



4 reforms for a post-Covid pupil premium



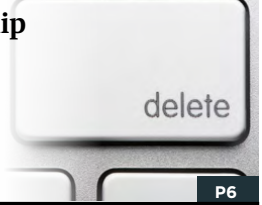
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# Row over plans to name and shame schools not doing tutoring

- Ministers want to publish school tutor spend so parents and Ofsted can check
- Part of plans to 'improve transparency and help identify and support uptake'
- But sector leaders hit out, saying it will 'shift catch-up failure blame to leaders'

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOOTH

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## NEWS

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# Ministers plan to name and shame schools not spending tutor cash

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

EXCLUSIVE

Ministers plan to name and shame schools not using tutoring cash under a new push to “improve transparency and support uptake” of the flailing flagship scheme.

However, *Schools Week* understands the proposals are being strongly challenged by sector leaders, who fear it will push failure of the scheme on to schools.

Government figures show two in five schools have not used the National Tutoring Programme this year.

Education secretary Nadhim Zahawi will write to all schools “early” next week to unveil new plans to “improve transparency and help identify and support uptake” of tutoring among schools.

The intention was outlined in an email sent to schools from the Department of Education yesterday afternoon.

*Schools Week* understands the government wants to publish school-by-school data showing their tutoring take-up based on the allocations they received.

The intention behind the plans is that it would allow both parents and Ofsted to check if schools were spending their tutoring cash. The drive behind the move is to improve take-up at those schools that have not used their tutoring cash.

It is believed the allocations published will be the grant funding issued under the school-led tutoring route, introduced this year.

Schools were given £579 million to organise their own tutoring this year, with another £65 million dished out earlier this year.

However, sector leaders are pushing government to drop the plans. One source said it would push the failure of the government’s heavily criticised flagship tutoring scheme on to schools.

Provider Randstad had its contract to run the scheme axed recently, as revealed by *Schools Week*.



Nadhim Zahawi

## “Holding schools to account to rescue a failing programme may hit the target but misses the point”

Latest data shows just 887,521 tutoring courses have been started since September, leaving the government well off its promise of two million courses by the end of this year.

However, three quarters of the courses have been under the school-led tutoring pillar. The other two routes – using an approved tutoring provider, or an academic mentor – are way behind schedule.

Paul Whiteman, chief executive of school leaders’ union NAHT, said it would be the “wrong way to rescue the government’s original failure to deliver an effective tutoring programme”.

“School leaders will use tutoring well if allowed to make professional judgments. Holding schools to account to rescue a failing programme may hit the target but misses the point.

“Further accountability measures may drive compliance, but will not drive excellence.”

Government could use data from two mandatory collections for the school-led tutoring cash.

The first is the school census, undertaken once a term. Schools must record all pupils who have received tutoring through the grant this year.

The second is an end-of-year statement from the Education and Skills Funding Agency, released in June.

Dame Alison Peacock, chief executive of the Chartered College of Teaching, warned that “naming and shaming is never the right way to go. I feel a knee-jerk response is unhelpful typically. Schools are trying to do the best they can with very limited resources and trying to support youngsters who’ve missed out during the pandemic,” she said.

The Department for Education said it will be announcing more details next week and so have nothing further to add.



## NEWS

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# Spielman blames 'vested interests' for Ofsted 'fear'

JAMES CARR

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EXCLUSIVE

Amanda Spielman has dismissed suggestions that pressure from Ofsted is contributing to an exodus of headteachers, instead blaming consultants “trying to make people afraid and unhappy”.

The chief inspector sat down with *Schools Week* to discuss the watchdog's new five-year strategy and challenges facing schools.

New figures show more heads are leaving the profession. Asked whether Ofsted contributes to that, Spielman said: “It's hard for us to tally the narrative that comes back from certain quarters that are violently opposed to inspection in principle, with what we actually get from people we work with directly.”

She said post-inspection feedback was that schools “overwhelmingly” found them to be fair and constructive, meaning there was an “irreconcilable gap in the narrative”.

An Ofsted survey found 90 per cent of schools visited between September and November last year said their inspection would help to improve provision. But schools given better grades are much more likely to respond.

“I hear a lot of negative stories spun around,” Spielman said. “There are people with vested interests in trying to make people afraid and unhappy. I wish there weren't, but we've seen for years a bit of an industry in selling consultancy services around Ofsted.”

“There are people who are there to make money out of any fear of Ofsted.”

## Longer inspections 'more satisfying experiences'

Despite the criticisms, Ofsted's strategy outlined how more schools will be getting longer inspections from this month.

Currently, just one sixth of inspections for 'good' schools are two-day section 5 inspections – most are shorter, one-day section 8 visits.

Now, a third of 'good' school inspections will be full, graded ones. This would allow for “more time for professional dialogue and evidence-gathering”.

Spielman said this was unlikely to impact the “overall profile of judgments in any particular direction”. It would be a “more satisfying experience on both sides” as inspectors and



“There are people with vested interests in trying to make people afraid and unhappy”

schools could dive into more depth, she said.

Julie McCulloch, the director of policy at the Association of Schools and College Leaders, said while schools could demonstrate their strengths in more detail, “more intensive” inspections “have the potential to cause leaders and teachers more anxiety”.

## All quiet on Tory promises to beef up inspectorate

Boris Johnson pledged during the election campaign in November 2019 to extend inspections from two to three days. He also promised trialling “no notice” visits.

Spielman was quizzed on the progress of these pledges during the Festival of Education in June 2021, admitting she “couldn't remember” the last time they were discussed with the government.

The pledges did not feature in Ofsted's five-year strategy and the chief inspector said extension

plans had “disappeared into ... coping with Covid”.

She also confirmed no funding was set aside for this expansion during the autumn spending review, suggesting it is unlikely to come into fruition anytime in the near future.

## Fine to label schools, but not children

During her keynote speech at the Schools and Academies Show on Wednesday, Spielman warned schools against labelling children “unnecessarily” as “negative labels can lead to negative perceptions and lower expectations”.

Many in the sector mocked the irony of the comment, given Ofsted's role in grading schools.

When challenged on this, Spielman said: “A school is not an individual, a child is an individual at the beginning of their lives.”

She was trying to push the focus on helping a child catch-up after Covid “before they move to put a label on them”.

## The Ofsted five-year strategy:

1. Increase the number of graded section 5 inspections to “allow more time for professional dialogue and evidence-gathering”.
2. Additional powers when children are being educated in illegal schools, such as inspectors being able to seize evidence.
3. Advocate for new powers to inspect trusts so they are “held to account through inspection”.
4. Collaborate with other organisations to broaden its research remit.
5. A three-year inspector retention target. Develop “specialist knowledge in growing areas of work”, such as academy trusts.
6. Improve the quality of early years' providers by developing specialist training.

## NEWS

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# Flagship edtech programme ends after two years

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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EXCLUSIVE

The government will scrap its flagship edtech demonstrator programme after just over two years, claiming it is no longer needed as schools reopen after Covid closures.

The Department for Education told *Schools Week* the programme would end after the summer term.

It was a key plank of the government's 2019 edtech strategy, but was later repurposed to focus on Covid and education recovery.

Under the scheme, schools, colleges and academy trusts were appointed as "demonstrators" and funded with up to £200,000 to help other institutions harness education technology.

Initially run by the London Grid for Learning and Education Foundation, the £850,000 contract for the second phase was controversially handed to the United Church Schools Trust (UCST), the sponsor of United Learning, England's largest academy trust.

Ministers recently extended the contract to July, but schools have now been told it will not be funded beyond the end of this academic year.

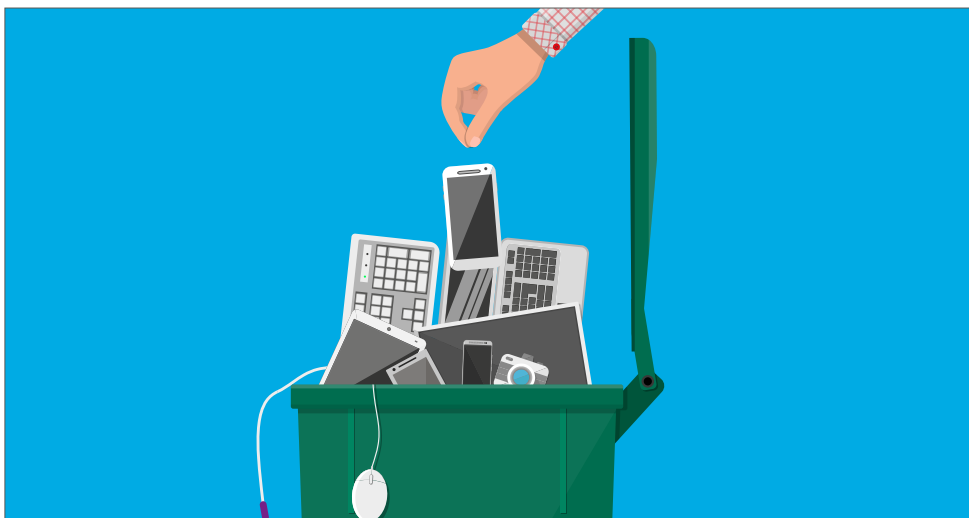
A DfE spokesperson said the programme had "provided important support during the pandemic, helping bridge the gap from crisis response to supporting longer-term use of technology".

"We will be ending the programme after the summer term as schools have returned to in-person teaching, but we will continue to work with the sector to build on education staff's existing digital skills."

James Garnett, the director of IT at United Learning, told the *Schools and Academies Show* this week there would still be support through other non-government schemes, but urged schools to "make use of the programme" before the end of term.

"I'm not saying wait until September and then start calling me, but there are people out there, whether they are Google reference schools, Microsoft showcase schools, Apple distinguished schools, there are people out there who can give you advice and support."

But one demonstrator warned that scrapping the programme represented a "missed opportunity".



The leader, who did not want to be named, said the scheme's launch had marked a "long overdue renaissance at the DfE around the potential of technology and its role in education".

"To see the programme end after only two years is very disappointing and represents, for me, the wider missed opportunity and lack of vision we're again seeing at the DfE about how technology could be enhancing schools."

Initially launched with just 20 demonstrator schools in April 2020, the programme grew quickly, and by the end of its first year involved 48 demonstrators.

Four schools and a college backed out at the start of phase two, leaving 43 demonstrators working with UCST. However, only 27 have been asked to stay on until July this year.

The government also recently announced funding allocations to cover the final four months of the scheme. Originally, £5.5 million was shared between demonstrators in the second phase, with grants ranging from £10,000 to £200,000.

Between now and July, grants for the remaining 27 schools will range from £5,000 to £60,000.

Ty Goddard, the chair of EdTech UK and co-founder of the Education Foundation, said the programme had become a "major response to the needs of England's schools and colleges in early 2020, supporting thousands of institutions and staff teams".

He paid tribute to the demonstrator schools and trusts, which he said were "not only running their own schools but were part of this educator-led pandemic response".

