guidance will be published on identifying children needing help, but it will leave scope for schools to reflect on their own curriculum.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Schools will have to foot future tutoring bill

Schools will have to raid their own coffers to pay for tutoring when government subsidies end, with an expectation that pupil premium is also spent on literacy and numeracy interventions.

Ministers expect tutoring to be a “staple offer from schools” when current financial incentives end in 2024.

Schools will be expected to “use their core budgets” to fund the provision, which will become a “core academic option in the pupil premium menu”.

The government also said it would “make it easier” for schools to use the £2.6 billion annual pupil premium funding to “support literacy and numeracy skills where needed”. Although the fund will retain its “core focus” on improving attainment for disadvantaged pupils, the new expectations show the government becoming more prescriptive about what cash is spent on.

Lee Elliot-Major, a professor of social mobility

at the University of Exeter, said establishing high-quality tutoring as a sustained and embedded option for all schools was the government’s “biggest test”.

“In my view there should be more pupil premium funding available – as long as it is spent on effective classroom approaches.”

James Turner, the chief executive of the Sutton Trust, said schools “should be properly resourced to provide tutoring”.

“If the expectation is that schools should fund tutoring from their core budgets, then ensuring that the pupil premium is at least increased in line with inflation would be an important start.”

In the white paper, the Department for Education said “effective use” of the premium was “key” to delivering its parent pledge.

It pointed to a recommendation from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) that half the funding is spent on high-quality teaching, with the other half for “targeted academic support and wider strategies”.

Based on EEF evidence, the DfE has produced a “menu of recommended evidence-based approaches”, which schools are encouraged to use.

The EEF told *Schools Week* that its research showed the “most commonly cited approaches in pupil premium statements are literacy interventions, general staff CPD and small group tuition”.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the school leaders’ union ASCL, said tutoring “must be a decision for school leaders and teachers who know their students and their needs, rather than with the government which does not”.

Eleanor Harrison, the chief executive of the youth charity Impetus, said she was “delighted” with the “vision for tutoring as a long-term tool to tackle the attainment gap”. But it was “vital” the national tutoring programme worked as a “stepping stone to a future where all young people get the support they need to succeed”.

WHITE PAPER

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

'Strong trust' ambition revealed (and 10 schools is sweet spot)

TOM BELGER
@TOM_BELGER

Ministers have left plenty of wiggle room in their expectation that all schools will be in "strong trusts" by 2030, as they attempt to avoid past failures.

Government "want all schools to be in or joining a strong trust" within eight years. There's also an expectation that "most trusts will be on a trajectory" to serve at least 7,500 pupils or run ten schools or more.

Moving towards full academisation is politically tricky, especially with a general election due in the next three years. Attempts to do so in 2016 – which set a much tighter deadline – had to be abandoned after an outcry.

Sir Jon Coles, chief executive of the country's largest multi-academy trust, United Learning, said: "With the wrong white paper, the Department for Education could have failed to even get off the mark. That is not the case. They have cleared the undergrowth, found the start of the narrow path and taken the first steps along it."

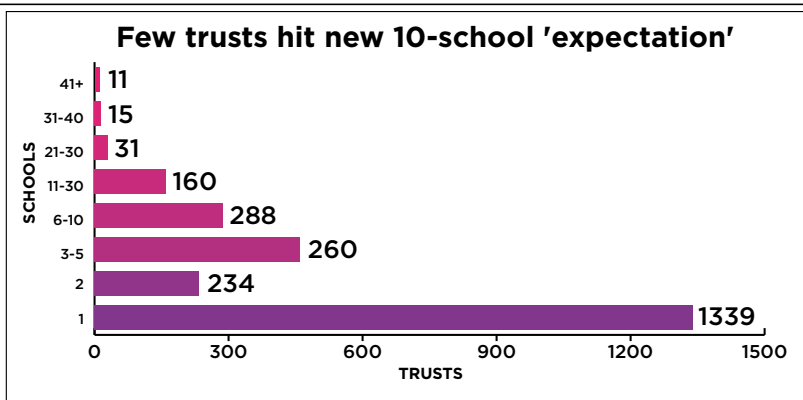
Instead, the plans will "nudge" many maintained schools and standalone trust boards to at least consider joining MATs, said Paul Heery, who

leads the White Hills Park Trust.

Pepe D'Illasio, head of single-academy WalesHigh School and president of leaders' unionASCL, said his "mindset had changed from'should we?' to 'how should we?'" participate in a MAT.

But Emma Knights, chief executive of the National Governance Association, said many standalone academies, small trusts and maintained schools remain wary of larger trusts. "We remain unconvinced enough has been done and said to win hearts and minds," she added.

Fifty-five per cent of schools are not yet



academies. Some 53 per cent of existing trusts also have only one school, and 75 per cent have under five.

Steve Chalke, founder of 52-school Oasis Community Learning, said it was unclear if smaller trusts could develop infrastructure to expand quickly. "What if they can't – are they going to be taken over?"

Michael Pain, CEO of MAT support network Forum Strategy, said it was also not clear whether academisation would be obligatory by 2030. Compared to its predecessor, the white paper "doesn't quite have the same urgency".

TOM BELGER | @TOM_BELGER

Academy reforms rest on regulator role, say leaders

Limited details over new standards for academy trusts and tougher "statutory intervention powers" are the "biggest question mark in the whole paper", says a former government adviser.

Ministers have faced a delicate balancing act in their academy push amid pressure for tougher action on failing trusts, but lower regulatory burdens on the rest.

But Sam Freedman, a former adviser at the Department for Education and now at Ark Schools, said scarce details left the regulation overhaul "the biggest question mark in the whole white paper".

He told an ArkTalks event this week: "If the regulator isn't set up in the right way, nothing else is going to work."

The white paper says a regulatory review in May will look at "how we will hold trusts to account through inspection", and ensure a "single regulatory approach".

The review will consider how to hold trusts accountable against new criteria for a "strong trust" – including high-quality, inclusive education, school improvement, maintaining local

school identity, value for money and workforce development.

Standards will be underpinned by "new statutory intervention powers", allowing "robust" action on trusts not achieving expected outcomes.

Martyn Oliver, the chief executive of the Outwood Grange Academies Trust, said the white paper was "full of good intent", but added: "Everything will now hinge on the role and powers of the regulator."

A recent report from Freedman criticised "weak" intervention powers over low education standards. The DfE has been accused of lacking teeth over past academy financial scandals too.

Paul Heery, the chief executive of The White Hills Park Trust, agreed trusts needed more "transparent" accountability, after criticism of high pay, related party deals and exclusion practices.

But Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said the DfE must not "compromise" trusts' independence, or determine operational procedure.

Evelyn Forde, the head of the single-academy Copthall School in north London and the vice-

president of the school leaders' union ASCL, said she felt a "sense of exhaustion" at the idea of further new standards, warning it risked undermining autonomy and creativity.

Michael Pain, the founder of the MAT support company Forum Strategy, said over-prescriptive definitions risked being a "straitjacket", with academy freedom "consigned to history".

Steve Chalke, the founder of Oasis Community Learning, said he hoped standards would reflect partnership, rather than a "master-servant relationship".

The "proliferation" of existing rules has already faced criticism, with Freedman highlighting regulations on the numbers of committee meetings.

Writing for *Schools Week*, Sir Jon Coles of United Learning, argued reforms should reduce the "extent and burden of process regulation", but "weak provision must be tackled".

It was "right to seek consensus built on evidence", which showed "confident, not weak government".

Sir Jon Coles, page 25

WHITE PAPER

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

Council trusts will bolster academy push

TOM BELGER

@TOM_BELGER

Local authorities will receive new powers to force academies to admit vulnerable pupils while others will be able to launch their own academy trusts.

Council-run trusts will "add expertise and capacity" to the government's all-academy push, the white paper says, allowing high-performing schools to formalise partnerships.

They will only be allowed "where too few strong trusts exist". But the policy still marks a big shift from the government, which has waged much of its academy reforms on needing to save schools from "failing" councils.

Speaking to *Schools Week*, Nadhim Zahawi, the education secretary, said: "Local government will, I hope, join us on this journey."

"Because if they think they're good at supporting schools – set up a

trust, and we will back you, but we will treat you equally with every other trust."

The government also clarified the role of local authorities in an all-academy system, saying they will be "empowered to champion the interests of children".

They will receive a "backstop power" to order trusts to admit pupils and take charge of in-year admissions, which academies now handle themselves.

Academies' duty to follow admissions codes will become statutory, and they will be obliged to work "constructively" with councils and other trusts. No dates have been set for the changes.

The Local Government Association praised the extra powers, while Pepe Di'Iasio, the president of the school leaders' union ASCL, said they could be "attractive"

for potential converters worried about large trusts' local knowledge.

But Michael Pain, who runs the trust CEO network

Forum Strategy, warned of "confusion and division", undermining department efforts to boost trust-council collaboration and delineate their roles.

Trusts fear conflicts of interest too. "Who is going to police that?" asked Josh Coleman, the chief executive of the East Midlands Academy Trust.

Writing for *Schools Week*, Seamus Murphy, the chief executive of the Turner Schools, said councils could not be "both poacher and gamekeeper".

But Coleman added: "There's a place for schools that want to be council-led. As long as there's a level playing field, I don't see a problem."

The DfE said council-run trusts would be regulated like any trust, but council involvement in trust boards would be limited.

It is not clear how "areas lacking in strong trusts" will be defined.

Paul Heery, the chief executive of The White Hills Park Trust, said: "Schools thinking we'll join a council trust as the least scary option might find it's not an option in most of the country."



Pepe Di'Iasio



Michael Pain

TOM BELGER | @TOM_BELGER

School-trust 'divorce' plans split sector leaders

Sector leaders are split over plans to let some good schools break away from failing trusts, with officials facing a headache over how to make the "divorce clause" work.

The Department for Education will consult on the "exceptional circumstances in which a good school could request that the regulator agrees to the school moving to a stronger trust".

Transfers currently only happen on trusts' say-so or the government's orders.

Ministers also appear set to strengthen schools' voices within their multi-academy trusts.

MATs "should have local governance arrangements" and protect schools' local identity, the white paper says.

There will be "transparency measures" too over cash that trusts top-slice from their funding.

The measures are aimed at easing the worries of reluctant academy converters as the government embarks on its mission for an all-

MAT system by 2030.

Pepe Di'Iasio, the head of Wales High School in South Yorkshire and the president of the school leaders' union ASCL, said: "Now you can try before you buy, and get out of something that once you were tied into forever."

However, dates for the introduction of the changes are vague.

Emma Knights, the chief executive of the National Governance Association, said stronger local governance was "to be applauded".

But Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said it would strongly oppose any attempt to mandate local governance arrangements.

The group, representing almost two-thirds of MATs, was also "deeply concerned" about schools leaving trusts.

Calling it a "retrograde step", Cruddas said proposals "fail to understand the trust is the legal entity, not an authority somehow separate from its schools".

Steve Chalke, the founder of Oasis Community Learning, agreed it was not a "well-formed idea", noting schools lost their independent legal status in trusts.

"The governing body is the trust board -- there isn't a local group that can take a school out."

He warned it would "plunge the DfE into direct involvement in local conflicts and politics", as well as complex issues over staff whose roles spanned multiple schools.

Josh Coleman, the chief executive of the East Midlands Academy Trust, said the system could become one in which schools kept "jumping around like a flea", as the government also planned to strip trusts of "coasting" schools. "That doesn't build sustainability or positivity."

Others noted only brave local committees and heads would use such powers. "Trustees appoint them, and have the right to remove them. It feels a bit meaningless – I'd love to see the detail," said Paul Heery, the chief executive of The White Hills Park Trust.

SEND REVIEW

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

'Inclusive' schools key to SEND system shake-up

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Ministers will consult on mixing up performance league tables to incentivise mainstream schools to become "more inclusive".

The SEND green paper sets out the government's ambition to improve a system it says is failing vulnerable children and their parents.

They want mainstream provision built on "early and accurate identification of needs, high-quality teaching of a knowledge-rich curriculum and prompt access to targeted support".

But there are "too many examples" where inclusive mainstream schooling "does not happen".

The Department for Education admits accountability measures can be seen as a disincentive. This is combined with a perception that those who welcome pupils with SEND become "magnet schools" and "unsustainable over time".

But proposed new national standards will set out "when needs can and should be met effectively in mainstream provision" and what support should be available.

School performance tables will also be updated to



consider "contextual information" about a school alongside its results data.

This will "make it easier to recognise schools" that are "going well for children with SEND".

No more details are provided, suggesting ministers are open to feedback about how this would work best.

But Rob Williams, a policy adviser at the school leaders' union NAHT, questioned if the government was confident there was enough cash so bodies across health, social care and education "can fulfil their duties as part of this new inclusive system".

"Warm words around what they want mainstream schools to do is not going to make that move."

The proposals are backed by £70 million funding.

The percentage of pupils with an education health and care plan (EHCPs) who are taught in mainstream schools increased from 48.7 per cent in 2019-20, to 50.4 per cent last year.

But the number of schools with units where pupils with SEN are taught in separate classes dropped from 361 to 352.

Those with resourced provision, places reserved at mainstream for pupils with specialist SEN, rose from 1,028 to just 1,066.