The DfE "deserves credit" for investing in the original scheme, he said.



Ty Goddard

The scheme's cancellation comes despite a recent government study finding that schools have "some distance to go" to make the best use of available technology. Ministers also recently launched a new set of digital and technology standards for schools.

But a DfE official acknowledged this week that the government needed to get better at drawing schools' attention to guidance on education technology.

Sofia Costa, an edtech policy adviser at the department, said feedback from schools showed some "don't know where to begin" when using technology. She admitted the government "has maybe not been the best at providing guidance to schools historically".

Goddard warned the sector needed "more than warm words", and said new standards without proper investment "won't allow us to maximise the potential of edtech for the good of England's education system".

"This investment must not be allowed to go to waste, as we need a new fit for purpose edtech strategy that puts education technology, support for educators and the gains made at the heart of moving forward."



## NEWS



Teaching Regulation Agency offices

## Head 'under a lot of stress' avoids ban for dishonesty

**TOM BELGER**

@TOM\_BELGER

A former headteacher avoided a teaching ban for "dishonestly" backdating a risk assessment because she was under "a lot of stress and pressure" ahead of an inspection.

A Teaching Regulation Agency panel found Catherina Rowsell-Dickens, former head of Wapping High School, guilty of unacceptable professional conduct following the incident.

She began working at the newly established east London secondary in 2013. But she resigned four years later after a series of allegations prompted a school investigation.

Governors decided claims did not warrant referral to the TRA, but it launched its own probe after a "third party" reported her.

Rowsell-Dickens admitted to backdating a risk assessment over a new hire, when she realised it had not been completed at the time of interview. The TRA had received a covert recording of her discussing the issue with her personal assistant, who flagged the gaps.

The panel said the misconduct finding was "serious" as it involved dishonesty.

But it dismissed a claim she "falsified" information, saying she was simply "trying to recall" the individual's interview answers when filling in the form.

The TRA ruling found there was "clear evidence she was under a lot of stress and pressure", with an inspection pending at a new school facing multiple challenges.

Her actions involved "supporting a colleague... as a way of protecting the staff and school", and she described having "panicked".

The TRA's report refers to a "pending Ofsted inspection", but the head said it was a Department for Education monitoring visit.

Such visits before schools' first Ofsted inspections are a little-publicised feature of the free school system. Reports are not published, though in 2014 it emerged one Suffolk school was praised shortly before Ofsted graded it

"inadequate".

Wapping High was rated "requires improvement" in 2014 and 2016. It improved to "good" in 2018 under a new head, the school said in a statement.

The panel said Rowsell-Dickens subsequently showed remorse over the "out of character" incident.

A government official, who rules on misconduct on ministers' behalf, accepted the TRA panel's verdict that a ban was "not proportionate", citing the circumstances and "less serious" nature of the incident.

The TRA panel also cleared her of alleged failure to act on a colleague's safeguarding concerns over a pupil who stopped attending, or to report absence quickly enough to the council.

A witness claimed they raised concerns the pupil was at risk of female genital mutilation, but the panel accepted Rowsell-Dickens' denial – and said no other staff raised concerns. While the witness's evidence was "inconsistent", the head's evidence was "credible".

Rowsell-Dickens told *Schools Week* she was "relieved" allegations were not proved beyond the backdated document, involving an overseas teacher she already knew. "I will always regret this momentary misjudgment," she added.

She was also "incredibly disappointed" her case had taken so long to resolve. She did not say if she had worked subsequently, but added in a statement: "I feel I have lost four years of my professional life."

A *Schools Week* investigation last year highlighted lengthy waits for TRA investigations to conclude, even before Covid.

Julie McCulloch, policy director at school leaders' union ASCL, said: "While there is never any excuse for unacceptable professional conduct, it is a sign of the intense pressure placed upon school leaders by inspections and monitoring visits that the TRA panel specifically noted this factor in its findings."

Scrutiny is important, but the inspection system "feels far too harsh", she added.

The DfE was approached for comment.

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## SIMS firm probed over 'abusing dominant position'

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**

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The competition watchdog is investigating whether England's largest school information management system (SIMS) supplier is "abusing a dominant position" to push new three-year contracts on to schools.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has launched an investigation into "suspected breaches of competition law" by Education Software Solutions Ltd Group (ESS).

ESS announced last autumn that it was scrapping its normal one-year rolling contracts in favour of three-year deals from this April, troubling schools who felt they had little time to find new deals.

ESS was sold to Parent Pay by Capita for £400 million in 2020. It has a market share of about 70 per cent.

The Department for Education initially told schools to hold off on signing the new deals before giving the green light. But hundreds signed up to take collective legal action.

The CMA said it was considering "whether schools were given sufficient time to consider their options, such as moving to an alternative provider".

Schools use information management systems to process pupil data, including attendance and safeguarding.

The CMA said it had been told by some schools that the process for selecting a provider was "often lengthy and can involve complex procurement steps".

The watchdog would consider "all relevant issues, including the concerns raised by schools and whether it should be imposing interim measures while its investigation is ongoing".

Ann Pope, the senior director of antitrust at the CMA, said: "Thousands of schools rely on management information systems and their choice of supplier should not be restricted."

She said that while ESS had made "some changes" such as a six-month break clause, "some schools tell us this is still not enough time".

The watchdog said its investigation would also consider the pricing of some ESS packages – and how its SIMS product was sold alongside financial management software.

An initial investigation will run until August.

An ESS spokesperson said the company "believes it has acted properly at all times and has constructively addressed the CMA's concerns".

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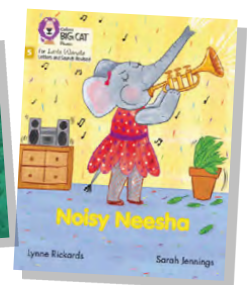
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## INVESTIGATION

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# The school gender gap narrows, but slowly

TOM BELGER

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EXCLUSIVE

Academy trusts are launching women-only leadership programmes, promising flexible working and overhauling recruitment advertising to attract more men into "traditionally female" roles to drive down gender pay gaps.

*Schools Week* analysis shows gaps narrowed at the largest trusts in 2020-21 – but on current trends it will take 22 years to close them altogether.

Alice Gregson, the chief operating officer at the trust support group Forum Strategy, said it painted a "worrying picture" with education lagging behind other sectors. But trusts argue that the data is flawed.

## Pay gap closes - but still 26%

Large employers have had to publish median male and female pay per hour since 2018.

Among the 20 biggest trusts, women lag behind men by 26 per cent, but it marks a 1.2 percentage point improvement year-on-year.

The gaps narrowed in half of the trusts, one stayed the same and nine worsened.

The Bath & Wells Multi-Academy Trust improved most: its gender pay gap decreased from 32.1 to 19.5 per cent.

Nicola Edwards, its chief executive, said more women had been encouraged into middle and senior leadership. It now anonymised applications, and ensured gender-balanced recruitment panels.

The Harris Federation's gap narrowed from 15.9 to 13.5 per cent, the second lowest.

Sir Dan Moynihan, its chief executive, said it remained "bigger than it should be", but highlighted Harris' efforts to recruit women on to its two-year "accelerated principal" programme.

"Half the battle is building



confidence," he said.

Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT), whose gap was the fourth largest, but narrowed slightly, runs a leadership course that is open to women in all roles.

Many participants have since been promoted, said Katy Bradford, the trust's chief operating officer,

Ark Schools, with the smallest gap at 12.3 per cent, highlighted its female-dominated management, efforts to "incorporate part-time and flexible workers", and a new diversity and inclusion manager post.

Bath & Wells said flexible working and

parental leave policies had boosted female leadership and male take-up of support staff roles.

The Peterborough Diocese Education Trust (PDET) needed to attract more men into primary education support roles, its report said. It highlighted calls by MPs for better leave for fathers.

United Learning reformed the wording and imagery on recruitment advertising to attract not only women into leadership and facilities jobs, but also men into "traditionally female" teaching assistant and primary teaching roles.

## STATS

26%

AVERAGE PAY GAP  
AT LARGE TRUSTS

22 YEARS

HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE  
THEM TO END IT

23

OF 50 EMPLOYERS WITH  
BIGGEST GAPS ARE MATSAlice  
Gregson

## INVESTIGATION

Women make up 74 per cent of top earners at large trusts – but 91 per cent of the lowest earners too.

### Female dominance of lower-paid jobs key factor

Education has the third highest gap among all sectors, with trusts making up nearly half of the 50 large UK employers with the biggest gaps.

Many trusts attribute the large gap to more women in lower-paid roles. Ark, for instance, has said that a “dearth of men” in lower-paid roles explained two-thirds of its gap.

Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said closing gender gaps was taken “incredibly seriously”. But role-by-role comparisons showed “far less dramatic” divides.

OGAT’s headline gap was 47 per cent. But among teachers the pay gap was only 0.1 per cent, the trust said.

Many trusts said reviews showed no gap between staff doing the same jobs, and highlighted salary bands set nationally or locally.

Methodology “artificially inflated” gaps more, Bradford said.

For instance, the hourly rate for teachers was calculated over 38 weeks, but over 52 weeks for support staff.

Ruth Walker-Green, the chief executive of PDET, said: “We don’t believe headline figures fairly reflect the inclusive nature of the trust.”

Julie McCulloch, the policy director of the Association of School and College Leaders, said women’s earnings were affected disproportionately by part-time work and career breaks to provide family care.

But Vivienne Porritt, the co-founder of WomenEd, said trusts should acknowledge leadership recruitment and pay issues too.

Three-quarters of teachers are women. But this drops to two-thirds for heads and just a third of the best-paid chief

executives, according to *Schools Week’s* annual analysis.

WomenEd research suggests seniority widens division, with a 11.3 per cent gap for heads, quadruple

that of teachers.

But while there is almost no gap for maintained secondary heads, the gap for academy secondary leaders widened to £3,399 last year.

### Union that campaigned on pay misogyny has huge gender gap

But it’s not just academies that have large pay divisions.

The teachers’ union NASUWT had a significant 33 per cent gap among staff, compared with 7.7 per cent at the National Education Union.



The NASUWT, which recently said misogyny blighted members’ pay progression, pledged “further action”, including gender balance at every salary quartile.

Leora Cruddas

Both unions highlighted equalities training for managers and improved recruitment processes.

The Department for Education fared better at 4 per cent, although the gap widened among its senior staff.

Meanwhile, women who work for Ofsted and the National Tutoring Programme provider Randstad earn more than men.

Teach First has also nearly eradicated its gap – it fell to 0.1 per cent – after moving hiring decisions from managers to a trained, diverse “assessor community”, and recruiting more female managers.

Porritt said organisations should not see reports alone as “complying”, instead co-developing action plans with staff.

Mandy Coalter, the founder of the HR consultancy Talent Architects, said breaking down gender stereotypes, however difficult, could address pay gaps – and staff shortages.