Warren Carratt, the chief executive at Nexus Multi Academy Trust, which has ten special schools, said there was no need for new standards.

The current SEND code of practice "makes it really clear what is expected", he said. "A simpler, more streamlined system is what's needed."

There are few other policies on inclusion. New "inclusion dashboards" for 0-25 provision are promised to set out "clear" performance data across education, health and care to give parents more transparency.

The review also talks about "upstream training opportunities" from specialist schools into the mainstream sector to "share expertise".

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOTH

Ministers take control to end 'postcode lottery'

Ministers plan to bring large chunks of the special needs system under "central control" with new national standards that take power from local authorities.

The green paper outlines the government's vision to establish a "single national SEND and alternative provision system" to end "too much local discretion".

Under the proposals, the government would introduce national SEND standards, standardised education, health and care plans (EHCPs) and national funding bands.

Rather than councils setting "notional" special educational needs budgets for their schools, the Department for Education would instead use a "single, national formula".

Jo Hutchinson, the director for vulnerable learners at the Education Policy Institute, said central control was the only way to tackle a "postcode lottery" of support.

"The DfE wants to be able to control this partly because of the implementation failure after the

2014 reforms. It's hard for them to make change happen if they don't take control of some central aspects of the system."

New national standards aim to set out "how and when" a child should be identified as requiring SEN support, with the government to "steward and regulate" the system.

Ministers hope this will "improve consistency of identification, reducing the likelihood of misidentification driven by place, setting or other factors such as race or disadvantage".

Standardised EHCP templates and processes also aim to cut out variations between areas that at present have discretion to create their own versions. One area's standards run to 40 pages, another to eight.

Karen Wespieser, a special needs expert, said academy trusts have faced a "nightmare" navigating different councils' EHCPs. The proposals would "really start to foster a system of data collection which has been missing", she said.

Professor Brian Lamb, whose 2009 review triggered the 2014 SEND reforms, said it was "such a mistake" that these weren't introduced eight years ago.

The DfE also wants a national system of banding and price tariffs matched to the levels of need and types of education provision set out in the new standards.

The government will decide who pays for support and how councils set funding levels, but it plans to consult on whether some "local flexibility" is required.

But Lamb warned that getting the banding system wrong could "undermine" progress on "personalisation".

Meanwhile the DfE's new "regions group" – the rebranded regional schools commissioners – will be responsible for holding councils and trusts to account on delivering for youngsters with SEND.



Karen Wespieser

SEND REVIEW

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

Tiered support package for shaky AP provision

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Alternative provision reforms will create a new “three-tier” system of support, with a focus on early intervention in mainstream schools.

The government’s SEND review includes plans for a shake-up of AP, which is commissioned by councils for children who miss out on mainstream education because of exclusion, illness or other reasons.

There is huge variability in quality across the country, uncertain and fluctuating funding and concerns over unregulated provision.

Nadhim Zahawi this week described outcomes in AP as “shockingly poor”. A Centre for Social Justice report in 2020 found just 4 per cent of pupils in AP achieved a grade 4 in English and maths, compared with 64 per cent in mainstream schools.

Under the reforms, mainstream schools will have a “clear, tiered package of support” for AP.

The first tier will be “targeted support” for children whose needs “lead to behaviour that disrupts theirs or others’ learning”. This could include advice, coaching, self-regulation classes for groups or one-to-one support.

The second tier will be “time-limited” placements in AP for those who need more “intensive support” to address behaviour or anxiety and “re-engage in learning”. Pupils would be dual-registered, and “supported to return to their original school as soon as is appropriate”.

The third tier will make transitional placements for children who won’t go back to their old school, but will be supported to transition to a different school “when they are ready, or to a suitable post-16 destination”.

ACE Schools provides AP for around 250 children across the south west. The organisation already supports schools in the region with interventions, CPD and advice.

Head Matthew Bindon said: “This is complex work for children whose needs have not previously been met. To provide them with some of the skills and abilities and curriculum they need to be successful is not quick and not easy.”

Dave Whitaker, director of learning at the Wellspring Academy Trust, which has 28 primary, special and alternative provision schools, warned there were “no quick fixes” for some children.

“I don’t want people to think that a lot of these



children can be cured by spending a bit of time in an AP and then go back and everything is fine. There’s a long-lasting intervention that’s needed with some of these kids.”

The green paper also pledged to “break the link” between individual pupil movements and funding.

Local SEND “partnerships” will have to create AP-specific budgets, “ideally for a minimum of three years”.

Partnerships will then work out the amount each tier needed, agreeing the cost of each service and how to manage changes in demand.

Councils will then have to distribute funding in line with the plan, with cash “no longer following the movement of each individual child or young person”.

Bindon said the proposals were “really promising. At the moment, where that funding fluctuates with pupils, we can’t guarantee how much work we can do in schools because we don’t know how much money’s coming in.”

Whitaker said the “stability of AP depends on funding them as if they’re full...you can’t just be chasing the money and expanding capacity as soon as children come into it”.

Sarah Johnson, president of PRUsAP, said the review of funding should consider how to “ensure parity of

support for children that isn’t based on their locality”.

“We would like to know how smaller PRU and AP will be supported to be able to make long-term plans that meet the needs of the

children and families in the community.”

Ministers also plan to shake up accountability with a new performance table and national performance framework for AP.

This would be based on five key metrics: outreach support, attendance, reintegration, attainment (with a focus on English and maths) and post-16 transitions.

Whitaker said the concept of performance measures was “ok, because it’s good to be able to work to some parameters”.

“But to then drop it into a league table, we’re now introducing AP into a league table scenario, which we don’t even want for mainstream schools.”

Bindon welcomed the extra accountability, but said outcomes from AP had to be “viewed with an air of caution”.

“I think it’s going to need some real precision in terms of its implementation.”

The DfE will also review how children and young people move around the school system, which will feed into a “statutory framework” for all pupil movements to deliver “greater oversight and transparency”.

A call for evidence will also be held before the summer on the use of unregistered provision.

Alice Wilcock, head of education at the Centre for Social Justice, said the greater focus on early intervention was a “welcome shift”. Many AP leaders are “experts in their area local areas, but all too often their knowledge goes unrecognised”.

Kiran Gill, founder of The Difference, which places mainstream leaders in pupil referral units, said AP schools needed to be “adequately funded to be able to hire those teachers who can then change outcomes for young people”.



Matthew Bindon

SEND REVIEW

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

New course to give SENCOs seat at top table

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Ministers want special educational needs co-ordinators in senior leadership teams and to inform schools' "strategic direction".

At present co-ordinators (SENCOs) have three years to complete the National Award for SEN Coordination (NASENCo), which is taught at a master's level by about 40 universities.

But the government claims the qualification has "variability" and might not provide "the knowledge and skills needed for the role". It also sits outside the "wider" teacher development reforms.

Ministers want to "strengthen the statutory timeframe" so headteachers must be "satisfied" SENCOs are "in the process of obtaining the qualification when taking on the role".

The NASENCo will be replaced with a new, mandatory SENCO national professional qualification. This will "improve the expertise and leadership" so staff are "well-placed to sit on a senior leadership team and inform strategic direction".

All mainstream schools must have a qualified teacher or headteacher designated as the SENCO.

Margaret Mulholland, the SEND specialist at the school leaders' union ASCL, said it was an opportunity to "reframe the role" so SENCOs were not "on the hamster wheel trying to do everything".

SENCOs will also be given "sufficient protected time" to carry out their role, alongside "dedicated administrative support" to reduce the time on paperwork.

Three quarters of co-ordinators said administrative work took up most of their allocated time, according to Bath Spa University research in 2020.

A Department for Education-commissioned study in 2016 found just 25 per cent of polled academy staff thought the NASENCo reflected their needs. Twenty-two per cent said it did not, while 53 per cent did not know.

In 2014, the DfE ceased to accredit providers of the course.

Accredited providers formed their own network to preserve high standards, later called the Leading Learning for Special Educational Needs

Community Interest Group.

Tristan Middleton, a director of the provider group, said it has improved the course to have more of a leadership focus, and urged ministers to keep "master's level study as an expectation".

Annamarie Hassall, the chief executive of the National Association for Special Educational Needs charity that helped to found the course in 2008, said it was a "healthy position to have more than one option."

"But when I read it will replace it I thought that's not a wise move. Immediately it starts to negate the qualification that a number of SENCOs work hard to do."



Annamarie Hassall

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOTH

Compulsory mediation could 'slow things down more'

Mandatory mediation proposals for parents who dispute a council's decision on their child's education, health and care plan (EHCP) could clog the creaking system up even more, experts say.

The SEND green paper proposes families and councils engage in mediation on disputes over EHCPs before registering an appeal in the first-tier tribunal.

The number of registered tribunal appeals has been steadily rising - from 4,725 in 2016-17 to 8,579 in the past academic year.

The long process can be costly, with one mother telling *Schools Week* she used her life insurance to pay for legal support.

The Department for Education says new national standards will "set clear expectations" on mediation, including timescales and ensuring that the local authority "decision-makers" attend meetings.

SEND expert Professor Brian Lamb said while he was "in favour", he had "serious concerns" about it being made compulsory.

"Requiring mediation before you get to tribunal may introduce more bureaucracy and slow things down even more."

A pilot trial to test whether it worked would be better, he said.

Ali Fiddy, the chief executive of IPSEA, an advice charity for parents with special needs children, said mediation failed to recognise the "inherent inequality" in SEND disputes, which involved parents, carers and young people challenging the decisions of local authorities.

"The way to reduce the number of appeals to the SEND tribunal is to make sure the law is complied with in the first place, not to restrict routes of redress."

Data published in December shows the appellant (parents) won 96 per cent of the 4,825 SEND tribunals that reached court last year. This is up from 86 per cent in 2014.

Only 3.6 per cent of the decisions by councils were upheld, the lowest on record.

Parents will also be offered a "tailored list" of

settings for their child. Councils will allocate the "first available place" in order of the parents' preference, but the settings "may be outside" the council region.

Fiddy added: "The sense is it will very much focus on what is available, rather than on the child's needs."

The Department for Education also proposes to change the timescale for issuing draft EHCPs after a landmark High Court ruling said children should not have to wait more than three months for changes to their plans.

The department said it was "concerned" the deadline "does not strike a balance between timeliness ... and enabling local authorities to gather and consider all the information and advice they need".



COVID

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

Schools battle to stay open amid Covid surge

JAMES CARR

@JAMESCARR_93

Schools are sending year groups home and “tripling up” classes in dining halls as up to a third of their staff test positive for Covid.

Senior leaders are also taking on extra teaching and cleaning duties to keep schools open.

It comes as the government slashes precautions under plans to “live with Covid” (see story right).

But data from the FFT Education attendance tracker shows pupil absence increased to 10.4 per cent in secondary schools last week, up from 9.7 per cent the week before. Absences in primaries rose to 7.5 per cent, up from 7.2 per cent.

‘This is the worst we’ve seen’

Pepe Di’lasio, the headteacher of Wales High School in Rotherham, said staff absences were the “worst we’ve seen, in terms of actual numbers off”.

Di’lasio, who is also president of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), said it was the “number one issue” school leaders reported as they struggled to secure specialist cover for exam years.

Wales High School has 25 teachers off – 10 per cent of its workforce.

Department for Education (DfE) attendance survey data, released last week, estimates that about one in ten teachers were absent on March 17.

The twice monthly data no longer reveals how many are off because of Covid.

Martyn Oliver, the chief executive at Outwood Grange Academies Trust, said cases among staff were “exceptionally high” across

his 38 schools.

Last week Covid absence reached its second highest rate with 146 staff absent. The rate was only higher in the week of January 17, when 215 tested positive.

“A significant number of schools have 20 or more staff off – in some cases this equates to a third of teachers,” Oliver said.

Last month the lack of staff forced eight year groups across the trust to learn from home.

Partial closures and tripling-up classes

Simon Elliott, the chief executive at Community Schools Trust, reported some of his schools were missing a third of staff and access to supply teachers “was suddenly very difficult again”.

The trust “block-booked” cover for future weeks in a bid to mitigate expected absences.

Stephen Chamberlain, the chief executive at Active Learning Trust, said “35 per cent or more” of classes in some of his schools were covered by supply teachers.

In a bid to provide continuity for exam groups, he has been teaching GCSE English four days a week at one school since the beginning of term.

Oliver said his staff were going to “extraordinary lengths”, including taking on cleaning duties.

“The pressure not to shut again is unbelievable.”

Di’lasio added that his school was “tripling up” classes in dining halls to ensure exam year groups had specialist teachers.

The FFT Education attendance tracker revealed pupil absence rates were highest among secondary schools in the south west, where 12.8 per cent of pupils were off.

Self-isolation slashed to three days for pupils

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Pupils are advised from today to self-isolate for three days if they test positive for Covid.

However, parents should keep children with high temperatures at home until they get better, new guidance says.

The legal requirement to self-isolate was scrapped in late February. Since then children have been advised to follow the same guidance as adults, which was to isolate for at least five days.

In an email to headteachers, the government said adults with a positive Covid test result should “try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for five days, which is when they are most infectious”.

For children and young people aged 18 and under, “the advice will be three days”.

The changes come despite the latest attendance data showing Covid-related pupil absences trebled in just two weeks. Almost one in ten teachers remains absent.

Paul Whiteman, the general secretary of the NAHT school leaders’ union, said heads would be “very worried” about the change when cases were “rising rapidly”.

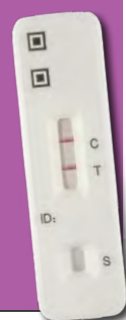
Schools will also no longer be able to order free lateral-flow test kits. Weekly testing for special school and alternative provision pupils and staff has also ended.

The Department for Education said schools might have “surplus stock of self-test kits”, but they should not hand out any more to staff, pupils or students “unless advised by your local health protection team, local authority or director of public health”.

Whiteman said it was “nothing short of reckless” to be removing access to free testing. “If the medical advice has changed, then government has a duty to explain that to schools.”

Heads were told the population has “much stronger protection” against Covid than “at any other point in the pandemic. We can begin to manage the virus like other respiratory infections.”

Sajid Javid, the health secretary, said the UK was “leading the way in learning to live with the virus”.



NEWS



Tutor cash will go straight to schools as Randstad AXED

SAMANTHA BOOTH & JOHN DICKENS
@SCHOOLSWEEK

Ministers will overhaul the flagship National Tutoring Programme so all the catch-up cash goes straight to schools next year, with the under-fire HR company Randstad axed.

In an interview with *Schools Week*, Nadhim Zahawi, the education secretary, said he wanted to "simplify" the scheme, but refused to criticise Randstad after its tumultuous year at the helm.

The provider has overseen a sluggish take-up in tutoring this year, with schools increasingly choosing to organise their own provision.

Just one in seven schools has used Randstad-approved tutors through the NTP this year, with the government still over a million courses away from its annual target.

From September, all £349 million of tutoring cash will go directly to schools, for them to decide how to spend it.

The Department for Education will launch a procurement process in April for a new supplier to run the scheme on a much smaller contract. It will only be responsible for quality assurance, recruiting and deploying academic mentors and offering training.

While Randstad can rebid for the contract, it could mean a third different organisation running the NTP in three years.

The two tutoring routes that Randstad organises – tuition partners and academic mentors – will still be available next year, but it will be up to schools to sort directly.

In what could be seen as a bid to ensure they meet the promise to deliver two million tutoring courses this year, schools will be allowed to deliver tutoring over the summer holidays.

Zahawi said the direct funding would give schools "the flexibility they've asked us for to provide tutoring in the way that works best for their pupils".

Asked whether it was a mistake to appoint

Randstad, he said: "No, I don't [it was]."

Zahawi said the scheme had been "adjusted" after feedback from schools. "You launch something, you scale it and then you begin to circle back and say, right, how can I refine it? And that's what we're doing."

As *Schools Week* first revealed, the DfE started secret talks this month on reshaping the programme. Randstad's current contract is worth £32 million this year.

It is a "one year, plus one year, plus one year" agreement with the government. This will now be cut short.

Bridget Phillipson, Labour's shadow education secretary, said the action was "too little, too late".

"The Conservatives' flagship tutoring programme has failed our children and wasted millions of pounds of public money."

Tutor charities welcomed the move. One said: "It's time for the outsourcing companies to back off and let the education experts work their magic."

Randstad claimed it had lobbied ministers "for some time" to simplify the rules around access to the programme and to standardise funding.

Karen Guthrie, the NTP director, said: "We have always supported the position that schools know best what is needed for their students and welcome the fact the department has recognised this."

The company will look to rebid "if we believe it is in the best interest of the programme and all those benefiting from it".

The latest NTP participation data estimates two in five schools have not used the NTP since September.

Of the 887,521 tutoring courses started this year, three quarters were through the school-led route.

Even with the extra time, the government would have to secure 44,499 starts a week to reach two million before September. The starts so far this year average 32,871 a week.

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

NSN loses contract to support free schools

TOM BELGER
@TOM_BELGER

The New Schools Network has lost its contract as the government's flagship support provider for new free schools.

The charity, founded by Rachel Wolf, an adviser to Michael Gove when he was education secretary, has been closely linked with the government and its free school initiative for more than a decade.

The loss of the deal raises questions about the network's future. Its website says it will continue to focus on its vision of giving children "an equal chance to succeed".

Premier Advisory Group, an education consultancy company, will become the "sole supplier of free school application support" from today.

The new contract is worth £1.5 million over three years, according to government documents. It is a two-year deal with provisions for another year's extension.

The Department for Education said Premier's role was to drum up interest in new mainstream, AP and special free schools, and to support groups with applications. It also would run events on behalf of the department.

Charlotte Pearce Cornish, a director at Premier who started her career with the New Schools Network (NSN) about 12 years ago, said there was still "a lot of unfinished business" on free schools, with alternative provision a "particular passion".

The SEND review reiterated a past commitment to deliver more alternative provision and special free schools beyond the 60 in the pipeline.

The contract had formed much of the work of the NSN, and provided a significant revenue stream.

But the charity also runs the academy ambassadors' programme, funded by the DfE, which helps to match academy trusts with business people who want to become board members.

The NSN said the DfE had "prioritised support" for aspiring and new free schools, with cash to support open schools axed.

David Ross, the network's chair, said free schools were "proving time and again their popularity with parents".

NEWS

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

24 'priority areas' to split £40m improvement cash

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The government has named 24 "priority education investment areas" which will split around £40 million to tackle issues such as absenteeism.

The government has also almost doubled the amount of trust capacity funding on offer over the next three years as it seeks to get all schools to join academy trusts by 2030.

The extra cash would be split between 24 of its 55 "education investment areas", which were created in the recent levelling-up white paper.

This subset is made up of 12 existing opportunity areas, and 12 other areas with low achievement and high levels of deprivation.

The Department for Education has not said much about exactly what the extra funding will be spent on. The white paper said it would aim to address "entrenched underperformance, including in literacy and numeracy".

The money will be spent on "bespoke interventions to address local needs, such as addressing high absence rates".

As set out in the levelling-up white paper, there

will also be a "targeted number" of "high-quality, academically focused 16-19 free schools in the areas where they are most needed".

These schools will "aim to rapidly increase the proportion of disadvantaged children in these areas progressing to top universities". Bids from the priority areas will be prioritised.

£86m for trust capacity

The government is also increasing the amount of trust capacity funding handed out across England to encourage the "strongest trusts" to expand into education investment areas.

Ministers will make £86 million available over three years, almost 80 per cent more than was paid out over the past three years.

The application process for 2022-23 trust capacity funding has now opened.

Trusts will receive up to £310,000 for projects that involve taking on at least one additional 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' rated school from education investment areas and other places of "higher need".

For all other trust capacity building projects, trusts will receive up to £100,000.

The 24 'priority areas'

Existing opportunity areas in bold

•	Blackpool
•	Bradford
•	Derby
•	Doncaster
•	Fenlands and East Cambridgeshire
•	Halton
•	Hartlepool
•	Hastings
•	Ipswich
•	Knowsley
•	Liverpool
•	Middlesbrough
•	North Yorkshire Coast
•	Norwich
•	Nottingham
•	Oldham
•	Portsmouth
•	Rochdale
•	Salford
•	Sandwell
•	Stoke-on-Trent
•	Tameside
•	Walsall

TOM BELGER | @TOM_BELGER

Dozens new behaviour hub schools and trusts revealed

The Department for Education has appointed 28 schools and eight multi-academy trusts to its behaviour hubs programme.

The £10 million scheme, led by government behaviour tsar Tom Bennett, involves schools and trusts helping their peers "diagnose issues and implement new behaviour approaches".

The DfE said almost 700 schools will receive support between 2021 and 2024, including training by expert advisers and access to networking events and open days.

The newly appointed trusts and schools all demonstrate "exceptional behaviour culture", the DfE said.

Schools minister Robin Walker said: "Helping schools to create calm, orderly, safe and supportive environments is key to levelling up education for children and young people."

New MAT hubs

- Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust and St Mary of Charity CofE (Aided) Primary School, Kent
- Cabot Learning Federation and Begbrook Primary Academy, Bristol
- Chiltern Learning Trust and Challney High School

for Boys, Luton

- City of London Academies Trust and City of London Academy Shoreditch Park, London
- Flying High Trust and Mapplewells Primary and Nursery School, Nottinghamshire
- Great Schools Trust and King's Leadership Academy Warrington, Cheshire
- LEO Academy Trust and Manor Park Primary Academy, Sutton
- The Sea View Trust and Tor View School, Lancashire

New primary hubs

- Alston Primary School, Leigh Trust, Birmingham
- The Beacon Church of England Primary School, Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust, Liverpool
- Beaumont Primary Academy, South Pennine Academies, Huddersfield
- Broadclyst Community Primary School, Cornerstone Academy Trust, Exeter
- Dunstall Hill Primary School, Perry Hall Multi-Academy Trust, Wolverhampton
- Hardingstone Academy, East Midlands Academy Trust, Northampton
- Ince CE Primary & Nursery School, Wigan
- Marine Academy Primary, The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust, Plymouth

- Spring Grove Junior Infant and Nursery School, Huddersfield
- Tennyson Road Primary School, Tennyson Learning Community, Luton
- Wansbeck Primary School, The Hull Collaborative Academy Trust, Hull

New secondary hubs

- Allerton High School, Leeds
- Cromer Academy, Inspiration Trust, Norfolk
- The Duston School, The Duston Education Trust, Northampton (all-through school)
- The Market Bosworth School, Nuneaton
- Moor End Academy, South Pennine Academies, Huddersfield
- Pudsey Grammar School, 21st Century Learning Partnership, Leeds
- St James School, Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust, Exeter
- St Patrick's RC High School, Salford
- Wingfield Academy, New Collaborative Learning Trust, Rotherham
- Worthing High School, South Downs Education Trust, West Sussex

EDITORIAL

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

Long-awaited policy plans underwhelm, but maybe that's ok

You wait years for an education policy paper, and two come at once.

The white paper and the SEND review both set out to solve big issues. But these are issues, mostly, caused by the government's own reforms.

The white paper, putting aside the academy plans for now, seems to have drawn a collective shrug from the sector.

We knew most of it already. And the new stuff – the ‘parent pledge’ and longer school day – is about nudging more parental involvement.

On the school front, the government has said: here's some targets, here's some help if you need (ie extending the work of the Education Endowment Foundation), it's over to you.

You could badge that up as trusting teachers – as the experts – to lead the way. You could criticise it for lacking ambition, given the huge scale of Covid catch-up.

With the tide of poverty soon due to hit schools - as the cost-of-living crisis bites - it certainly feels more like the latter.

Many in the sector also feel there was a missed opportunity to transform early years – where the gap the government is trying to close with its new targets often starts.

But many of these problems are also rooted in sorting out the current “messy and confused” school system.

There's lots to welcome on academy reform, but the 2030 deadline and some vague proposals potentially just prolong providing solutions.

The SEND green paper has much meatier policies (to be expected, given it is nearly three years in the making).

There is lots of sense in it, and it has received a cautious welcome. But what is important here is implementation – which is where the 2014 reforms went horribly wrong.

Both papers feel like the first step on what seems like the right path. Is that good enough for a government that's been at the helm for 12 years?

Either way, with plenty of consultation, hopefully they will shape up into the long-term, bipartisan settlement the sector has been crying out for.

After two years of Covid disruption, a decade of austerity and years of piecemeal reforms since Michael Gove's departure, a sense of vision and the promise of stability will be welcome. But, ultimately, there's just not a lot to get too excited (or too worked up) about. And maybe that's OK.

SCHOOLS WEEK

Got a story

Get in touch.

CONTACT:
NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK
OR CALL 0203 4321 392



NCFE

VCE

V CERTS

CERTS

Boost your KS4 curriculum – switch to NCFE

We're experts in vocational education and our V Certs provide a more streamline alternative to other KS4 vocational qualifications with **only one internal assessment**.

What's more, with **no summative assessment until year two**, our V Certs allow you to focus on teaching in year one – rather than spending this valuable time marking and moderating.

Switching made simple

We know that switching your provision can feel like an additional admin burden, but rest assured that we'll help you every step of the way to ensure a seamless switch to NCFE.

What you'll get when you switch to NCFE:

- Access to our dedicated Provider Development team from day one
- Free teaching and learning resources to help you to deliver engaging lessons
- Support to communicate the power of vocational education to parents and pupils through our parent pack
- Teaching support through regular, subject-specific CPD webinars.



Our team are on hand to help you boost your KS4 curriculum through V Certs.

Make the switch today

Visit: ncfe.org.uk/v-certs

Call: 0191 239 8000

Profile

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ



‘What we really need is a proper ten-year plan for children’

It’s a baptism of fire for Steve Crocker, as he takes the reins at the Association of Directors of Children’s Services. He reveals to Jess Staufenberg his views on this week’s white and green papers

Today is Steve Crocker’s first day as president of the Association of Directors of Children’s Services. He’s chosen quite the week to begin. The Department for Education this week dropped both the schools white paper and the SEND green paper. Together, they arguably propose the biggest upheaval in council education powers since 2010. Crocker, who now represents all the

directors of children’s services in councils, who will be tasked with implementing many of the changes, is mainly positive (with a few well-placed warnings). “This is not a panacea, but I genuinely think this is a step in the right direction,” he says. Is this just careful diplomacy, given he needs to survive his one-year presidency, I joke? “No,” he smiles. “If I really wasn’t happy

with the green paper – and colleagues in DfE know me all too well – I am capable of expressing my views clearly.” Before we delve into the proposals, Crocker, who started off as a residential children’s home manager in 1989, outlines what children’s services are currently required to do. It’s an awful lot, it turns out. First, there’s safeguarding – which takes in everything from overseeing elective home

Profile: Steve Crocker



education, finding and placing 'children missing in education' and brokering in-year school admissions for excluded children. They must also deliver early help for families, run social care intervention, residential care provision for children in care, and oversee children in foster families.