## 2021 gender pay gap data

Employer	Women’s hourly earnings for every £1 men earn	More or less than previous year	Average pay gap in hourly wages (%)
Peterborough Diocese Education Trust	36.1p	17p less	63.9%
Delta Academies Trust	50p	5p less	50.0%
Greenwood Academies Trust	52.6p	2p less	47.4%
Outwood Grange Academies Trust	53p	1p less	47.0%
Diocese of Ely MAT	54.1p	12p less	45.9%
David Ross Education Trust	59.5p	0.3p less	40.5%
Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust	61.1p	Same	38.9%
GLF Schools	61.6p	3p less	38.4%
NASUWT	67p	1p more	33.0%
Plymouth CAST	67p	5p more	33.0%
Hamwic Education Trust	67.2p	0.3p worse	32.8%
REAch2	67.7p	3p less	32.3%
AET	71.8p	6p more	28.2%
The Kemnal Academies Trust	72.5p	5p more	27.5%
Ormiston Academies Trust	73.6p	4p more	26.4%
Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust	73.7p	1p less	26.3%
Oasis Community Learning	77.7p	1p more	22.3%
Bath & Wells Diocesan Academies Trust	80.5p	13p more	19.5%
United Learning	81.2p	2p more	18.8%
Harris Federation	86.5p	2p more	13.5%
Ark Schools	87.7p	1p more	12.3%
Ofqual	87.9p	5p less	12.1%
National Education Union	92.3p	1p more	7.7%
Department for Education	96p	4p more	4.0%
Teach First	99.9p	2p more	0.1%
Randstad Public Services	107.7p	8p more	-7.7%
Ofsted	108p	2p more	-8.0%

Schools

Other education employers



Vivienne Porritt



## NEWS

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# Costs for delayed secure school balloon to £36.5m

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The first secure school for young offenders is now three years behind schedule and £31 million over budget, a National Audit Office investigation has found.

The school, on the site of a former secure training centre in Medway, Kent, was supposed to open in autumn 2020 and cost £4.9 million.

But delays mean it will not open until November 2023 at the earliest, with incorrect assumptions about timescale, changes needed to meet Ofsted requirements and arrangements for charity status blamed.

The estimated costs of the project have also ballooned to £36.5 million, an increase of 645 per cent on the Ministry of Justice's 2018 estimate. It follows "significant design revisions after due diligence".

However, this is still less than the £59 million estimated cost of building a secure school from scratch, though the audit office said the final full costs "will not be known until the advanced site designs are complete".



Dame Meg Hillier

## 'A crisis in the making'

Dame Meg Hillier, the chair of the public accounts committee, said years of "mismanagement and poor performance" meant the youth justice system "risks failing many of the children who end up in custody".

"It feels like a crisis in the making. Children in custody are expected to double by 2024, yet new facilities are delayed and existing ones are failing to meet standards."

Secure schools were first recommended in the 2016 Taylor review, which called for education to

be central to dealing with children in custody.

The government initially pledged to open two schools, which will be registered as both 16 to 19 academies and secure children's homes. So far only one is in development.

The Oasis Charitable Trust, sponsor of the 52-school Oasis Community Learning academy trust, was chosen to run the first school in 2019.

The government said it would cater for 49 pupils with an annual budget of £10.5 million, based on a cost of between £186,000 and £212,000 per place per year.

But more than three years after the contract was awarded, and over a year after the school was due to open, the site remains closed.

Steve Chalke, the founder of Oasis, said the charity remained "committed" to opening the school, although this hinged on the government approving its business plan. The site would reopen as a secure training centre if approval was not given later this year.

The prisons service is also "considering the details of its funding agreement with Oasis on accommodating all children who need places", but has "not yet worked out a mechanism to legally enforce this".

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOTH

## £11k canapes help guests swallow Zahawi's climate strategy

The Department for Education spent more than £11,000 on canapes and booze for the launch event of its climate change strategy – but civil servants were barred from the buffet.

Nadhim Zahawi launched his schools sustainability vision – which included a new natural history GCSE – at the Natural History Museum on Thursday evening last week.

Attendees included adventurer Bear Grylls and Doug Gurr, the museum's director.

While the museum waived its fee for hosting the event, the DfE had to cover catering for the 200 to 250 guests, a spokesperson said.

Taste Studios, trading as "The Recipe", was given a £11,480 contract to provide the food – about £46 a head.

Taste describes itself as a "premium caterer" for "some of the largest and most prestigious events" in London.

Canapes listed on its website include seared duck breast served on sweet potato polenta



Bear Grylls

cake, decorated with comfit cherries. Or rolled wing of skate with summer truffle stuffing and crispy celeriac sticks.

The government said it had to use a caterer from the museum's list of accredited suppliers.

Staff were "asked not to eat or drink [at] the event" as they were there for work and not as invitees.

The Civil Service Code says officials



must carry out their "fiduciary obligations responsibly", making sure public money is used "properly and efficiently".

The launch "brought together individuals and organisations who can help us implement our strategy in order to galvanise support from them – whether through funding, resources, driving public support and awareness, or encouraging youth engagement", said a spokesperson.

The government has been on a money-saving mission in schools – sending in experts to help headteachers cut costs. One adviser told a school in 2019 to limit lunch portions for pupils.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
CONTACT US [NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK](mailto:NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK)

## Another SEND delay looms

Ministers are considering extending their consultation on plans set out in the landmark SEND review, following delays in publishing accessible versions of the documents.

The green paper was launched at the end of last month, with British Sign Language and an easy-read versions promised by "early April".

Will Quince, the children's minister, apologised for the delay and said the two versions should be published in the coming days. But he is now considering extending the consultation period. The SEND review was published two years late.

[Full story here](#)


## Girls shun 'hard maths'



Katherine Birbalsingh has been asked to apologise after claiming low uptake of physics among girls was because they would rather not do the "hard maths" associated with the subject.

Birbalsingh, chair of the government's social mobility commission, said girls make up just 16 per cent of physics GCSE entries at her school, Michaela, in north London.

"I just think they don't like it," she told MPs. "There's a lot of hard maths in there that I think they would rather not do."

[Full story here](#)

## No Covid rules for SATs

SATs pupils will not receive special consideration for Covid-related problems except in the most extreme scenarios, such as the loss of a family member to the virus within the past year.

Heads have a responsibility to ensure pupils only sit key stage 2 exams if they are physically and mentally fit, working at the standard of the tests and have completed the full programme of study.

New Standards and Testing Agency guidance says this does not apply when a pupil has been ill or affected by issues relating to Covid.

[Full story here](#)

## Loans rethink hits poorest



Plans to deny student loans to pupils who fail their English and maths GCSEs could deprive about one in four disadvantaged pupils of a university place, the Institute for Fiscal Studies has warned.

The government is consulting on plans to cut off access to student finance to pupils who do not achieve either two Es at A-level or at least a grade 4 in English and maths GCSE.

[Full story here](#)

## 'Tweaks' can fix ECF issues

Setbacks with the flagship early career framework are "teething problems" that can be fixed by "tweaks", says Ian Bauckham, a leading government teacher training adviser.

Polls show workload issues are prompting nearly half of primary heads to take on

fewer early career teachers. Almost half of new mentors work weekends to complete training.

Bauckham, an academy trust leader, said ministers were in discussions with providers over the issues, and needed to "evaluate and review and adjust".

## Trust in exams falls



Understanding of GCSE and A-level exams plummeted last year, following the switch to teacher-assessed grades.

Thirty-three per cent of 3,000 respondents to an Ofqual poll of parents, pupils and teachers said GCSEs were well understood in 2021. This compared with 70 per cent who said they were generally well understood. The figures were similar for A-levels.

Trust in exams stabilised at 32 per cent following a huge drop in 2020, when exams were first cancelled.

[Full story here](#)



# 'Crushing workload' pushes more heads out early

TOM BELGER

@TOM\_BELGER

More than a third of new secondary heads leave their jobs within five years, new analysis suggests.

The National Association of Head Teachers urged the Department for Education to "stem the ever-worsening losses" after obtaining official figures on retention. It shared data with the DfE's advisory pay body this week.

Paul Whiteman, the association's general secretary, blamed "high-stakes accountability, crushing workload, long hours and inadequate school funding" – and warned that the real-terms pay of leaders was down 21 per cent on 2010.

Thirty-seven per cent of new secondary heads in 2015 were not in similar posts in 2020, up from a 35 per cent five-year exit rate among the 2010 cohort.

Primary five-year departure rates worsened too, from 22 to 25 per cent. Similar trends were evident among deputy heads, assistant heads and middle leaders.

Only staff under 50 were included in the



Paul Whiteman

analysis to factor out retirement. Staff count as retained if they move to similar or more senior posts elsewhere. But leaders moving to temporary contracts or trust roles outside schools count as leaving, potentially inflating exit rates.

Ian Hartwright, a senior policy officer at the association, said leaders felt there was "no point" progressing to headship given the increased workloads, stress and dwindling pay premiums.

He said the government's main focus appeared

to be junior staff, noting early-career framework reforms and an 8.9 per cent hike in new teachers' minimum pay bands next year.

Leaders will get 3 per cent, despite economists predicting 9 per cent inflation this month and a pay squeeze over the past decade.

Further NAHT analysis shared with Schools Week indicates leaders' pay will be 21.3 per cent down in real terms from 2010.

Minimum pay bands of £42,195 this year would have been £52,716 if they had risen with inflation.

"It makes little sense to make higher echelons less attractive," Hartwright said. "It's a profession you need people in for a long time."

Stephen Morgan, Labour's shadow schools minister, accused the Conservatives of "draining talent".

Labour has pledged 6,500 new teachers. The government hiked trainee recruitment targets last week, after predicting a surge in staff departures delayed by Covid.

TeachVac also reported an 18 per cent rise in head vacancies this year.

A Department for Education spokesperson said vacancy rates were "low", however. The 3 per cent pay rise was the highest since 2006, they said.

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOTH

## Rising energy costs threaten staffing levels

About one in six headteachers expect their energy bills to treble over the next year, with many anticipating spending cuts for support staff, maintenance and school equipment.

New survey data from the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) found school leaders were anticipating an average 106 per cent increase in costs.

But 16 per cent of the 1,000 respondents, most of whom work in primary schools, are expecting a hike of more than 200 per cent.

As a result, 64 per cent are planning to reduce energy consumption, while more than half are cutting spending on school equipment and maintenance.

Forty per cent of heads said they would cut the number of teaching assistants, while 15 per cent said they were reducing teacher numbers or their hours.

Almost half say continuing professional

development is threatened, while a third will cut non-education support and services for children.

Paul Whiteman, the NAHT's general secretary, said the energy cost hikes could hamper recovery efforts. "For some, they are the equivalent to the cost of a full-time teacher."

"Money that could be being spent on pupils is being paid to energy companies instead."

The NAHT's survey found that on average, leaders were expecting to spend an extra £26,800 on energy this year. At Bellfield Junior School in Birmingham, headteacher Nigel Attwood has budgeted for £56,000 after paying £25,500 in 2021-22 – a 120 per cent hike.

As a result, the school will have to cut the number of school trips and "inspirational" paid guest speakers and workshops.