Children's services also have a "general duty to ensure that children receive a good quality of education", says Crocker – so most local authorities do school improvement work. He says this includes school visits "almost like a mini-Ofsted". (As a case in point, he was asked to become director of children's services on the Isle of Wight, while also director in Hampshire, to drive school improvement there, and he remains director of both.)

Another big responsibility is school admissions, meaning "who goes where according to a school's admissions policy". Offers for secondary school places from councils, for instance, went out this month.

The final huge area that children's services are responsible for – and the biggest focus for the SEND green paper – is ensuring pupils with special educational needs and vulnerable pupils are receiving the right education. This includes whether they need an education, health and care plan, as introduced under the Children and Families Act in 2014. The long delays to plans, and soaring numbers of parents taking councils to tribunals over them, are some of the nightmare outcomes of the 2014 reforms.

To make matters worse, trying to cover



"We've been frustrated for a long time that our duties have not matched our powers"

all these duties has resulted in a £1 billion deficit in councils' dedicated schools grants.

Crocker is candid about what's happened. "The simple way to think about it is the LA is the gatekeeper into the special educational needs system, and what the 2014 act did was widen the gate, and loosen the bolts on that gate. We can argue if that was right or wrong. But many more children came through, and that doesn't matter – as long as you fund it properly.

"Schools can get frustrated with local authorities, we know that, but we've been frustrated for a long time that our duties have not matched our powers."

This is partly why the wording in the schools white paper has given Crocker cause for celebration. It says that "schools, trusts and local authorities have unclear – and often overlapping – roles and responsibilities" which have resulted in children falling through gaps. Instead, the government promises to "back local authorities with new legal powers to match their responsibilities".

For Crocker, the most significant of these would be proposed "backstop powers" in the SEND green paper for councils to force academy trusts to admit children as a "final safety net".

"We've been seeking this for some time.

Most trusts and standalone academies work gainfully with local authorities on admissions. When it occasionally becomes a problem, shall we say, this power would simply make it a level playing field for all schools." Indeed, academies knowing local authorities held this power would make collaboration more likely, he adds.

He's also delighted the schools white paper gives councils the power to set up academy trusts for their maintained schools. "I think this is a really positive step. Particularly councils with lots of small or rural schools, it's very difficult for heads to see any advantage in becoming a standalone academy, where many of those schools feel very positive about being in the local authority family."

It also helps resolve the lack of academy trust sponsors in some areas, he adds. "It's something we've pushed for, for a long time. In my local authority, 94 per cent of schools are good or outstanding. Why would we not be able to run a MAT?"

Does it seem ridiculous it's taken 12 years, since the 2010 Academies Act, for the government to admit councils can be trusted with schools? Crocker laughs. "You'd have to ask the DfE that question, not me."

The newfound trust does come with threats from the DfE, however. The SEND

Profile: Steve Crocker



green paper says government will look more closely at “how high-needs budgets are spent, to ensure value for money is achieved”, with local authorities needing to draw up new “local inclusion plans”. If found lacking, a “change in leadership” in local authorities will be on the cards. Is Crocker worried?

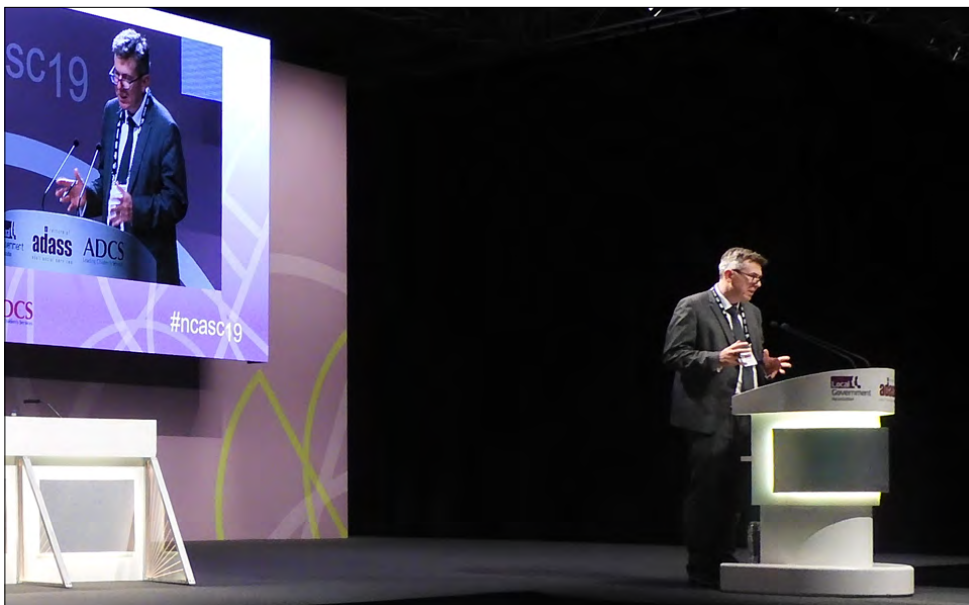
He is equanimous. “I think it’s a little bit of a red herring. I’ve never met a director of children’s services who doesn’t want to do their job well.” The issue that needs solving, he says, is that so many staff in the system, including teachers, are “under duress” and “being pulled in different directions”. (It’s also not actually certain the DfE has the legal powers to fire staff in children’s services.)

The real problem is the overstretched high-needs block, says Crocker – and the knock-on effects for schools left to pick up the pieces.

It’s not clear yet whether the money announced will be enough. Before both papers, the government had already pledged £1 billion for children with high needs in 2022-23, and £2.6 billion in capital funding over three years for new high-needs provision. The spending review also announced £300 million for the government’s ‘safety valve’ intervention programme for local authorities with the highest deficits.

There’s no new money in the SEND green paper outside of £70 million for a “SEND and alternative provision change programme” to “test and refine key proposals”. I ask Crocker if it’s enough.

“There is provision to begin to address the



“I’ve never met a director of children’s services who doesn’t want to do their job well”

£1 billion deficit,” he begins evenly. “But in the end, that deficit will become an even bigger problem, if we don’t achieve the reforms that the green paper has set out to do.”

Here we come to his key concern – that the proposals will not get rid of the costly problems already in the system. These include expensive private special needs school placements, and EHCPs the council can’t afford.

Even with a lack of funds, can Crocker defend the fact that 96 per cent of tribunals over high-needs provision go in favour of the family? “The reality is, alongside the 2014 reforms, we are also still charged with managing the public purse. That’s what we’re required to do, and to test those things out in law. Nothing would make me happier than to be able to afford to exceed everybody’s wishes.”

The green paper has come up with various ways to solve this: a ‘national framework of funding bands’ for high needs would supposedly provide more consistency between areas (which Crocker is in favour

of, if it takes account of differences in local living costs), while digital EHCPs can streamline processes (Crocker says most councils have these already).

But the biggest suggestion is mandatory mediation between councils and families before tribunal. Currently, families can get a ‘certificate’ of mediation before going to court, but Crocker is clear this is often a tick-box exercise. He welcomes the mandatory element of mediation, but emphasises it must be genuinely “meaningful”, adding “exactly how you make that happen is a very tricky thing”. Interestingly, he wonders whether EHCPs will become “less tailored and specific, and more banded and general”, leading to fewer sticking points between councils and families.

All in all, it looks like a new era for local authorities, as more trusted and authoritative partners with schools.

Given that people like Crocker are warmly supportive of academy trusts, and deeply focused on issues such as the crisis in NHS mental health services and rising child poverty, these are partners that are perhaps coming at exactly the right time for schools, who share the same concerns.

But these huge challenges mean the green and white papers are only the start for Crocker. “What we really need is a proper ten-year plan for children,” rather than piecemeal strategies, he concludes. “This country has never had that. That’s what we need.”

Schools White Paper

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

Many – even most – schools may already be doing it, but that takes nothing away from the government’s parental engagement pledge, writes Jonathan Simons

What I am saying today is, to parents [...] if your child starts to fall behind, we should step in straight away and give one-to-one or small-group tuition,” said the secretary of state for education, launching his white paper.

“Any primary pupils falling behind will have an entitlement to ten hours of one-to-one tuition. For those who are behind at the start of secondary school, we will now guarantee catch-up tuition in Year 7,” announced the formal document. The government’s ‘parent guarantees’ will be a central plank of the government’s election-winning offer.

The year is 2009. The government, Labour. The secretary of state, Ed Balls. I am a 27-year-old policy adviser in Number 10 helping to draft said document.

It’s an interesting question as to whether these echoes reflect today’s Conservatives tacking left, or whether in retrospect it was more remarkable than first noticed that Balls and Brown could front a document that would be wholly acceptable to Boris Johnson’s Tories 13 years on. But political déjà-vu notwithstanding, the most important element for me about this week’s white paper is that all politicians come to the same two realisations about education policy in quick succession.

The first is that parents matter. We all know this, of course. There’s not a single Schools Week reader working in a school that can’t rattle off 20 things they’re doing to boost parental engagement. Indeed, the common refrain about the new ‘Parent Pledge’ from the shadow education secretary Bridget Phillipson and legions of

JONATHAN SIMONS

Director, Public First



Why the parent pledge is much more than a gimmick

disgruntled edu-Tweeters is that it’s nothing more or less than what most schools are doing anyway.

But the truth is that when viewed from the other side, many schools are insufficiently responsive in parents’ eyes.

and many of them will say – almost embarrassed – that they often don’t really know how their child is doing, or what they can do to help. They don’t want to replace the school. They trust teachers. But they want to understand what’s going on and be a

“Many schools are insufficiently responsive in parents’ eyes

Public First do a huge amount of qualitative research with parents. Almost every single one wants to help their children in any way they can. They mostly trust their schools implicitly – especially at primary. But probe underneath the surface,

partner in making it better.

Last year’s tuition policy was the best-received announcement I’ve ever seen. It seemed to tick every box, and it is this central insight that the government is working with today. So whether you view this cynically as a



way of tapping into parents as voters, or whether you view it through the prism that it really does drive pupil results, almost all secretaries of state come round to the view that parents matter.

And this is where they quickly come to their second realisation: parent policy is hard. The DfE doesn’t have levers like it does with schools. They can show and ask and nudge. But often, government comes up with policies that are either good-but-obvious (read to your children, feed them fruit not chocolate), or hard-edged but focused on a very small number of families (parenting contracts, fines or multi-agency support for the most troubled).

In 2009, we had plans for a legally enforceable guarantee. Looking back through the white paper, we promised formal recourse to the Local Government Ombudsman to make binding recommendations for remedy if the school was not meeting its requirements to parents (including around tuition).

I am very glad this never came to pass. It seems to me that today’s approach is a better one. Yes, there’s no enforcement mechanism. But overall, setting an expectation – which may indeed be what already happens in the vast majority of schools – that parents are entitled to know regularly how well their child is performing, and that there are options open to them for help (including tutoring) seems a sensible approach.

A ‘Parent Pledge’ may sound gimmicky. But the central observation made by Nadhim Zahawi – that it is only through collaboration between parents, schools and young people that real progress is made – is right. I hope schools and parents engage with it in the way it is intended.

Schools White Paper

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



MARY
BOUSTED
Joint general secretary, NEU

Superlatives, misinformation and sadly few solutions

The paper is a wasted opportunity, ignoring and downplaying the problems besetting our schools, writes Mary Bousted

The schools white paper is full of noble aims couched in superlatives. The curriculum it advocates is described as “strong, broad, ambitious, academic and knowledge-rich”. The lessons to teach this curriculum will be “brilliant”. Teaching will be “attractive” and “high-status”.

Unfortunately, it takes more than a succession of adjectives to turn objectives into outcomes. And it is here that the government utterly fails to convince.

The white paper rightly recognises that the quality of teaching is the most important in-school factor in improving outcomes for children, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. So it would seem to be sensible, would it not, for the government to acknowledge two obvious facts that directly impact on teacher supply and render it inadequate?

The first is that the government fails, year on year, to recruit enough teachers. That’s particularly true for traditional ‘shortage subjects’ – but this year it also applies to subjects such as English, which usually recruit strongly.

And the second is that the profession is haemorrhaging teachers. Within ten years of qualification over 40 per cent of teachers leave teaching. The key cause cited by those who leave is excessive workload caused by

“It shamefully attempts to downplay the workload problem

accountability pressures.