"We are in a deprived area and it is difficult to ask parents for that much money for trips or supporting visitors to school, so we fund big

parts of them ourselves," Attwood said.

Some staff will not have temporary contracts renewed and school building work could be cut.

More than a third of survey respondents predicted a deficit budget by the end of next year as a "direct result" of increased energy costs.

Attwood said his school would be in this position if it didn't make "drastic savings".

After claiming energy costs would have a "small impact" on school budgets, the Department for Education is now "considering what additional support we could offer".

However, it said the additional £4 billion in core school funding next year "will help schools to meet wider cost pressures, including energy prices".

DfE data published this month revealed that 97.4 per cent of academy trusts reported having surplus cash or breaking even in their most recent accounts.

## EXPLAINER

# White men more likely to become heads

Female, non-white and part-time staff are significantly less likely to become headteachers, according to new government research.

A workforce census study by the Department for Education says the disparities exist even when “controlling for other factors”, such as experience, location and phase.

The DfE appears to have been forced into publishing by the leaders’ union NAHT, which earlier this week secured part of the data that showed declining leader retention.

Here are the key findings:

## 1 MEN MORE LIKELY TO GET PROMOTED – AND QUICKLY

The share of female heads rose from 67 to 70 per cent between 2010 and 2020 – but it remains lower than their representation among classroom teachers.

Women are 14 per cent less likely to be promoted to senior leadership (assistant or deputy head) and 20 per cent less likely to become heads. By contrast, they were just as likely to be promoted to middle leadership.

The average man also progressed three years faster to primary headship and one year faster to secondary headship.

## 2 LEADERS MORE DIVERSE (BUT BIG DROP IN INNER LONDON)

The teaching workforce is becoming increasingly diverse, including at leadership levels - but remains less diverse than the population.

Seven per cent of primary heads are from ethnic minorities and 9 per cent of secondary heads, both up two percentage points in a decade.

But non-white teachers were 18 per cent less likely to be promoted to middle leadership than their white British peers, and 21 per cent less likely to be promoted to headship. No difference was found between white British and white Irish staff.

Ethnic minority staff overall were also disproportionately in London, even when factoring in its more diverse population.

But, interestingly, diversity among inner London secondary heads declined, from 34 per cent in 2010 to 25 per cent a decade on.

## 3 TREND FOR YOUNGER HEADS TAILS OFF

The average age of a headteacher fell from 51 in 2010 to 48 in 2016, but remained unchanged four years later. The average age of a senior leader also fell from 44 to 42 in 2014, stabilising since.

The DfE said it could reflect higher retirement levels early in the decade, with older staff replaced by younger ones, before retirement levels normalised.

A trend for increasingly large leadership teams has also tailed off since 2018.

Maintained schools have more leaders than academies, however. Officials said this could reflect lower use of teaching and learning responsibility payments, and more centrally employed leaders at trusts.

## 4 FEMALE LEADERS 5X MORE LIKELY TO BE PART-TIME

The proportion of part-time leaders rose from 7 to 11 per cent over the decade. Among female leaders it jumped six percentage points to 15 per cent, but among men stood at just 3 per cent – only half a percentage point higher.

Yet further promotion “disparities” affect part-time staff. They are 51 per cent less likely to be promoted to middle leadership and 45 per cent less likely to make head.

“We expect around one part-time teacher to be promoted for every two full-time teachers,” the report read.

“This may reflect barriers to promotion for part-time workers, especially in higher leadership positions, but may also be the result of self-selection amongst those teachers with different priorities in terms of work-life balance, who might be therefore less interested in pursuing promotion.”

## 5 RETENTION FELL OVER DECADE UNTIL COVID

NAHT analysis of DfE data published earlier this week showed new leaders in 2015 were less likely to last five years than their peers in 2010.

But this report noted more recent improvements in most teachers’ and new leaders’ retention rates in their first year, put down only partly to Covid.

Officials said the “increasing prevalence” of multi-academy trusts may affect the data, as many trust-level leaders are not included in school workforce censuses. Only leaders under 50 on permanent contracts were analysed.

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## THE BROKEN SPECIAL NEEDS SYSTEM

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REVEALED: THE  
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THE DOMINO EFFECT:  
KIDS SENT HUNDREDS OF  
MILES TO SCHOOL

As the government launches a major consultation about the future of SEND provision, a joint investigation by *Schools Week* and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism reveals the scale of the challenge ahead to fix a broken system ...

# No place to go: special schools' capacity crisis

**SAMANTHA BOOTH**  
@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Special school leaders are being forced to cram vulnerable pupils into converted therapy spaces and staffrooms as surging demand and scarce places elsewhere pushes them over capacity.

New figures shed light for the first time on the places crisis in state-funded special schools – some of which are breaching building safety guidelines because pupils have nowhere else to go.

As well as pushing special schools over capacity, councils are forced to place more youngsters in costly independent schools – pushing their high-needs funding black hole to £1.3 billion (see page 4 and 5).

Warren Carratt, chief executive of Nexus Multi Academy Trust, which has nine special schools, said: "It's a perfect storm for the quality of education to start to reduce in special schools. They are being forced into an impossible position where they are having to take more pupils – and no one has a grip on it."

## Heads get 'creative' to avoid saying no

The government does not collect capacity data for special schools, which instead falls to local authorities.

However, many councils said they were unable to provide figures. Councils said the physical capacity of a school will change based upon the needs of children.

Councils commission places for SEND pupils, which is done in consultation with the school. Experts said the commissioned places figure was a good proxy to use to show a school's capacity. However this could underplay the true figures – as our investigation found many commissioned numbers were actually already above official estimates on how many pupils schools can accommodate.

Freedom of Information data obtained by *Schools Week* shows that 54 per cent of special schools had more pupils on roll than



**“ Schools are being forced into an impossible position – and no one has a grip on it ”**

the number commissioned by their council. This was a 15 per cent rise from 2017-18.

While not directly comparable, around 20 per cent of mainstream schools were at or over capacity, based on government data collected in May.

The failure to keep up with rising needs also comes despite more than £380 million being spent on expansions, new buildings or new schools in the 51 councils that responded to our request.

Abbey School, part of the Nexus trust, has been oversubscribed by between 30 to 50 pupils each year, despite the commissioned places by Rotherham Council increasing from 86 to 171 since 2017.

Over the trust's nine schools, there are

1,126 children on roll against a commissioned places figure of 939.

To cope, seven Nexus schools have expanded into satellite provision. This includes a disused pupil referral unit in Doncaster. But the £120,000 a year to fund it is coming out of the trust's own pocket.

Schools must admit a pupil if named on their EHCP. Leaders also said they were reluctant to turn vulnerable children away.

While councils can refuse requests, this is often challenged by parents who normally win in costly tribunals.

Carratt added: "If we don't find creative ways, we find ourselves with overcrowded classrooms or inadequate provision which puts us at risk of getting a 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' Ofsted."



Warren Carratt

## THE BROKEN SPECIAL NEEDS SYSTEM

**Staff move kitchens to cupboards**

Cedars School in Gateshead has turned an on-site garage, a large cupboard storing physiotherapy equipment and the staffroom into classrooms, as well as a satellite site costing £40,000 a year. The school is 33 places oversubscribed this year.

Headteacher Michelle O'Rielly said they try to make "sensible" changes, but "have reached a point now where we are at capacity".

"It wasn't so bad with Covid, but at the moment we haven't got a staffroom. We've created little kitchen areas in little cupboards, and nooks and crannies. Staff were supportive, but it is something we need to look at to make sure we've got the space for them too."

Kris Williams, headteacher at James Rennie School, in Cumbria, said increasing complexity of need, as well as rising demand, means "school stock is physically unable to meet the needs of the pupils".

Nationwide, the number of pupils with EHCPs has risen from 237,000 in 2015-16 (2.8 per cent of all pupils) to 326,000 last year (3.7 per cent).

The number of children with autism listed as their primary need as soared from 66,723 in 2017 to 92,567. Children with severe learning difficulties has risen from 29,532 to 31,300.

The academy, in Cumbria, has sacrificed specialist therapy rooms for teaching spaces. Children now get physiotherapy in class. Funded by the local authority, a disused church will also be converted into a sixth form block.

All five special schools in Oldham are oversubscribed, with the gap between commissioned numbers and pupils actually on roll rising from 60 to 152 over the past five years.

The council said it attracts high numbers of pupils from other areas. It is now focusing on early identification so mainstream schools can better "meet the needs of pupils without the necessity of an EHCP".

**Councils' special school capacity blindspot**

Most authorities said they could not provide capacity data. Of those that did, some were years old, with one council saying their last assessment was in 2017.

In Coventry, most special



## “ School stock is physically unable to meet the needs of the pupils

schools are over capacity, based on a council assessment using non-statutory government guidelines for building sizes. The guidance recommends how much space is required per pupil, based on their needs.

For example, Sherbourne Fields School has a building capacity of 197 pupils, but its commissioned places for this year sat at 220 and it had 221 youngsters on roll.

The Department for Education's own predictions show the state-funded special school population will continue to rise before peaking at 121,000 pupils in 2024, up from 113,000 in 2020.

North Yorkshire Council predicts a 21 per cent rise in demand. Gateshead, which needs ten per cent more places by 2024-25, said there is "no capacity or ability to stretch" schools to accommodate this.

Annamarie Hassall, chief executive at the National Association for Special Educational Needs, said more "strategic planning" was needed from government and councils.

"School leaders work so hard to make sure this didn't have a negative impact, but they might be making short-term choices and not long-term solutions."

Some areas seem to be getting a handle on the issue, though.

In Devon, for instance, the number of schools with more pupils than commissioned places has dropped from eight to five. This is despite the number of children with EHCPs in Devon more than doubling since 2018.

But more than £17 million has been spent on expanding schools.

Graham Quinn, chief executive of the New Bridge Academy

Trust, also said having more pupils allows them to "work a scale. We view that as a positive as there's no doubt at all that some of

the curriculum opportunities we have have been a direct consequence of having large numbers."

Newbridge school, part of New Bridge Academy Trust in Oldham, is 104 places oversubscribed and has satellite buildings.

Ministers have pledged £2.6 billion to create 30,000 new places for children with SEND over the next three years.

This includes capital funding worth £1.4 billion for councils to "improve existing provision" and help "stabilise local systems" before SEND review reforms are introduced.

On top of the £2.6 billion, government wants "up to" 40 new special and AP free schools in "regions where they most needed". This is on top of 60 that are "in the pipeline".

But Carratt said the funding addresses "historical underfunding" of high needs budgets. "It does little to meet further growth needs and there is no immediacy that can help rebalance the system now, so that it is fit for purpose in future years".

He said historical deficits should be wiped - like NHS trusts - "and a clear long term plan agreed that recognised expected increases in demand".

### SPECIAL SCHOOL PLACES CRISIS: THE STATS

**37% MORE PUPILS WITH AN EHCP SINCE 2015**

**JUST 21 MORE SPECIAL SCHOOLS SINCE 2017**

**54% SPECIAL SCHOOLS NOW TAKE MORE PUPILS THAN COMMISSIONED**

**15% RISE IN 'OVERSUBSCRIBED' SPECIAL SCHOOLS**



Annamarie Hassall

## THE BROKEN SPECIAL NEEDS SYSTEM

# Revealed: The (spiralling) cost of a system in crisis

GARETH DAVIES AND SAMANTHA BOOTH  
@SCHOOLSWEEK

A financial black hole at the heart of the SEND system has ballooned to £1.3 billion this year, an increase of more than £450 million in just 12 months as the places crisis bites.

The spiralling local authority deficits reveal the costly toll of a broken system. The dual pressures of rising demand and increasing complexity of need have left councils without enough state-funded provision to cope and hugely reliant on costly independent schools.

For instance, spending on private school places by cash-strapped councils handed government bailouts to keep afloat has risen by two thirds.

The recent SEND review attempts to solve the cost problem at the start – by keeping more children in mainstream schooling to dampen rising demand.

But reforms could be years away. In the meantime, our investigation has found 21 councils already now reject one in every three requests for education health and care plan (EHCP) assessments.

More councils also plan cost-cutting measures that threaten to prevent children from receiving support, or to reduce or remove the help they now receive.

## 75% of councils amass deficits

Three in every four councils, who are legally obliged to organise and fund EHCP arrangements, have amassed deficits in their high-needs budgets, analysis by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ) reveals.

Kent, Surrey, Devon, Hampshire and Norfolk are particularly badly affected. Deficits across these five councils were together expected to grow by almost £190 million in the past 12 months.

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council's deficit more than doubled to £18.6 million in 2021-22. Independent school placements are the most significant pressure on its budget. The council had hoped to reduce these but admitted "there is no



“ Councils lack the levers to bring this spending under control

indication yet this can be achieved”.

Hillingdon Council in west London recently required emergency government intervention to reduce its £34 million special needs debt. A lack of capacity in-borough means there is “an expectation” that independent schools “will become the only route the council will be able to take until more provision is created locally”.

Kent's deficit has reached £103 million – in cash terms, the largest in the country. In a candid interview, the council's special educational needs and disabilities director, Mark Walker, said parents had lost faith in the ability of Kent's mainstream schools to meet their children's needs.

As a result, he explained, the council receives a higher proportion of EHCP applications from parents than schools.

What parents want, Walker said, is places at expensive independent schools and he

blames the SEND Tribunal, which hears appeals against local authority decisions, for helping them to get their way. The national independent tribunal ruled in favour of parents in 96 per cent of cases last year.

Walker gave dyslexia as an example, explaining that the council has a well-qualified speech and language service and an educational psychology department specialising in the condition. “Why then are we losing a tribunal for parents who want to go to Frewen College, which is an independent college in East Sussex?” Frewen is one of a small number of dyslexia schools in the UK. Its fees start at £6,500 a term.

He added: “It's a beautiful building, fantastic facilities – they've got a swimming pool there and everything. As a parent, if I see that, I want that sort of education for my child. I know why people go for it. But that's different from, I think, what was expected within the



## THE BROKEN SPECIAL NEEDS SYSTEM

[SEND] Code of Practice.”

Frewen’s principal, Nick Goodman, said these notions of luxury were misguided. “It is a not-for-profit charitable trust. It does indeed have a swimming pool – outdoor, unheated – and many of our classes are taught in temporary classrooms dating back to the 1980s. A look at our accounts will confirm that margins are tight. It is not the buildings or the swimming pool that make Frewen College attractive to the parents of students with specific learning difficulties. It is the provision and outcomes.”

Walker believes the answer to reducing the deficit is to increase inclusion at mainstream schools – a key promise in the government’s SEND green paper.

“We need to make sure parents in Kent don’t think they have to get an EHC plan in order to get the type of support their son or daughter needs,” he said.

The deficit, he said, would take years to reverse.

### Support ‘thresholds’ considered

Councils with deficits must submit plans to the Department for Education on how they intend to balance their books. Some include proposals to amend thresholds for which children are eligible for the education, health and care needs assessment that marks the first step towards securing an EHC plan – thresholds that have no legal standing.

Bury and Derby councils both included language about clarifying or reviewing assessments in their plans as part of their cost-cutting measures.

Bury said while it was not looking to raise thresholds “across the board”, some schools in the area had incorrectly put children forward for assessment and that for these schools, the thresholds needed to be “clarified”.

Derby City Council said it was “working with all partners” to become a “more inclusive city, to find ways of strengthening the system and balancing the budget”.

Some councils already turn down a high proportion of assessment requests. In 2020, nine local authorities (Warwickshire, Liverpool, Medway, West Sussex, East Sussex, Southend-on-Sea, Staffordshire, Southwark



and Peterborough) turned down 40 per cent or more – about twice the national average.

In 2020, Peterborough City Council turned down half of all the assessment requests it received – the highest rejection rate in the country.

A spokesperson for the Local Government Association said: “Meeting the year-on-year increase in demand for SEND support is one of the biggest challenges that councils are dealing with. Councils lack the levers to bring this spending under control, and this is a key issue that needs to be addressed.”

### Bailed-out councils see spend soar

But the reforms are backed by just £70 million of new money – which will be used to implement the changes across three years.

Instead, the government’s new “safety valve” intervention programme awards bailouts on the strict condition that councils save money by reforming SEND support.

Deals totalling £400 million with 14 councils have been reached so far, with more in the pipeline.

Merton Council will get nearly £29 million in government bailouts over the next five years. But new figures obtained by *Schools Week* show that its costs for educating pupils outside of mainstream special schools have soared by 96 per cent since 2017-18.

The council spent £9.9 million five years ago on 223 places in independent or non-

mainstream special schools. This year it spent £19.5 million on 398 places.

TBIJ figures show Merton had to place 40.7 per cent of its EHCP pupils in schools outside the borough last year – the second highest of any council.

Just over 1,000 of its 1,500 pupils with EHCPs were placed out of borough. But the council also had 433 pupils placed in its schools by other boroughs (taking 23 per cent of its provision).

In return for the bailout, Merton must “strengthen” SEND support in mainstream schools to “reduce escalation” of students’ needs and “manage demand” for EHCPs.

Across six “safety valve” councils that responded to our freedom of information request, spend on non-mainstream places had soared from £82 million to £131 million in five years. The number of places rose from 1,989 to 2,862.

Surrey, which will receive £100 million in bailouts, has seen these costs nearly double – from £47.6 million to £80 million.

The councils were contacted for comment.

A *Schools Week* investigation revealed that 51 councils spent £368 million on private SEND providers in 2019, up from £290 million three years earlier.

If extrapolated across the country, it means around £1.1 billion was spent on placing SEND pupils in private schools that year.

## THE BROKEN SPECIAL NEEDS SYSTEM

## The domino effect: Kids travel hundreds of miles to school

GARETH DAVIES  
@SCHOOLSWEEK

Thousands of children with special needs are being placed in schools 20 miles or more away from their home.

Figures obtained by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ) show at least 43,000 children with education, health and care plans (EHCPs) are in schools or other education establishments outside their home council area.

Of those, more than 3,300 have to travel an estimated 20 miles or more away – the maximum distance MPs on the education select committee suggested that children in the care system (a similarly vulnerable group) be moved away from where they live.

Some of the distances are much higher. One child who lives in Tameside, Greater Manchester, has been placed in education 650 miles away in the Shetland Islands, with another from Cornwall at school 500 miles away in Fife.

In total, more than 100 children were placed in excess of 200 miles from where they live.

Seven children from North Tyneside are placed in Harrow, north-west London, around 270 miles away. Two young people from Islington are being educated in Cumbria – 280 miles in the opposite direction.

Katie Ghose, chief executive of the disabilities charity KIDS, said an out-of-borough placement “can cut [a child] off from the same opportunities to live, learn and thrive at home and in their local community, as enjoyed by their non-disabled peers.”

“Yet with early intervention and the right support, many children and young people could be educated in their local school.”

**‘Children have two-hour school runs – to what benefit?’**

At times the situation appears self-defeating. Windsor and Maidenhead places one-fifth of all its EHCP pupils in more costly independent or non-maintained schools, because its own state capacity is used up by other local authorities.

In Rutland, in the East Midlands, 38 per cent of children with an EHCP have been placed there by other local authorities – the highest



“It can cut children off from opportunities to live, learn and thrive at home and in their local community

proportion in England. In turn, Rutland has the highest proportion of children educated outside its borders.

The council said it was aware of both issues and had published an inclusion strategy that will address “the need for Rutland children to remain in local provision”.

Christine McInnes, director for education at Kent County Council, said: “There are children spending two hours being transported to a special school. To what benefit?”

“I’m not saying that should never happen, but it should only happen in extreme cases because actually you’re taking ten hours a week out of that child’s life when they should be doing after-school activities, meeting with friends, and having a life. Instead, they’re spending it being transported around.”

For many parents it has become a case of weighing up a place that meets their child’s needs against the stresses and strains of getting them there. Jayne Evans knows this balancing act well. Her son Dominic is unable to cope in mainstream education as a result

of pathological demand avoidance (PDA), a profile on the autism spectrum.

Jayne looked for a school in Wolverhampton, their local area, that could meet her son’s complex needs, but the nearest one she found was in Worcestershire, 20 miles away.

Dominic now makes a three-hour round trip there and back every day. To make matters more complicated, he does so in a taxi with another child who also has complex needs.

**Councils shell out for private taxis**

TBIJ found that, due to lack of transport provision, more than 13,000 special needs and disabled children in England travel to and from school in private taxis as the sole child in the car. Not only do these journeys generate a huge expense for the councils in question but, for a child with ADHD or autism, they can be enormously stressful.

“We’ve had a lot of problems,” said Jayne, who would have to give up work in order to drive Dominic to school herself. “It’s two very complex children who set each other off. The driver doesn’t understand SEND. If one of them gets upset or goes into crisis, he starts shouting.”

More than once Dominic has fled the vehicle and run away along a busy road. Even on less dramatic days, the children are often late. It affects their education.

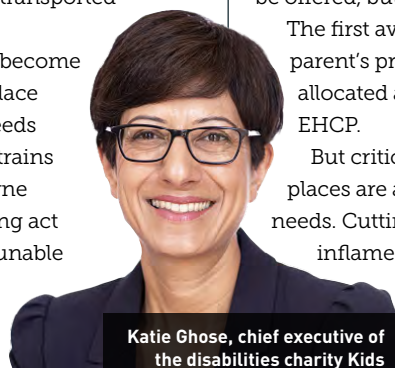
Proposals in the government’s SEND review aim to resolve such issues.

Parents or young people have a legal right to request that a particular school or college is named in an EHCP.

But ministers want parents to instead choose a school from a “tailored list” of settings, based on provision available within the local area. Out-of-borough places could be offered, but would likely become rarer.

The first available place based on the parent’s preferred schools would be allocated and named on the child’s EHCP.