Yet the white paper shamefully attempts to downplay the scale and severity of the teacher workload problem with the caveat “where this still exists”, as though teacher exhaustion and stress are not now endemic across schools and throughout the profession. If there is any doubt that this is the case, I refer you to the Independent British Skills and Employment Survey, done every five years since 1992; Its latest study concludes that no other large occupation has shown anything like the degree of work intensification teaching has. In 2017, 85 per cent of teachers reported that they came home from work exhausted – more than double all other professionals put together.

The white paper’s proposed solution of a staff wellbeing charter to tackle excessive workload “where it still exists” is an insult. It is

completely inadequate to the scale of the problem and will do little, if anything, to address the stress and burnout created by the combination of a toxic accountability system intensified by the pressures the

Covid pandemic.

Disadvantaged children suffer the most harm when there are not enough teachers. But the white paper does not even acknowledge the root cause of inadequate teacher supply – and without this its policy proposals for ‘levelling up’ will not succeed.

The main thrust of the white paper is towards the academisation of all schools by 2030. Here, the rhetoric is matched by shameless misinformation disguised by statistical sleights of hand which should have no place in any serious piece of government policy making. The emphasis throughout is on ‘strong’ multi-academy trusts, which are characterised by sharing of evidence-based approaches, quality professional development, robust financial governance and economies of scale.

In particular, it makes the claim

that if all schools achieved the performance of the strongest MATs (those “performing at the 90th percentile”), then “national performance at key stage 2 would be 14 percentage points higher and 19 percentage points higher for disadvantaged pupils”.

Sounds good, doesn’t it? Until you stop to consider that the dramatic improvements described above are predicated on all MATs also performing as well as the top ten per cent. The reality, that 90 per cent of MATs do not meet the standards of the top ten per cent is obfuscated by an entirely contrived comparison between MATs and others.

So let’s turn the argument on its head: if all children did as badly as pupils in a trust performing in the bottom 90th percentile, national performance at key stage 2 would be 15 percentage points lower and 18 percentage points lower for disadvantaged pupils.

Put that way, the claim is much less impressive, isn’t it?

In its attempt to complete the education revolution of 2010, the white paper ignores and downplays the pressing problems besetting our schools in 2022. It is a wasted opportunity, and the policy at its heart looks more and more like the answer to a question nobody ever asked.



Schools White Paper

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



SIR JON
COLES

group chief executive, United Learning

A welcome return to long-term policy making

It may be unglamorous, but ministers' return to a long-term focus on systems and structures is the right thing to do to improve outcomes, writes Jon Coles

Governments often overestimate what they can achieve in the short term and underestimate what they can achieve in the long term. In education, that can mean an attraction to short-term, eye-catching policies directed at visible changes in practice. This kind of policy makes good headlines, but it creates a lot of work for teachers and, in the end, achieves little.

Meanwhile, systemic issues that affect everything we do attract little policy attention, perhaps because they are less visible and slower to address. Yet making sure that we all work in a functional system should be the government's first priority.

Defining accountability, regulation, and the roles and responsibilities of schools, trusts and local authorities appears a long way from teaching children. But a system in which everyone is clear about their role and responsibilities, and appropriately accountable, is one in which time and energy are not wasted and everyone can give of their best. Without these, a system will be less

than the sum of its parts.

So the government is right in its white paper to set about creating a more rational school system. We should not carry on with two parallel systems – one maintained, one academy-based – when it

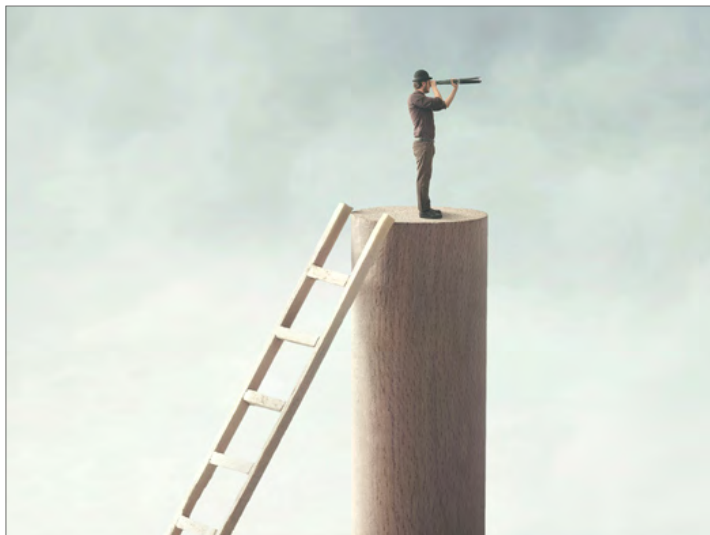
“A functional system should be the first priority

makes the lives of many working to improve things for children unnecessarily difficult.

The government is also right that the only available single system now is one based fully on academy trusts. Even those who would prefer a maintained school system recognise there is no realistic way back to that.

Equally, though, the white paper recognises that place does matter. Local authorities have an important role to play. When all schools are part of trusts, there can be no objection to local authorities having the powers they need to carry out the duties they do and should have.

The government also rightly wants sharper accountability for trust performance and sharper consequences for failure. Schools and trusts should have meaningful independence from the state with



the extent and burden of process regulation reduced – but weak provision must be tackled.

There is a narrow and treacherous path to doing so. It will require ministers to reach beyond their natural constituency and even across the political divide, to face up to the toughest issues and let evidence rather than ideology be their guide.

One white paper could not get them there in a single bound. But with the wrong white paper, the Department for Education could have failed even to get off the mark. That is not the case. It has cleared the undergrowth, found the start of the narrow path and taken the first steps along it.

It's unglamorous work, perhaps. But it's absolutely necessary to seek to create a system within which all schools and teachers can flourish.

So I welcome this white paper with at least two and a half cheers. Which is a good one and a half cheers more than I would have given the government for anything 12 months ago.

It is not impossible that we will look back at this white paper from the vantage point of future decades as the founding moment of a new settlement. A moment when government did not underestimate its ability to shape the long term.

Schools White Paper

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

Many of the white paper's proposals mirror what we already do, write Kindy Sandhu and Kirston Nelson, but needless change to systems could hinder our progress

The wait and anticipation is finally over. The government has published its schools white paper and the Easter break will give us the chance to reflect on how its proposed reforms can be a catalyst for change. We welcome the themes of targeting support for every child who needs it, a stronger and fairer system and delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance. Sadly however, our early response, like many stakeholders, is a sense of missed opportunity. The paper, lacking detail for many of its key propositions, is light on ambition and substance and under-powered in terms of funding commitments.

This is the first schools white paper in six years. It arrives on the back of a pandemic that has had (and is still having) a brutal impact on our children and young people as well as over a decade of austerity. And unfortunately, it falls short on tackling the connected issues of child poverty, health and social inequalities that prevent many from succeeding. Furthermore, there is an absence of a vision for children who need additional support, for example those in care. The white paper instead defers to the independent review of children's social care, and even this week's green paper makes no mention of them, and only one reference to virtual schools.

The pandemic showed clearly how crucial councils are in our children's education. Coventry has an excellent track record in providing a high-quality education for pupils, with over 90 per cent of pupils attending a good or outstanding school, rising to 94 per cent in the maintained sector. And the

COUNCILLOR
KINDY SANDHU

Cabinet member for
education and skills,
Coventry County
Council

KIRSTON
NELSON

Chief partnerships
officer, Coventry
City Council



Lack of flexibility could set councils back

white paper does mirror the vision of the Coventry Education Partnership: placing children at the heart of everything we do, and ensuring collective moral responsibility and accountability for all of them.

Our partnership includes all of

can draw on school-to-school support from any source, brokered by the local authority or directly with partner schools through our collaborative school improvement model. Our role as a city council is fundamental to the success of this

“Our role is fundamental to our schools' success

our schools and further education colleges and has a strong record of delivering improved outcomes for children and young people. The trajectory of improvement has been significant and sustained, rising from 58 per cent of pupils attending good or outstanding schools in 2013 to the levels we see today. All schools

endeavour.

So while we may disagree with the thrust to force academisation on all schools, we welcome the proposal that LA-led MATs will receive government support, and we will continue to work in partnership with strong local MATs. The proposed new collaborative



standard requiring MATs to work constructively with other partners is something we already adopt. However, we are concerned that the legislative framework will remove school improvement responsibilities from councils, instead conducting partnerships through a statutory duty to cooperate.

The education landscape has expanded to include different types of state-funded schools, and in Coventry the differences have not hindered progress and collaboration. Maintained, academy, free schools and FE providers all work together to achieve our common purpose of building and sustaining an educational offer that protects, nurtures, cares and educates children and young people to give them the best life chances we can. There is no competition between our schools, just a healthy relationship of support and challenge. Coventry City Council sits as an enabler and facilitator of a strong and diverse school system, recognising that the mortar is as important as the bricks.

As the government's focus turns to delivery and implementation, we believe that they will need to look carefully at the approach councils such as ours are taking. From an organisational perspective, the partnership ensures we already meet these statutory responsibilities and make efficient use of the public purse.

We therefore urge the DfE to exercise flexibility by ensuring that investment is purposeful, has a clear impact, improves outcomes, and delivers value for money – and that reforms don't unnecessarily hinder the outstanding work that is already being done.

SEND green paper

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

These proposals are encouraging but long overdue, writes Sam Parrett. The journey to implementation must be thorough and much faster than it has taken to get to this point

The long-awaited SEND and AP green paper recognises the many challenges the sector currently faces. From inconsistent, overly bureaucratic processes and long delays in processing EHCPs to a national shortage of SEND professionals, including educational psychologists and speech therapists – these are common issues that our own SEND and AP schools are dealing with every day.

So it's clear that reform is needed, and it is positive to finally have movement towards some real change. We know first-hand that parents and carers of children with SEND often struggle to access the support they need. CAMHS waiting lists are extremely long, with mental health issues among young people at an all-time high. The entire system is stretched to unprecedented levels post-pandemic.

Schools can't tackle the problems by themselves. Ensuring a child with SEND can reach their full potential relies on a fully holistic approach with input from many other agencies, including health and social services. Getting a timely EHCP is a fundamental part of this process. Yet this has become a major issue, and in many cases is failing to support the families who need it most.

The green paper's commitment to digitising EHCPs makes sense in terms of bringing the system into the 21st century and will hopefully make them easier to use and understand. However, this is evading the real problem. We are seeing children who desperately need to access our special provisions but are awaiting an EHCP.

DR SAM PARRETT

Group principal and CEO,
London & South East
Education Group



Now let's ensure real reforms follow quickly

We can't take them on until they have this document, even when their need for special education is clearly having a negative impact on their mental and emotional health, as well as on their learning.

carers can find themselves in a postcode lottery when it comes to funding and support. Standardising this – as is being proposed with a national framework – would be of huge benefit, providing clarity on

“The system is stretched to unprecedented levels

If young people can't access the system in the first place, any improvement measures within the system will obviously be less impactful. That's rather ironic, considering the green paper's consistent focus on early intervention and national standards.

Our own multi-academy trust works across three local authorities, and it's clear that parents and

entitlement fairly across the country for each child.

And where we talk about enabling a young person to reach their full potential, this must focus on their entire educational journey if it is to be truly meaningful. Our college-sponsored MAT very much supports the retention of 0-25 EHCPs as they provide a clear line of sight to adulthood, supporting



parents and students through each transition phase.

However, EHCPs usually cease on admission to higher education. As the FE adviser to the Office for Students' disabled students commission, I have argued for some time that extending EHCP support for academically able SEND students would improve transition and provide continuity.

The green paper proposals recognise this could be a real improvement on the current arrangements, which are bureaucratic, time-consuming and lead to duplication. They involve applying for the Disabled Students' Allowance, which is a process that all too often leaves students on a cliff edge and at a significant educational disadvantage to their peers when starting HE courses.

Children need access to high-quality, personalised support from day one. This must then continue throughout their educational journey so they can progress successfully into appropriate destinations – whether this is HE, an apprenticeship, employment or a supported internship.

Ensuring alternative provision has an integral role within the SEND system will play an important part in delivering this ambition. Many students in AP have undiagnosed SEND and improved alignment of the two will facilitate better and earlier intervention – leading to better outcomes for young people.

So all in all, the proposals in this green paper are encouraging and recognise many of the challenges we face. But there is scope for improvement on the journey from green paper to enacted reform – and precious little time to deliver necessary change for struggling young people and families.

SEND green paper

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



DR JESS MAHDAVI-GLADWELL

SENCO and head of assessment centre, Newhaven School

Why SENCOs must engage in the consultation

The green paper recognises the value of SENCOs, but the proposals will need all our voices to shape them into meaningful reforms, writes Jess Mahdavi-Gladwell

After a pandemic-augmented two-year wait, the 106-page SEND green paper has finally arrived. It comes at the end of another exhausting term that I hesitate to call unprecedented because we are all tired of that word. "Living with Covid" has certainly not made things easier and, while reading the whole document on our well-deserved break may not be appealing, it's vital we do. The 13-week consultation period is already under way.

The paper contains some thought-provoking facts that raise as many questions as they answer. Is the increase in children identified as requiring SEN support related to the pandemic, or was the pre-2016 decrease due to changes in thresholds and/or SENCOs' workloads? Is the increase in EHCPs from 2.8 per cent in 2016 to 3.7 per cent last year a result of school closures, or would it have happened anyway?

The data can be used to show the need for change, and answering these questions could lead to strong, evidence-informed policy.

Reassuringly, the executive summary acknowledges that, "particularly over the course of the pandemic, the system is driven by a hardworking and dedicated workforce".

“More unenforceable guidance won't make a difference

Sadly, not all its content is as motivational. Professionally drawn to the chapter on changes to qualifications for SENCOs, I was taken aback to read a quote to the effect that good SENCOs, while vital, are "almost impossible to find". The ratio of headteachers to SENCOs must be nearly 1:1; yet imagine the uproar if a SENCO made a comparable comment about finding a good HT! If so many are struggling to do the job well, perhaps the problem is the job.

The section goes on to mention variability in relation to SENCOs' experiences of the current NASENCO qualification, questions its provision of the knowledge and skills relevant for the role and acknowledges its separation from "wider teacher development reforms". However, there is no recognition of individual differences in prior levels of qualification, time since last engaging in study, intrinsic



motivation for the course, or amounts of release time SENCOs are given to engage in study.

Meanwhile, the "wider teacher

a difference. However, if it is outlined in a legal framework, then we must avoid a loophole that would allow a nominal SEND representative to sit on SLT while the qualified SENCO does the day-to-day work.

There is also a tweak to the timing for undertaking the qualification. Currently, anyone can be appointed as SENCO and must qualify within three years. Under the new regime, headteachers would have to ensure that their appointee is "in the process of obtaining the qualification" at the time of appointment. A lot will hinge on defining "in the process of", and adjusting the funding structure accordingly.

Of all the proposals, the biggest cry of glee from SENCOs will come in response to the paper's call for the provision of sufficient protected time and dedicated admin support. However, while the consultation asks for comment on the proposals for a new NPQ and requiring SENCOs to be on the way to obtaining it when they are appointed, there are none about how "sufficient protected time" will be calculated.

In the end, however, it's getting this right that could have the biggest impact on children, families and the school workforce.

development reforms" seem to refer mainly to the re-vamped NPQs launched this year, to the exclusion of other excellent CPD opportunities. Aligning with these new NPQs appears to be an article of faith that there will be no variability of experience with them, because policy solutions to limit that are absent.

Many SENCOs who are not currently sitting on (or paid as) SLT will welcome the promise of a new leadership component that will leave them "well-placed" to do so; and so they should. I wonder though whether, by the time this green paper turns white, then becomes a bill, and then an act of parliament (and who knows how long that will take), this ambition will have been lost in the process.

The code of practice and Ofsted already recommend that SENCOs should be part of SLT; more unenforceable guidance won't make

Reviews

BOOK REVIEW



The Trouble with English and How to Address It

Author: Zoe Helman and Sam Gibbs

Publisher: Routledge

Reviewer: Tabitha McIntosh, head of KS5 English, Nower Hill High School

This is a book which, above all else, is calling for *time*. Zoe Helman and Sam Gibbs argue exceptionally well – both by argument and example – that English is time poor. English teachers don't have time to talk to each other about what they're teaching about texts or how they're teaching them. They don't have time to reflect on and plan for professional development and subject expertise. They don't have time to keep up with the academic field or the latest on curriculum design. You, dear reader, almost certainly don't have time to read this book, so I read it for you. You're welcome.

The Trouble with English and How to Address It is several books in one, the best and most useful of which concerns the 'concept-led curriculum.' Using worked examples, educator testimonies and curriculum maps, Helman and Gibbs set out the five 'deep concepts' which they see "at the heart of understanding our subject":

1. Texts are constructs
2. Texts make use of patterns, all of which are conveyed through language
3. Texts are informed by the contexts in which they are written
4. Every text is an argument – texts can influence us (thoughts, feelings, sometimes behaviour)
5. Readers construct meanings as they read

Refreshingly, these 'deep concepts' are not presented as a definitive answer to teaching English either in general or in your specific faculty. Rather, the list is offered as a tool with which to "explore" as you "work through the thinking

behind it". The trouble with English, they argue, is the lack of such deep thinking, and the final part of the book maps out processes for considering this concept-led approach in faculties, increasing and standardising teacher subject expertise and troubleshooting the implementation of the new curriculum.

The other 'books' contained within Helman and Gibbs' text are less compelling. Or, if not unconvincing, certainly tangential to the purpose of the concept-led model. There is an entire section on using images to elicit class analysis. The pedagogical role of dramatically re-enacting the thoughts of, say, a fired shopworker in 1911 is considered. In what is now an unwritten yet ineluctable law of education texts, Sweller's cognitive load theory and Ebbinghaus's curve of forgetting are wheeled out to frame the argument in a cognitive science-y way. Discovery learning and GCSE coursework are ritualistically denounced, as if they had not been buried at the educational crossroads with a stake through their hearts in 2015.

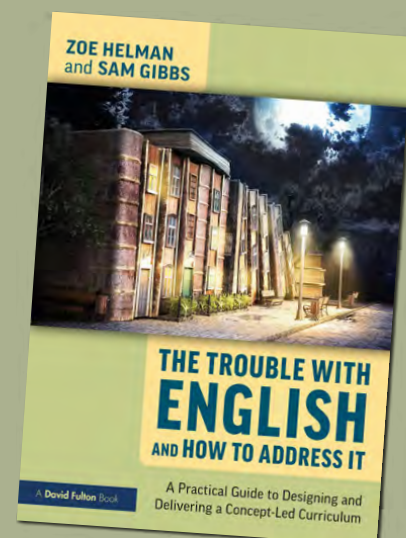
But then, those are necessary conversations. Conversations we need time to have. And that takes us back to the beginning: 'the trouble with English' is that we don't often have that time. In the first line of the introduction, Helman and Gibbs assure us that were we to have it, were we to access "really good continuing professional development" we "might" spark a "glorious revolution in English" that would enable "many more pupils to develop their understanding, en masse, beyond anything that has ever been achieved before."

The word 'might' is doing an awful lot of heavy lifting there. Buying this book might revolutionise your school.

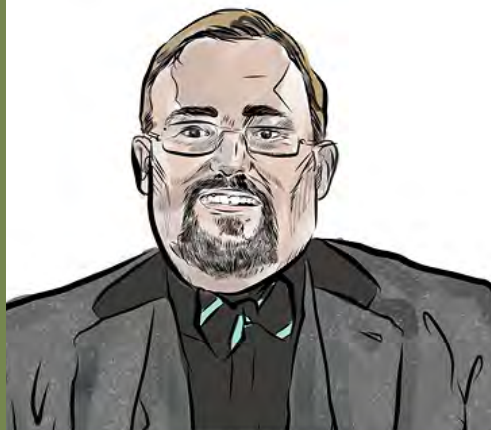
It might revolutionise your life. This is a glorious revolution, after all, so it might reorganise our understanding of parliamentary sovereignty while guaranteeing you glossier hair and whiter teeth.

But there are bigger problems than grandiose mission statements; problems suggested by the authors themselves. The book is predicated on our lack of time, and yet in the absence of time to have a discipline-wide conversation, the authors have chosen to have these conversations by themselves and arrive at conclusions for us. Seen this way, the most compelling aspect of their text risks reduction to a sales pitch for those conclusions and that curriculum – the latest convenient set of do-now tips and tricks for the busy head of faculty.

As such, this book is unlikely to change the nature of teaching and learning in English as we know it. But the concept-led curriculum (and more importantly, the faculty conversations that it requires and enables) is as good a place as any to start.



Reviews



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

@JMSREFLECT

Leaders With Lives

@thosethatcan

It's no secret that the education sector needs many more leaders. However, many talented individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds are put off, and concerns about workload and stress contribute to this. In this original and helpful piece, Dr Emma Kell sits down with six education leaders (four primary heads, a secondary head and a secondary deputy head) to discuss their experiences of leading while trying to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

With advice that includes mental attitudes and personal and workplace behaviours, this piece meets Kell's ambition of being a "valuable addition to the narrative around leaders and work-life balance." Worth a read by those aspiring to leadership and those already holding leadership positions.

Why Are We So Obsessed With Time?

@MBDSscience

It is still common for trainee teachers to be encouraged to plan their lessons to the minute. There can certainly be a value to thinking about how long you intend an activity to take and then reflecting on the reality and what led to the difference. But as Claudi BenDavid argues here, this can also

TOP BLOGS of the week

be unhelpful.

Even with several years' experience, we don't necessarily know how long it will take students to finish a task – and this is no bad thing. Reading a room, responding to students' progress and adjusting for external factors all matter more than sticking to pre-set time limits.

The message is simple: "Don't bother giving specific timings for things. Just pay attention to the class and stop when needed."

Moving Towards Neurodiversity Inclusion

@SpacialNdsJungle

Since Siena Castellon founded Neurodiversity Celebration Week in 2018, the event has expanded steadily. Appropriately, a number of neurodiversity-themed blogs were released last week in recognition of the event, but if you're only going to read one, I recommend this piece.

Castellon explains the vision behind the celebration and spells out some of the challenges that the 20 per cent of neurodivergent students face in schools. The piece has links to other reading and valuable resources for anyone looking to educate themselves further. A huge amount of work remains to be done to bring about "acceptance, tolerance and understanding of different minds". This is a good place to start.

How teacher Twitter opened doors, created friends and made me a better teacher!

@gmanstorey

I suspect that if you're reading this, you're familiar with the advantages engaging with educational thinking through social media can bring. It may therefore carry few practical benefits for you; but it is one of the nicest blogs I have read for some time. And it's from a new voice, from whom I hope to hear more in the future – so there's plenty to recommend it.

The negative side of social media often gets a lot of attention, but here Gareth Storey tells a different tale. For him, Twitter offered encouragement, help and a community of committed educationalists who provided career advice and support when needed. "Twitter can be the most wonderful place at times." With contributions like this, it can indeed!

#16: Thinking About Learning

@marcxsmith

This is an interesting piece by psychologist Marc Smith on metacognition. Having seen it categorised as 'soft' cognitive science, he considers what it is, why it is often ill-defined and why it is nevertheless important. Smith also outlines some key practical considerations, such as the importance of children reflecting on what has changed in their understanding of a topic after a learning activity, and the role of self-regulation.

The coverage of interventions such as 'metacognitive reflection' after reading tasks, self-testing and study time allocation is very brief and left me keen to learn more. But the important messages about metacognition are clear: "It can be taught, and it doesn't appear to matter what stage of life we're at."

Not Even Water?

@ShuaibKhan26

This insightful blog is almost exactly a year old, and featured in Melissa Jane's selection for this column when it was first written. But with Ramadan starting this weekend, I have been rereading it and thought it well worth reminding others of its value in promoting inclusive practice.

Research



Leeds Beckett University Carnegie School of Education will review a research development each half term. Contact @EducationLBU if you have a topic you'd like them to explore

What does inclusion mean to those who experience it?

Anthony J. Maher, professor of special educational needs, disability and inclusion, Carnegie School of Education, Leeds Beckett University

Since seeping into education vernacular, 'inclusion' has become a global buzzword, even a form of 'eduspeak', that guides school policy and practice. However, the meaning of the term inclusion is contentious; it can change over time and space, is tied to the context and circumstances it is used in, and therefore can mean different things to each mouth that speaks it.

The waters are further muddled because inclusion, as a concept, is not exclusive to the educational experiences of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Indeed, concepts of inclusion have been developed and drawn upon to discuss identity markers relating to race, sexuality, social class, gender and nationality.

Therefore, there is a general need for some conceptual clarity when it comes to inclusion for pupils with SEND if policy makers and school practitioners are to make more informed decisions about how to facilitate inclusion and judge the ways and extent to which they are being inclusive.

Historically, and even today, the inclusion of pupils with SEND can be considered in relation to two overlapping and interfacing phases. Phase one is about inclusion as equal access to and opportunities in

mainstream schools. This view of inclusion is often tied to an expectation that pupils with SEND 'fit into' existing school structures and practices that were not developed with the needs and capabilities of



pupils with SEND in mind.

The second phase of inclusion relates more to equitable practices in school. Here, there is a focus on tailoring education provision to the needs and capabilities of pupils with SEND. Intervention, which is a major focus of the government's SEND and alternative provision green paper (where many instances of the word are preceded by the qualifier, 'early') is tied to second-phase ways of thinking about and doing 'inclusion'.

While there is much merit to considering inclusion as being akin to equal access, opportunities and equitable practices in schools, it is problematic that these inclusive practices have been developed and are enacted by adult stakeholders – policy makers, school leaders, teachers and teaching assistants – without input from pupils who experience inclusion.

Much of my research attempts to centre the experiences and amplify the voices of pupils with SEND. One such project involved working with Dr Justin Haegle, a researcher from the US, to explore feelings of inclusion among autistic pupils in mainstream schools. For us, autistic pupils have expert knowledge of inclusion because they have lived and embodied school and teacher attempts to include them.

Our participants acknowledged that curriculum decisions, pedagogical actions and assessment arrangements shaped the ways and extent to which they felt that they belonged, were accepted and valued in school, but these were secondary rather than primary influences.

For the autistic young people in our research, inclusion was more about how they felt when in different spaces throughout the school day, rather than what teachers or teaching assistants did. For them, inclusion was about feeling that they belonged, were valued and accepted in school. In this respect, having positive social interactions and relationships with peers and school staff was central to feelings of belonging.