But critics fear this may focus on what places are available, rather than a child’s needs. Cutting down choice could further inflame already-strained relationships between councils and parents.



Katie Ghose, chief executive of the disabilities charity Kids



# STORYTELLING: A POWERFUL TOOL IN IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

From my experience of managing literacy and storytelling programmes, I know the power that reading and sharing stories has to improve wellbeing, engagement and attainment. Reading to children from an early age can have huge benefits, but [fewer than half of 0-2 year olds are read to](#) nearly every day by their parents.

Given the frantic pace of life and demands on parents, time dedicated to reading together can be seen as a luxury. When combined with a commonly held view that reading is a skill to be learned at school, instead of a pleasure to enjoy during leisure time, the importance of sharing stories can be underestimated.

## Why sharing stories matters for children, adults and families

Reading for pleasure was found to be the most important indicator of the future success of a child ([OECD, 2002](#)). It has a four times greater impact on academic success than one parent having a degree ([Centre for Longitudinal Studies 2013](#)). In fact, no matter where a child lives, their family background, or socio-economic status, reading for pleasure opens doors intellectually. It impacts positively on education, aspiration, opportunity and quality of life.

Children who read for enjoyment are significantly more likely to perform better than their peers in school ([Sullivan and Brown, 2013](#)). Plus, reading for pleasure has been linked to higher performance in maths and science ([PISA, OECD, 2011](#)). Children who enjoy reading are also significantly less likely to have mental health problems than those who do not ([National Literacy Trust 2018](#)).

Reading benefits adults too. Adults who read for pleasure get a greater sense of relaxation from reading than watching television or using technology ([Billington, 2015](#)). Regular readers have higher levels of self-esteem, increased resilience, better sleep, and even see a reduction in symptoms of diagnosed illnesses such as depression and dementia ([Reading Agency](#)).

[Age UK](#) even found that adults who spend time sharing stories benefit from



reduced loneliness, increased mood, and a greater connection with loved ones.

## The benefits of reading for children, adults and families

Encouraging a love of reading is important so that both adults and children can experience the benefits. One way to do this is by reading to children. Being read to consistently throughout childhood is key to encouraging children to read for pleasure. A Nielsen study found that 65% of 5-7 year olds read to themselves when they are read to every day or nearly every day, this increases to 73% of 8-13 year olds. Reading to children from when they're born to when they turn 5 can expose them to [1.4 million more words](#) than children who have not been read to during this time.

Dedicating regular time to read together shows children that their grownups want to spend time with them. As a chance to bond, this quality time together can improve family and group dynamics and increase communication.

Reading teaches children about the world around them. Exploring different worlds, characters and scenarios stimulates a child's imagination and develops their empathy. Sharing this experience as a family or group enhances learning, creating chances to discuss ideas, beliefs and ways of life that might be different to what they know and see.

Sharing books with specific topics and themes is a way adults can encourage children to talk about something that they may be struggling with, helping parents and care givers to support children's wellbeing, at any age ([Booktrust](#)).

## How can you support families to develop a culture of reading for pleasure?

The best way is to role model reading together with fun, engaging and replicable story times for families.

**campaign**   
for learning

For story telling sessions that provide the most benefit to the families you work with, we encourage you to join our upcoming online session on the 11 May, 'Supercharge Your Storytelling Sessions'.

**John Beattie, Deputy Director (Families) at Campaign for Learning.**



# EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
CONTACT US [NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK](mailto:NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK)

## SEND solutions mean nothing without urgency

The SEND system is broken.

State-funded special schools cannot accommodate the rising number of pupils needing support – despite their best efforts of converting halls and staffrooms into classrooms.

This means councils have to spend more money sending pupils to costly private schools, or to schools in other boroughs – some hundreds of miles away.

It has pushed already struggling councils into more trouble – with the SEND financial black hole now at a staggering £1.3 billion.

In turn, councils cut provision – failing to provide the support children are entitled to, resulting in more costs on tribunals as parents challenge shortcomings.

These problems are not new. But our investigation today reveals just how bad it has got. And this posts two big issues.

The government has, at last, published its proposals to reform the SEND system. But are the solutions enough to resolve the mess?

One issue we have uncovered is a total lack of

oversight over special school capacity. That is not addressed in the SEND review.

What about a pilot project for councils to conduct capacity reviews and report back to the government? No one wants to add to workload demands, but we need to capture whether special schools are dangerously oversubscribed.

Currently, nobody really knows. And in the meantime, full-up schools keep getting sent more pupils.

Vulnerable children are also being failed, now. Some are being forced to travel hundreds of miles to a suitable school. Some councils are rejecting one-third of all requests just to assess whether pupils need additional support.

Ministers have already spent too long coming up with solutions. Just this week, they announced the consultation may be extended after they failed to produce accessible versions of the document.

Everybody loses in a broken system. Ministers have admitted it's failing. They now need to understand the urgency required, and act accordingly.

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# Profile

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ



## ‘A national profile may be nice, but you earn your reputation locally’

**Duncan Spalding, headteacher at Aylsham High School, tells Jess Staufenberg why an ‘extended school’ – that reaches well beyond classroom to community – makes the biggest difference for pupils**

**L**ike many of the nicest people in education, Duncan Spalding is under the impression he couldn’t possibly be important enough for a *Schools Week* interview.

This is obviously nonsense (to name but a few interesting things: he’s part of the influential Headteachers’ Roundtable and runs the only secondary in Norfolk that’s not an academy!).

Without making too much of this, it’s the sort of modesty that seems to typify Spalding’s approach to leadership.

He has worked at ‘good’-graded Aylsham High School for 25 years – the last 13 years as head. He joined as a languages teacher.

He’s not a Norfolk man – Spalding grew up in Dorset – but he has embedded himself and his family into the community, and he has remained.

I ask him why he was initially reluctant to chat?

“There’s a lot to be said for quietly getting on with what you’re doing,” he says slowly. He used to work for a headteacher called Tom Widdows when first at Aylsham High School, and he quotes him now.

“Tom would say to me, ‘You earn your reputation locally’. It may be nice to have a sense of a national profile, but actually, it’s in



## Profile: Duncan Spalding



Spalding with his eldest son, who was graduating from Spalding's alma mater, Leeds University

your own community that it really matters. It's about, what's the truth on the ground?"

So it makes sense the initiative Spalding is particularly enthusiastic about involves local parents. Before lockdowns, the school offered maths GCSE courses for parents, with about seven attending. Now that Covid restrictions have eased, the offer is back on – along with other courses too.

"Adult learning opportunities have been hit big time by budgets, and what we're trying to do now is tentative forays to rekindle that," he says.

There has been a 50 per cent fall in spending on adult education since the Conservatives arrived in power in 2010, and the number of adult learners has fallen off a cliff. Subsidies for adult education institutions, such as the Open University, have also gone.

So Spalding's school has run beginners' French and British Sign Language lessons, creative writing and home cookery courses, adult swimming and craft classes, and more recently A-level sociology. A new school building means he has more space to broaden the offer further. The adult just needs a familial link – as a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle – to take lessons.

Spalding's eyes light up as he tells me he bumped into a learner parent in the school car park recently. "She was coming in to do the sociology course! She'd already done the maths GCSE," he smiles. "At the moment,



Getting his MEd from Cambridge University in 2018

### "There's a lot to be said for quietly getting on with it"

it's a tiny thing, but we'd like it to become bigger."

Spalding's enthusiasm is in line with the evidence. In educationalist John Hattie's 2008 study, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, the author finds that "the effect of parental engagement over a student's school career is equivalent to adding two or three years to that student's education".

Exactly how to improve parental engagement is not entirely clear, with the Education Endowment Foundation stating "developing effective parental engagement is challenging and needs careful monitoring". But Spalding and his team are acting on the basis that offering adult education opportunities can only be a good thing.

The school has been inventive with funds, raising £10,000 through grant bodies including housing associations, local retailers and the town council. Learners also

pay a nominal fee that can be reimbursed, and have donated about £1,000 so far.

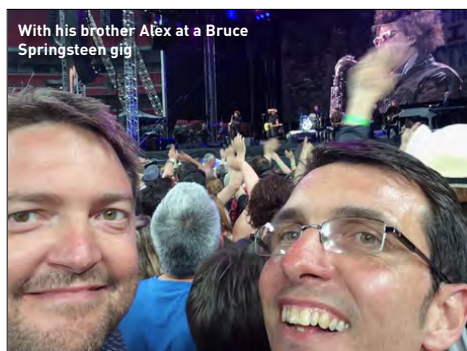
Spalding appears to have been influenced by watching his own mother, Marilyn, retrain when he was young. He cites her as a "force of nature" for him and his brother, and a great loss to them when she died of cancer when he was just 29 years old.

"Neither of my parents went to university, but my mum got her English O-level by going to night school," he says. After working in a chocolate factory, his mum joined a wine and spirits distributor. "She was always successful at what she did, and she eventually did a 'Masters of Wine' diploma." Spalding never forgot that it was her employer who paid for that course.

It's not the only family-oriented initiative Spalding is backing. His school belongs to a foundation trust of nine local authority schools set up in 2011, all primaries and one infant school.

The collective model means the schools get a 'family learning coordinator', who

# Profile: Duncan Spalding



With his brother Alex at a Bruce Springsteen gig

puts on family learning days. It's possible because one of the trustees, the Rotary Club of Aylsham, sponsors the events.

"We've done reading festivals, or we put on science activities, crafts and making. Anyone who wants to come gets a free day of activities."

Spalding's school also belongs to a smaller federation, a more formal legal structure formed in 2016, of three schools. The other two are Bure Valley junior school and John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery school. It was prompted partly by the junior school struggling with performance, and Spalding taking a personal interest because his own children were there. Rather than pull them out, he offered support.

"I think it's important to run a school you'd be happy sending your own children to," he says. All four of his children have been educated at Aylsham High.

The federation also shares a 'parent support adviser'. "That's someone who is not a teacher, who is well-known to our parents and families, someone who can go to their home to support." Similarly, the federation has a charitable trust to fund a social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) officer for families.

Such roles are a leftover from New Labour's old 'extended schools' agenda, Spalding adds (part of the Every Child Matters programme, launched in 2003). The agenda encompassed support services for children, after-school clubs and cultural and sporting activities, to adult and parenting classes – anything that went beyond the core function of the classroom.

It's arguably not an approach that's been given much public support since 2010, with the focus from the Department for Education and Ofsted on the knowledge-rich curriculum instead.



With the year 11 rugby team - runners up in Norfolk State Schools' Cup 2022



A student's impression of Aylsham High School for a graphics project

## "We're trying tentative forays to rekindle adult learning opportunities"

A big influence on Spalding's 'extended school' focus is a 2002 book by Stephen Gorard, professor at Durham University, called *Creating a Learning Society?: Learning Careers and Policies for Lifelong Learning*. Spalding says it taught him that "to encourage young people to be learners, we should surround them with lifelong learners". He believes this is at the core of great schooling.