The SEND green paper includes one mention of student voice in a case study. Elsewhere, it carries one mention of a survey of pupils with SEND in respect of their experiences of bullying. And perhaps that's the right balance for this policy document. But we should nevertheless critically reflect on the beliefs about inclusion that are embedded by it, because how we conceptualise inclusion shapes – to varying degrees – how we develop policy, designate resources, make decisions about professional development, construct curriculum and teach.

Ideally, pupils with SEND should be encouraged and supported to be actively involved in the consultation that follows. When it comes to implementation in schools, there is no doubt that pupils with SEND can and should become part of the development of the policies and practices that affect them.

It's not radical. It's just a different conception of inclusion, and an important and valid one at that. In fact, without due consideration of the voices and experiences of pupils with SEND, an 'inclusive' education will always remain out of reach for them.



Week in

Westminster

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

MONDAY

Among the most amusing commentary on the schools white paper were tweets from physics teacher and Teacher Tapp co-founder Alex Weatherall.

"Great teachers are made, not born", he picked out from the white paper, adding: "Pretty sure they're born – unless this is a coded message that all teachers should be digital AI bots as a cost-saving exercise is the goal of the DfE."

Now that technophobe Nick Gibb has left the DfE, we can see how the idea of robot teachers might catch on.

Rishi Sunak would be delighted at the prospective 80 per cent drop in school funding it would allow.

While Boris Johnson would be rubbing his hands at the thought of not having to square up to the unions on funding at the next election.

And Michael Gove would be ecstatic that he could FINALLY clone Dame Rachel de Souza.

TUESDAY

It's not like Nadhim Zahawi to mention the fact he used to be the vaccines minister. We jest, of course. The education secretary can barely open his mouth without bragging about it.

To some extent the bragging is justified. The UK's vaccination programme has objectively been a big success.

But there does come a time after starting a new role that you've got to stop talking about the old one.

The education secretary, however, shows no sign of stopping after six months in the job.

Asked about the SEND review on Tuesday, Zahawi said: "One of the lessons that I learned in vaccine deployment is that however ambitious

we are, if we do not have the team and have not thought through how we are going to succeed on the ground operationally, we will fall over, and I promise to think that through."

Thanks for the reminder...

The schools white paper this week set out plans to boost Ofsted's powers to tackle unregistered schools.

Meanwhile, chief inspector Amanda Spielman was pictured in front of a massive tank at the Army Foundation College.

We know Spielman is a ministers' fave – but shelling out for a new tank to bulldoze through illegal schools while providing no extra cash for anyone else is a step too far.

THURSDAY

Far be it from us to point out a silly mistake, but DfE proof-readers must have been rushed off their feet this week as a result of their department's decision to publish every single document ever at the same time.

It's probably no surprise that something went amiss.

In a press release uploaded to the department's website about the government's gutting of the National Tutoring Programme, education secretary Nadhim Zahawi was quoted as saying "over 1.X million courses" had now started across the country.

Clearly the author of the release was waiting for the latest stats, but what we

can't fathom is why they didn't simply just ask their colleagues?

The DfE publishes its own statistics. They were known in advance. But the figure didn't make it into the final draft of the PR.

In a way, you can understand why the DfE may wish to leave the figures out. They're still over one million starts behind their target for this academic year, and will need to average 44,000 a week from now to August to meet it.

No wonder Randstad is getting the boot!

TODAY

After our big scoop this week that the under-fire NTP provider Randstad got the boot, we reported it could essentially rebid for the contract next year.

Well, we can reveal today, April 1, that not only did they bid for it, the DfE has awarded them the contract!

Nadhim Zahawi said: "I am the evidence-led secretary of state. And the evidence shows that outsourcer Randstad has undercut every bloody bidder again, leaving our cost-cutter procurement team no choice but to award them the contract."

Education Secretary, Nadhim Zahawi, said:

"The National Tutoring Programme is transforming the way schools provide support for the children and young people who need it most, with over 1.X million courses now started across the country since the programme began."



Lt Col Simon Farebrother MC
@CO_AFC

Many thanks to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Ofsted @amanda_spielman for coming to visit today. Amanda met the College staff and Junior Soldiers whilst touring the site. All topped off with a shot for #TankTuesday!



British Army and 3 others

Principal at Hill Top Academy

Grade: L18-L24 (£64,143 – £74,295) School Teachers Pay and Conditions
Location: Hill Top Academy
Reporting to: Local Governing Board and Chief Executive Officer
Responsible for: All Academy Employees and Pupils



The Directors of Exceed Learning Partnership are looking to appoint an outstanding strategic leader who will inspire our pupils and empower our staff to continue to strive for the very best education.

This is a great opportunity for an exceptional individual to join a highly successful and outstanding 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 at Hill Top Academy
- A proven track record of accelerated pupil progress and raised standards
- Strong literacy and numeracy skills
- Excellent organisational skills
- Experience of working with children with a range of needs
- Good understanding of the importance of transition into all phases.
- A good communicator with excellent interpersonal skills
- A team player who contributes to whole academy and trust improvement.

The Trust will offer:

- Excellent career development working alongside a CEO and Director of Primary Education who are passionate about education, teaching & learning
- Talented and hard-working professional colleagues who are committed to children's success across the curriculum
- The most up to date research and opportunities to influence national policy.
- Wonderful pupils and parents who support the school in all its' aspirations.
- Lots of fun and inspiration to achieve your very best!

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

<https://www.exceedlearningpartnership.co.uk/vacancies/> or by contacting the Trust office

Email: **admin@exceedlearningpartnership.com**

Telephone Number 01709 805175

Closing Date for Applications:

25th April 2022, 12 noon

Would you like to join our amazing Alps Education Team?

We are currently looking for a Full Time or Significant Part-Time Education Consultant to join our growing team, someone who is passionate and committed to Alps and our philosophy and who believes that every student should be valued and inspired to reach their full potential.

This senior-level role is varied, exciting and fulfilling, with fantastic opportunities in our work supporting schools, colleges, MATs and LAs, both in the UK and Internationally.

As an Alps Education Consultant, you will be expected to deliver exceptional training, assist with the product development and educational direction of the company, attend and contribute to Key Educational meetings, including with the DfE, Ofsted and Estyn, as well as working with our key partners, including PiXL, HMC and ASCL.

Application Closing Date: Friday 6th May 2022

To find out more, please email
jevon.hirst@alps.education



Weatherhead High School

A high performing academy providing excellence for all

HEAD OF SOCIOLOGY

Required for September 2022
MPS – UPR & TLR 2b, £4,781

An exciting opportunity has arisen to appoint a well-qualified, committed and motivated teacher to lead this highly successful department.

This post is a really exciting leadership opportunity for a successful Teacher of Sociology who is looking for the next step in their career and wants to be part of a world class school with a continuous leadership development and support programme as a new curriculum leader, or it is the next step for an already successful Head of Department to develop your leadership skills even further at an outstanding school.

For further information about the school and this opportunity, including details of our pre-application session, please visit our website <https://weatherheadhigh.co.uk/join-us/work-with-us/> where you will also find details of safer recruitment procedures and the relevant checks applicable for this role.

Closing date 25th April 2022.

Weatherhead High School

A high performing academy providing excellence for all

TEACHER OF ENGLISH

(with additional responsibilities)

Required for September 2022
MPS – UPR & TLR 2b or 2c

We are seeking to recruit a well-qualified and highly motivated practitioner to enhance our outstanding and high performing curriculum area to teach across Key Stages 3, 4 & 5.

This is an exciting opportunity to join our department and begin, or further develop, your leadership skills with a TLR 2b or 2c responsibility at an 'Outstanding' and 'World Class School'. The specific area of responsibility will be decided by the skills and experience you have to offer but may include, a Key Stage responsibility with the department, Whole School Literacy or Phonics.

For further information about the school and this opportunity, please visit our website <https://weatherheadhigh.co.uk/join-us/work-with-us/> including details of safer recruitment procedures and the relevant checks applicable for this role.

Closing date 6th May 2022.

Weatherhead High School

A high performing academy providing excellence for all

YEAR LEADER

Required for September 2022
MPS – UPR & TLR 2a, £7,017

We are seeking to appoint a well-qualified and committed Year Leader to join our outstanding Student Services team.

Working under the guidance of an Assistant Headteacher, the successful candidate will be able to create a positive ethos with their Year Group and ensure all students make outstanding progress academically and in their personal and social development. You will also be an effective leader, managing the work of the year group tutors and pastoral support staff.

We have an excellent range of resources available to support and enrich Teaching and Learning and exceptional pastoral provision to enable our students overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential.

For further information, please visit our website <https://weatherheadhigh.co.uk/join-us/work-with-us/> including details of safer recruitment and the relevant checks applicable for this role.

Closing date 6th May 2022.



Headteacher (L15 – L21) Jervoise School

This is an exciting and unique opportunity for a highly effective and inspiring school leader to move this school forwards and improve outcomes for all pupils. The recruitment of dynamic, committed, and inspirational staff is at the heart of our Trust's vision.

We are looking for a Headteacher who shares our values and has the vision, drive, and resilience to lead Jervoise School, securing rapid improvement whilst also bringing leadership capacity that supports other Trust Schools to learn from each other and beyond.

To apply download an application form from www.drbignitemat.org.

To arrange an information discussion please contact James Hill, Executive Director of School Improvement on jhill@drbignitemat.org.

The Trust is absolutely committed to safeguarding through its safer recruitment processes. The Trust expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check will be required for this post.

Closing Date: 20th April 2022
Interviews: 27th / 29th April 2022
Start Date: 1st September 2022



Headteacher (L18 – L24) Wychall School

This is an exciting and unique opportunity for a highly effective and inspiring school leader to move this school forwards and improve outcomes for all pupils. The recruitment of dynamic, committed, and inspirational staff is at the heart of our Trust's vision.

We are looking for a Headteacher who shares our values and has the vision, drive, and resilience to lead Wychall School, securing rapid improvement whilst also bringing leadership capacity that supports other Trust Schools to learn from each other and beyond.

To apply download an application form from www.drbignitemat.org.

To arrange an information discussion please contact James Hill, Executive Director of School Improvement on jhill@drbignitemat.org.

The Trust is absolutely committed to safeguarding through its safer recruitment processes. The Trust expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check will be required for this post.

Closing Date: 20th April 2022
Interviews: 27th / 29th April 2022
Start Date: 1st September 2022

Executive Headteacher

Application Deadline: 13 April 2022 at midday
Interview Dates: 26 and 27 April 2022
Start Date: 01 September 2022
Salary: L24-L30 (£74,295-£86,061)
Contract Type/Term: Full Time/Permanent



We are seeking to appoint a motivated and innovative leader as the Federation's first Executive Headteacher.

We are looking for someone who:

- will embed and further develop the strategic vision for the Federation whilst maintaining the distinct identity of each individual school;
- will ensure that the Federation's ethos and values are deeply embedded and visible amongst pupils, staff, parents and stakeholders;
- will drive collaboration, learning and joint working across the Federation and ensure this translates into measurable pupil outcomes, professional development and efficiency savings;
- will provide outstanding leadership, inspiring the same throughout the Federation to ensure strategic school improvement, excellent learning outcomes and effective business operations;
- has proven excellent teaching and leadership skills across EYFS to KS2 level with sustained success as a Headteacher;
- is motivated by a passion for education and a desire to improve the lives of young people.

We can offer you:

- a fantastic opportunity to develop the Federation;
- the opportunity to make a difference to our children who are enthusiastic and engage positively with their learning;
- a strong, dedicated staffing team, committed to their schools and the children they teach;
- the support and commitment of our governing body, parents' associations, the diocese and the local community.

We welcome school visits which can be arranged for the week commencing 04 April 2022.

Please email helen.gibson@coventrydbe.org for further information and an application pack.

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.

**Buttershaw Business
and Enterprise College**

Reevy Road West, Bradford, BD6 3PX



HEADTEACHER

Salary: L36 – L42 (£99,681 - £115,483)
Full Time, Permanent for 1st September 2022

We are looking for an inspirational Headteacher to join our vibrant and bustling school filled with incredible children. We would like a strong leader and team player who will build on the existing strengths of the school and support us on the next steps of our journey. If you think you can be our exceptional candidate, we can't wait to meet you.

We need from you

- A love of teaching and learning
- A passion for developing your team
- Strong, innovative and strategic leadership and management
- A firm commitment to achieving success through partnership and teamwork
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Drive, ambition and high expectations
- A commitment to ensuring our children achieve their biggest and bravest ambitions
- Commitment to the Christian values of the Trust

We can offer you

- Engaged, happy, well-behaved and well-motivated children
- A dedicated, enthusiastic staff team committed to our school and our children and who will support you every step of the way
- High levels of Trust and Governor support – you won't be in this alone when you join the BDAT family of schools
- A welcoming, friendly and vibrant school
- A career in a forward thinking Trust

Visits to the academy are warmly welcomed and actively encouraged. Please ring the Academy Trust Office on 01274 909120 and ask for Emma Williamson to make an appointment to see our school at work or email emma.williamson@bdac-academies.org

Timeline

Closing date: Thursday 14th April 2022 at 9.00am

Shortlisting: Wednesday 20th April 2022

Interview day 1: Tuesday 26th April 2022

Interview day 2: Wednesday 27th April 2022

Tour dates: w/c 28th March 2022

w/c 12th February 2022

For the Full Job Description and Application Form please visit <https://www.bdac-academies.org/employer-of-choice/vacancies/>

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our children and we require all our staff to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced criminal records check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Please see our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on the BDAT website www.bdac-academies.org/bdac-business/bdac-policies/



Assistant Principal

We are looking to appoint an inspirational and dedicated Assistant Principal – Inclusion (SENCO) to join our successful and expanding school.