"There's an element in education, where there's a lot of ephemera. There's a lot of things that bubble up that then evaporate," he explains. "But can you actually get to the bottom of things that stick, and work hard on them? In terms of schools, it's great relationships, a really supportive environment and great teachers."

The recent focus on working together, from a policy perspective, has been schools doing this with each other in academy trusts. Perhaps schools working with their



Spalding on holiday with family in 2011

communities has been a little lost because of this?

It's why Spalding isn't wild about the government's proposals for all schools to be in trusts by 2030. From his perspective, he and his two networks of schools already have the advantages of cooperative working.

"I don't know what the huge incentive would be for us to do so – we're already working as a family of schools." He adds that for smaller schools, joining an academy trust can also feel like "handing over control or a sense of agency".

Instead, a key measure of success for Spalding is how embedded schools are with local families. That perhaps explains his relative modesty: such embeddedness takes time, and isn't always easy to measure.

"Our strapline is it takes a whole community to raise a child," he smiles.



# Opinion

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RUSSELL  
HOBBY

CEO, Teach First

## The pupil premium reforms we need for a post-Covid recovery

**An increase in pupil premium funding next year is welcome, writes Russell Hobby, but the policy needs significant improvements to deliver its aims**

Recent Education Policy Institute research has shown that there has been no progress since 2011 in closing the attainment gap between persistently disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers. Indeed, the pandemic has only made that gap worse.

Decisive action is needed to ensure every child can maximise their potential. Because while young people's talents are evenly distributed across the country, access to a brilliant education is not. Schools serving disadvantaged communities face significantly harder challenges compared to those in more affluent areas and simply need more funding and resources to do the same job.

Teachers agree. Seventy-four per cent believe the government should invest in all schools but weight additional funding towards those in disadvantaged areas. And almost 70 per cent feel that increasing pupil premium would help their school secure better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

While the government has made

some welcome steps by increasing pupil premium rates by 2.7 per cent in the 2022-23 academic year, it must go further in four ways.

### Accounting for inflation

Pupil premium funding is vital for schools serving disadvantaged communities, but in recent years rates have not risen in line with inflation.

That means a real-terms cut, which makes it more difficult to provide necessary support to those who need it most.

Restoring pupil premium rates to 2015-16 real-term levels for primary and secondary school pupils – and guaranteeing that rates will continue to rise in line with inflation – would

make it easier to provide that support and tackle educational inequality. It would allow schools to implement more long-term planning, including teacher recruitment and development – a vital component of high-quality education.

### Recognising persistent disadvantage

The current pupil premium system doesn't account for pupils who face persistent disadvantage, the same who have the lowest levels of attainment. Schools receive the same level of funding for a child who has been eligible for free school meals for several years as for a pupil eligible for just a year or two.

So we need a new "persistently disadvantaged" pupil premium subcategory – for those who have been eligible for free school meals for 80 per cent or more of their school life. Its rate should be 50 per cent

higher, allowing schools to provide additional support for some of the most vulnerable children in society.

### Matching funding for early years

The Department for Education's recent schools white paper includes a pledge to ensure 90 per cent of children leave primary school with

age-expected standard for reading, writing and numeracy by 2030. But we know the attainment gap can set in before primary school, so we must re-examine how we are helping teachers in early years settings support children's learning.

Our research found 71 per cent of primary school teachers believe pupils entering reception are less cognitively, socially and emotionally prepared for school than in previous years. Currently, disadvantaged pupils in early years settings receive less pupil premium funding than those in primary school. Aligning those rates would make a significant difference to helping young pupils develop the social and academic skills they need to transition to primary school and in turn to helping meet these ambitious targets.

### Seeing pupils through their whole journey

Currently, there is no pupil premium for 16-to-19-year-olds. This is an anomaly in the system; its introduction could boost participation and achievement – and improve thousands of young people's work prospects. With almost 700,000 young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), this could make a significant difference.

If we don't implement pupil premium reforms now, we risk another lost decade with no progress in closing the attainment gap and tackling educational inequality. They are the most efficient way of helping to 'level up' our education system, young people's future opportunities and our long-term economic prospects. They are simple, build on an existing, successful system and will ensure every child receives the necessary support they need – from nursery all the way through their school lives.

**“We risk another lost decade in tackling inequality”**





# Opinion

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**EMMA KNIGHTS**  
Chief executive, National Governance Association

## Sustainability strategy: high aspirations alone won't fly

**Governors stand ready to put sustainability at the heart of our schools, writes Emma Knights, but they'll need more support than this strategy provides**

Last week, under the majestic blue whale skeleton that adorns the ceiling of the Natural History Museum, the DfE launched its environmental sustainability and climate change policy. It was good to see the future of the planet – and education's role in saving it – get such a good airing. But despite support from some well-known figures, I couldn't help feeling the content is all a bit minimal.

Young people have been calling for change for years, and pupil voice has already spurred many governing boards and school leaders to act. This – alongside the definite evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – is why the National Governance Association (NGA) developed its Greener Governance campaign.

So when the DfE published its draft strategy in November in response to a COP26 conference, NGA was among the many that welcomed it. It has taken almost six months of talking to the education sector and green organisations to get from that draft to last week's final strategy.

Nadhim Zahawi's ambition to be world leading is great to hear, but the vision needs to be realised, and at a pace that averts IPCC predictions – a challenge he accepts as formidable. So I'm glad we agree that it's imperative schools play their part in tackling climate change. However, it's equally obvious that they need the wherewithal to achieve what is being



many boards will struggle to find the finances for the additional hours required, and it is highly unlikely that we will lead the world if it is going to take three years just to nominate sustainability leads and put climate action plans in place.

The strategy is absolutely clear that sector leadership and institution-level accountability for sustainability

business department but needs to come up with its own dedicated pot for school and nursery estates, and I have urged them to do so.

NGA's guidance builds on the four Cs developed by the National Association of Environmental Education: culture, curriculum, campus and community. The DfE's strategy covers those aspects too, and it would be churlish not to be encouraged by its aspirations, including what pupils will experience and learn about climate change and the opportunities for green careers, and how schools will be trained, supported and incentivised to model climate leadership.

But a focus on the "inspirational enthusiasm of youth" mustn't be a foil for adults taking action. Of course, pupils should be involved in a meaningful way. But one of the biggest and most immediate wins for reducing greenhouse gases will come by transforming our schools' and buildings' energy use. We can't expect pupils to know how to achieve that. Nor can we afford to wait for them to grow into the leaders of tomorrow.

Governing boards are ready to embrace the challenge, to listen to young people and to support today's leaders to deliver.

But this is not going to work on fresh air alone.

**“Schools need the resources to do what is asked of them**

asked of them.

Our work shows that the two big barriers to moving the sustainability agenda on from a vanguard of passionate advocates to the mainstream business of education are leadership capacity and funding.

### Leadership capacity

Every school will need a sustainability lead, but wishing for one won't make it happen. And in practice, trusts and schools need two leads: one for education and another for business. These are very different sets of expertise.

Governing boards know this, but these responsibilities can't just be heaped on to leaders who are already stretched to breaking point. In truth,

will be key for success. However, there is no specific mention of the role of trusts. This is perplexing, not just in light of the recent schools white paper, but especially because this is an area where they can really add value by employing central expertise and procuring support.

### Funding

Most of the trusts that have led this work to date have been successful in obtaining separate funding to support their work, particularly with regards to capital investment to bring buildings to net zero. But this requires time-consuming bids for pots which would not support the whole school estate. That's why the DfE can't just refer schools to the

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## Marking the end of Autism Acceptance Month, Georgia Fielding and James Grant set out some classroom-friendly tips for neurodiversity-inclusive practice

From struggling to hand homework in on time and feeling too shy to ask questions to being misinterpreted as rude in the classroom, Georgia's school experience came with challenges that she did not see her friends face. Then, having spent years of her school life feeling out of sync with her peers, things started falling into place for her when she was diagnosed with autism at the age of 18.

A growing rate of autism diagnosis in children is testament to our increasing awareness. But it also demonstrates the growing demand on teachers to develop their inclusive practice. Georgia is now at university and working as a tutor, and she consistently reflects on her school experiences to inform her tutoring. Her approach is influencing ours as an organisation and, while the classroom setting is of course more complex than a tutoring session, her tips will prove useful for teachers working to create neurodiversity-friendly learning environments.

### Communication. Communication. Communication

From my experience, communicating directly with autistic students is the holy grail of creating a neurodiversity-friendly classroom. Autistic people like myself can often struggle to speak up when feeling uncomfortable, but being approached by someone who seems genuinely interested in helping can make addressing our needs a lot easier.

Of course, there are things that can't logistically be changed; autistic students would find smaller class sizes easier

GEORGIA  
FIELDING

University student and  
tutor, MyTutor

JAMES  
GRANT

co-founder, MyTutor



## Tips for creating a neurodiversity-inclusive classroom

to navigate, for example. But other aspects can be altered with potentially significant results, such as seating plans. Personally, I always felt safer at the back, in a corner, knowing there was no one sat behind me. Sitting like this increased my concentration and even my

Predictable routines help make the classroom feel safer. This might involve establishing an environment where asking questions is embraced by the entire classroom, where lesson plans are given to students ahead of time and where certain aspects

“Georgia's approach is influencing ours as an organisation

classroom participation.

When a teacher approaches an autistic student to better understand their needs and makes changes like this, it can boost not only our engagement but our confidence as well.

### A safe space to engage

of lessons remain consistent. For example, using the same technological equipment and a similar seating plan would have benefitted me hugely.

Another key factor to note is that autistic students often feel judged when we ask teachers or peers



to cater for our specific needs. For example, we might fear we'll sound immature if we ask to use fidget toys, and yet these can help increase our concentration and lower other disruptive activities. Having a teacher who is open-minded about the use of such tools and who is receptive to our requests makes a world of difference.

### Look for the signs

If an autistic student begins to seem uninterested, disengaged or rude, there's usually something wrong and they're not sure how to express it. This was my experience, and I was often misinterpreted as having an attitude. In truth, when I was quiet it was because I was struggling and had no way of showing it. Being aware of slight changes in an autistic person's temperament and engagement and approaching it in the correct way can make a significant difference to our everyday school lives.

We know that autistic students often feel isolated by their experiences, and this can lead to a lower sense of self-confidence than their peers. These experiences are typically unique to them, but the strategies Georgia sets out here have the potential to be more universally beneficial, especially in a post-pandemic context where students' mental health is an area of broad concern.

Hearing from tutors like Georgia is transforming our provision. Aware of teachers' already stretched workload, we thought her tips were worth sharing. They are small, sustainable changes with the potential to bolster confidence, engagement and academic attainment. And that can only be a good thing, for autistic students, their peers and their teachers alike.