Reading Girls' School is a dynamic and welcoming community, serving the educational needs of girls from the ages of 11 to 16 from a diverse local community. Standards and progress are high, and it is performing at the 'top 1% of all schools nationally' (Department of Education, November 2019).

A focus on excellent teaching and learning is the driving force behind our success. Our students are polite and thoughtful individuals who play an active role in shaping and leading the school, through the Senior Student Leadership Team.

Our aim is a very clear one: to provide the best possible life-chances for every student. To that end, we challenge our students to the very edge of their academic capabilities whilst providing wrap-around support towards those goals.

You will find a refreshingly collaborative culture here, underpinned by respect and mutual trust. We are not afraid to challenge each other in an open, honest and supportive way. Teachers are genuinely recognised and valued.

We want someone to work closely with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that all student groups and vulnerable students make significant progress, which is at least in line with all other students.

The successful candidate will be able to

- Proven experience and knowledge in leading inclusion across the whole school
- To have responsibility for Special Educational Needs and EAL students leading whole school initiatives
- To demonstrate experience of alternative education provision
- To manage Child Protection and Safeguarding

In addition, you will contribute to the development and delivery of

the school and Trust vision and values as determined by The Thames Learning Trust.

We are committed to staff continuous professional development (CPD). Ofsted (November 2021) highlighted that "Leaders consistently prioritise the professional development of their staff. This includes a focus on making sure teachers have the most up-to-date and relevant specialist knowledge in their subject areas."

We also offer a forward-thinking Employee Assistance Programme, no lesson cover and generous non-teaching time allocation. As we are close to the centre of Reading, travel connections are first rate, with the M4 and M3 within easy reach, as well as the mainline railway station (with fast connections to London).

To find out more about Reading Girls School visit:

www.readinggirlsschool.co.uk

The closing date is noon 2nd April

To apply for this position, please visit **www.readinggirlsschool.co.uk**

Applications will not be considered without a completed application form.

Visits prior to application are warmly welcomed. To arrange a visit, please contact, Ms Clacey jclacey@readinggirlsschool.net, PA to the Principal.

The Thames Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. For this post prior to appointment, The Thames Learning Trust will apply for an enhanced disclosure certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service.



HEADTEACHER VACANCY

Northumberland Heath Primary School



Role: Headteacher
Contract: Full time/permanent
Salary: Starting salary L18 (£67,495) but negotiable dependant on experience
Start Date: 1st September 2022

Woodland Academy Trust is thrilled to be currently recruiting for a Headteacher at Northumberland Heath Primary School.

As Headteacher, the successful candidate will have the courage to lead the school with compassion and keep the children and community at the heart of all decision-making.

We are looking to speak with candidates who have vision, drive and ambition to build on the school's journey so far and help the school to reach its vision for excellence. The successful candidate will work closely with other members of the established leadership team to provide the highest quality education throughout the school.

The successful candidate will have a proven track record of leadership experience and demonstrate their skills in successful school improvement and motivating colleagues through change.

As a Headteacher within our Trust you will work collaboratively with other leaders across the Trust to come together as a united team of educational professionals to develop the vision of the Trust across our entire community.

To find out more information and to apply please visit our recruitment page:
www.woodlandacademytrust.co.uk/join-us

Application Deadline: Friday 8th April 2022
Interviews: Friday 22nd April 2022

For more information about Woodland Academy Trust please visit:
www.woodlandacademytrust.co.uk

Visits to our school are warmly encouraged. Please contact recruitment@watschools.org.uk to arrange.



AMBITION



COLLABORATION



COMPASSION



EXCELLENCE



INCLUSIVITY



**Woodland
Academy Trust**
Ignite the spark, reveal the champion



DEPUTY CEO

Salary range: L27 – L31
Full-time, Permanent
Start Date: 1st September, 2022

Due to the recent appointment of our new CEO, we are excited to announce this vacancy for a Deputy CEO within Kernow Learning, a primary academy Trust of 20 schools throughout Cornwall.

Trustees seek an inspirational DCEO, to work alongside the CEO and Executive Leadership Team, to continue to grow the Trust's regional reputation as a highly effective primary trust.

Our ideal candidate has a passion and proven track record for school improvement and is a team player experienced in building strong relationships with all stakeholders. A qualified teacher with recent executive school leadership experience, they will join our Trust at an exciting juncture as we move to open our new free school, Sky Primary, in partnership with the Eden Project.

We offer:

- A competitive salary
- Teachers' Pensions Scheme
- A culture which seeks to be fair, developmental, and supportive of staff and pupils
- A focus on staff wellbeing, and access to wellbeing services

Please refer to the Information for Candidates brochure.

Please contact the Designated CEO, Clare Crowle, in the first instance if you are interested in applying, by contacting the PA to the CEO (Bernie Blacklaw) on 01637 303106.

Please download the application pack from our website

<https://sites.google.com/view/klvacancies/leadership-vacancies> and return completed form and EO monitoring form to:

hr@kernowlearning.co.uk

Closing Date: 9am on 4th April, 2022

Interviews: Tuesday, 26th April, 2022

Kernow Learning is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and follows the Safer Recruitment process; the successful applicant will be expected to share this commitment and will be subject to checks including an enhanced DBS and prohibition checks. We are an equal opportunities employer and welcome applications from all.

Kernow Learning, The Old Cricket Pavilion, Treninnick Hill, NEWQUAY TR7 2JU

Website: www.kernowlearning.co.uk | e-mail: hr@kernowlearning.co.uk | Tel. 01637 303106 (HR)



The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust (DOWAT)
Our Lady Catholic Primary School, Hitchin



Headteacher

The successful candidate will be offered 7 point range between L12 and L21

Start date: 1st September 2022

Owing to the promotion of our current headteacher, Our Lady Catholic Primary School is looking for a new headteacher from September 2022.

The school offers a distinctively Catholic education in an inclusive environment.

Our Lady has been on a journey of rapid improvement in recent years and secured good and outstanding judgements in its recent Diocesan inspection. The school expects positive validation of its work when Ofsted next visits.

The school is a member of the Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust and leaders work supportively and collaboratively for the common good. Catholic excellence permeates our work.

You will:

- Be a practising Catholic with a strong commitment to Catholic education
- Have a clear vision for the future of the school, building on its current strengths
- Have a proven track record in raising standards in teaching and learning resulting in whole school improvement
- Be able to motivate and inspire the whole school community
- Be excited by the wider opportunities offered by DoWAT

We offer:

- A supportive and caring ethos based on the values of the Catholic faith
- Extensive support and collaboration across DoWAT
- Opportunities for continuing professional development with a strong leadership group, including development for first time headteachers
- The opportunity to work with enthusiastic and friendly children, committed staff and supportive parents
- An enthusiastic and supportive Local Governing Body

School visits are welcomed and encouraged by prior arrangement.

To arrange this, or to obtain any further information, please contact the school on 01462622555.

Closing Date: 19th April 2022 5pm

Interviews: w/c 25th April 2022

For further information, please visit

<https://www.dowat.co.uk/40/vacancies>



Regional Development Lead

Home based to cover the South East, London and East of England regions.

Starting Salary: £39,000 (negotiable for exceptional candidates – depending on experience).

Annual inflation increase (subject to affordability) + annual incremental rises.

Home based with occasional travel to Birmingham and within the region

Do you have a proven track record in partnership development and creating opportunities?

Do you have an in-depth knowledge of school governance?

Are you passionate about improving schools by developing effective governance?

If you have answered YES to these questions, then we would like to hear from you.

We have an exciting opportunity for right person to join NGA as Regional Development Lead for London, South-East and East of England. You will join the newly formed Governance Development team who share a passion for developing opportunities with new and existing partners and being the face of NGA within the regions. As part of our flexible working commitment, we

are willing to be flexible in terms of the shape of the region and will consider part time for one of the regions or full time for all of the regions.

Benefits include:

- 25 days annual leave + bank holidays (increasing to 27 at 6 years continuous service)
- 7% employer contribution pension

How to Apply:

Candidates must complete an Application Form. Please do not send a CV or include a CV to support the Application Form.

Candidates are asked to submit the monitoring form. The information provided is confidential and used for monitoring purposes only.

If you have any questions about the role, please email jobs@nga.org.uk

Applications should be sent to jobs@nga.org.uk with "Regional Lead" in the subject line **by 12 noon Friday 8th April 2022.**

NGA is an equal opportunities organisation and Disability Confident employer. We encourage applications from all backgrounds and communities.

Closing date for applications:

Friday 8th April 2022

Shortlisted candidates notified:

Monday 11th April 2022

Interview Date: Wednesday 20th April 2022

We will aim to offer alternative interview dates if shortlisted candidates are unavailable on this date.



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT OFFICER

The Redstart Learning Partnership is looking to appoint an experienced school improvement lead to join our senior team. This role will support our heads of school to implement plans for sustained improvement, provide mentoring support for those new to school leadership or those requiring additional support. You will lead a development programme for our next tranche of leaders as well as contribute to the development of the Trust wide CPD programme. The School Improvement Officer will ensure that each school within the Trust provides high quality teaching and learning and achieves the highest possible outcomes for all pupils. This role is part of the Trust's Senior Executive Team.



Chief Finance Officer

Bosco Catholic Education Trust is looking to appoint an ambitious, hardworking and well-qualified Chief Finance Officer to work with schools across Sussex. This unique and important post has the potential to make a very real difference and lasting impact on the future life-chances of the children entrusted to our care.

The CFO will be a member of the Trust Central Team (TCT) and work with the Board of Trustees, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Operations Officer (COO), Headteachers, leadership teams and Local Governing Committees (LGCs). The post holder will be responsible for managing the current financial position and to establish the vision for the future financial management of the Trust.

If you want to work with wonderful staff, students, and a forward-thinking leadership group, this is the job for you. We are always striving to improve and we'd love you to be part of this journey.



ST JOSEPH'S
Catholic Primary School

HEADTEACHER

The governors of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School are seeking to appoint a highly-motivated, inspirational and dedicated Headteacher with the energy and enthusiasm to lead the school, whilst striving to maintain its exceptional levels of education and community spirit. This is an exciting and rare opportunity to lead a successful and heavily oversubscribed Catholic Primary School with a fantastic reputation.

Our school has a well-developed curriculum and continually achieves high outcomes for its pupils. Our pupils are caring, enthusiastic, hardworking and eager to learn. Our staff are committed professionals with a passion for continued improvement, a love of teaching and supporting our pupils to achieve their best.

St Joseph's is situated in the centre of Upminster, a vibrant commuter town and a short walk from Upminster station with excellent transport links to London, Essex and the South East and a short drive from the M25.

www.st-josephs-upminster.net



Head of School

Leadership Scale 7-11

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

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

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

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

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

Travel and relocation package available.

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

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

Visits are welcomed and encouraged

Closing date: Monday 25th April 2022 @ noon

Interview dates: Thursday 5th & Friday 6th May 2022

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



School Improvement Officer

First Federation Trust

Full-time, permanent position. Payscale: L16-20

A rare and exciting opportunity has arisen for those senior leaders who wish to take the next step in their career

We are seeking a passionate School Improvement Officer with a proven track record of leading improvements in an educational setting, to join our skilled senior leadership team.

The successful candidate will work with school leaders across our diverse family of 16 schools, to provide professional support for all staff to ensure that they attain the highest standards and rates of progress possible.

Applicants must have recent experience as a Headteacher (minimum 3 years), evidence of sustained school improvement impact in one or more schools, and relevant leadership qualifications / designation: NPQH, NPQEL, LLE, SLE.

For an informal discussion about the role, please contact Paul Walker, Trust CEO paul.walker@firstfederation.org.uk

Closing date: April 7, midday

Apply here <https://www.firstfederation.org/vacancies/>



Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy, in Ashton-under-Lyne in Greater Manchester, has a strong and caring community. Following the retirement of our Headteacher, we are seeking an inspirational leader who will build on our strengths and take our school to the next stage of our adventure.

The successful candidate will be a child-centred professional with a strong track record, and a commitment to ensuring that Rosehill Methodist Primary continues to be a happy and thriving environment where children can flourish.

This is a fantastic opportunity to:

- Be welcomed into a strong community
- Help shape the lives of pupils with positive attitudes to learning who are hardworking, caring and proud to attend Rosehill
- Lead dedicated staff who are committed to delivering the very best for pupils
- Benefit from the support of the Epworth Education Trust, a caring and inclusive MAT

For more information, please visit www.joinrosehill.co.uk

Deadline for applications is: 9:00am on April 4 2022

Epworth Education Trust and Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy are committed to the safeguarding of children and young people. An enhanced disclosure from the DBS will be required for this post.