# Digital poverty

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JANE REED

Education CEO, Catch22  
Multi Academies Trust

## No longer locked down, but many are still locked out

**The digital divide is just another manifestation of deep-seated inequalities, writes Jane Reed, but it threatens to make the gaps even wider if left unchallenged**

Of the many societal problems the pandemic brought to public awareness, digital poverty is perhaps one of the starkest. Defined as an inability to interact with the online world effectively, whether through lack of access or lack of skill, digital poverty was already affecting 22 per cent of the population before 2020. While lockdowns forced us to rapidly transition to an even more digitally reliant world, they intensified this group's deprivation.

Like our 12 primary and secondary specialist and alternative provision schools, many were forced to overhaul their usual ways of teaching, quickly navigating to remote education. Despite the remarkable efforts of teachers to accelerate their digital skills and confidence to achieve this, it's now clear that novel online platforms are only as effective as the devices, connections and digital proficiency of those possessing them.

Some of Catch22's school staff had to teach parents on their doorsteps

how to set up devices provided for home learning. As one of our teachers put it succinctly: "We were giving out laptops to some kids and then realising they didn't have the money for electricity at home. We're talking about kids with no oven, never mind wifi."

It's no wonder then that one-fifth of pupils (equating to over two million

**“We're talking about kids with no oven, never mind wifi**

children) did no schoolwork at all or spent less than one hour a day on it at home during the first lockdown. Many children and families simply could not adapt quickly, and were 'locked out' of learning.

### Digital exclusion and poverty

Responding to this challenge, we have published the second of four research papers in partnership with internet tech company Nominet seeking to identify who is most at risk of digital exclusion. Our students (some of whom are the most vulnerable in the country) and our staff fed into this research, which highlights how deeply connected digital poverty is with economic poverty.



At the start of the pandemic, only 51 per cent of households earning between £6,000 and £10,000 had internet access. Initiatives were introduced, including a government scheme to distribute one million laptops to disadvantaged school children.

But although the ambition was admirable, our research describes how restrictions affected those who

students had adequate access to a device, with access even less likely for those in more deprived schools. Meanwhile, the pandemic is still having a severe impact on full-time, in-person teaching, and a cost-of-living crisis threatens to increase the digital divide.

The government's commitment to Oak National Academy in its schools white paper is an important policy response that shows digital learning is here to stay, but serious hurdles remain. Digital access is no longer a luxury but a necessity if a child or young person is to have equal opportunity to high-quality education.

Beyond these hurdles lies real opportunity. By extending the scope of the digital classroom, amplifying the benefits of online learning and improving digital skills across the board, we can transform children's engagement and attainment. But lifting more children out of deprivation in the long term requires us to tackle digital poverty now.

The alternative is to see educational technology drive a growing attainment gap by benefiting only those who are already more advantaged. Only by bridging the digital divide and creating a more digitally equitable society will we make sure that "no child is left behind".

received them. Even for those with the electricity to charge them and the wifi to get online, many "lacked access to essential software, such as Microsoft Office, Zoom or Gmail".

And of course, having internet access is not the same as having enough access or reliable access. One teacher described how a student was submitting homework at 3am, as this was the only time they could access their shared device. While studying remotely, approximately two-thirds of young people shared a device with at least one other person.

### Ongoing challenges

In the Sutton Trust's latest report in January this year, only 13 per cent of teachers reported that all their



# Digital poverty

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
CONTACT US [NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK](mailto:NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK)



JOE HALLGARTEN

CEO, Centre for Education and Youth

## Can edtech really help close disadvantage gaps?

**'Digital maturity' will remain an exclusive club until everyone is putting the needs of disadvantaged learners first, writes Joe Hallgarten**

**A**head of the much anticipated schools white paper and SEND review, the DfE published a research-heavy, 100-page tome exploring the digital maturity of schools. The report described the majority of schools as "moderately mature", but only nine per cent as "digitally mature" – which was something of a surprise, given the past two years. It also highlighted that many schools find it difficult to assess the impact of their technology use.

Yet understanding the impact of technology, particularly with regards to supporting teaching and learning, is critical to narrowing attainment gaps between disadvantaged learners and their peers. Using edtech in this way, over and above its contribution to curriculum delivery, is surely the best sign of a school's digital maturity.

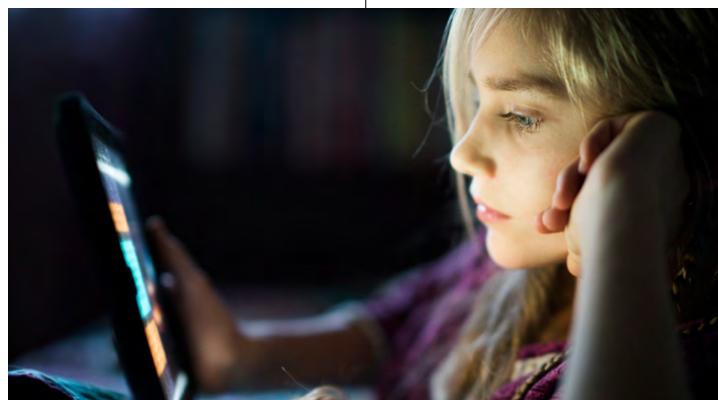
This was the topic of a recent roundtable discussion I chaired on behalf of Tassomai, and the follow-up report, *Bridging the attainment gap: edtech and the struggle to level up*, had some encouraging advice

for teachers and school leaders, particularly regarding impact.

A key message was that data from any given tool has limited value if it's not connected to a school's wider information system. Without information on demographics including pupil premium and special educational needs, progress made in the classroom can't

be contextualised. Connecting individual edtech tools provides a much richer data set from which to understand the impact on different students, not least about those who face additional challenges.

Closely related to this, the report also underlines the importance of how information is presented. It may be easy to get edtech tools to churn out reams of data. But in its raw form it won't help school leaders or teachers understand whether the students who need the greatest support are really benefiting and, most importantly, are actually learning more. Instead, presenting data in a dashboard that is easy to understand gives teachers actionable insight from which to make informed



decisions.

For school leaders navigating the increasingly competitive edtech market, keeping the needs of disadvantaged learners foremost in their minds will help to inform the questions they will need to ask prospective suppliers. The report emphasises the need to assess whether edtech software is laser-focused on the needs of

suppliers to support the development of more inclusive edtech solutions.

Many edtech software packages are already capable of personalising learning to the needs of disadvantaged children. However, vendors may not be familiar with this functionality (or realise its importance to schools). Taking a lead on the matter from the outset could be transformative for the market, putting closing attainment gaps at the heart of edtech companies' offer and ensuring teachers are involved in developing – and trained to make effective use of – the tools that can help them to achieve that goal.

The experience of the past two years means all schools, whether digitally mature or on their way to that status, have a clearer understanding of edtech's value. And while it is true that the sector has in some cases over-promised and under-delivered, there is a broad acceptance that digital technologies are powerful classroom tools that are here to stay.

But reaching digital maturity in any meaningful sense depends on the whole ecosystem. Until developers, vendors and schools (and the Department for Education too!) are working together to ensure all pupils benefit, it's hard to see how anything more than a small proportion of schools will get there alone.

**“ Reaching 'digital maturity' depends on the whole ecosystem ”**

disadvantaged learners.

There is an encouraging groundswell of interest in how edtech can address the needs of disadvantaged learners among organisations that work with schools. However, our own research at CfEY highlights the importance of co-development with disengaged groups and calls into question how often and how well edtech software is currently developed with these groups in mind.

So a key question for school leaders to consider from the outset is whether software designers are themselves asking questions from the perspective of disadvantaged pupils. Another is whether there is an opportunity to collaborate with

## Reviews

BOOK  
REVIEW

## Support Not Surveillance: How to solve the teacher retention crisis

Author: Mary Bousted

Publisher: John Catt Educational

Reviewer: Dan Morrow, CEO, Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust

Mary Bousted is clear from the outset that *Support Not Surveillance* is “unashamed, evidenced polemic”. In it, the NEU joint general secretary sets out to unpick the tangled paths that have led us to a system that loses so many teachers – and loses them earlier and earlier in their careers.

Her central thesis is that the “exodus” is primarily the result of the profession being perceived as unrewarding, and her comparison with OECD averages paints a compelling picture of abnormally high pressure, long hours and heavy accountability. But why?

Bousted asserts that political will (when it is there), often “looks for answers in all the wrong places”. Political posturing has it that bringing results up is a question of not being “soft on standards”. By extension, the solution is to be hard on teachers, and the enforcer of standards in education, Ofsted, drives workload in the effort.

So far, so NEU. For sure, her views on Ofsted are clear: a confusing and toxic “shadow” looming over the profession that contributes nothing to school improvement and fails even to provide an accurate picture of the sector. But for Bousted the silver bullet is not so much a return to some pre-Ofsted halcyon days as reducing burdensome administration and intelligently reforming regulation and inspection.

The main thrust of her argument is equally compelling. She cites Education Policy Institute research that Ofsted is “better at judging the characteristics of a school’s pupil intake than of the education it provides”, and her examination of inspection data backs her claim that schools serving disadvantaged cohorts are “punished”

for their intakes.

Given that 40 per cent of the educational attainment gap emerges before children start school, it’s hard not to agree with Bousted that this is not the result of a “poverty of expectations” but of actual poverty, and that holding the teaching profession responsible for mitigating that is unjust – especially when funding cuts have disproportionately hit the most disadvantaged schools.

There’s plenty of politics here. Bousted is outraged by Sunak’s 2021 budget statement putting educational spending back to 2010 levels by 2024 at a time of increased need. She is scathing of the ITT market review, using it as a prime example of policy-making failure. She accuses ministers of blaming “the blob” for the consequences of their own policies.

Readers may disagree, and baulk at her portrayal of our situation in near-Dickensian terms, but they will still have to argue with the evidence. The context of a “heat-or-eat” cost-of-living crisis while local authority support services have been eviscerated makes that hard.

And it’s made all the harder by the fact that Bousted addresses her own position throughout, consistently showing that she is articulating issues felt very broadly and cleverly citing the DfE’s own research about post-pandemic recovery to do it. When changes to accountability and assessment are top priorities for over 75 per cent of school leaders after two years of Covid, Bousted’s identification of the problem is clearly spot on. And her focus on recruitment and retention never wavers as she discusses the long squeeze on teacher pay, the lack of flexible working and more.

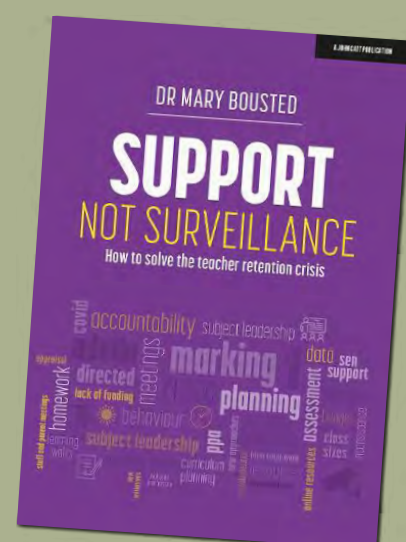
In terms of big-ticket reforms, Bousted proposes profound changes to Ofsted, more regional accountability and a refocus

on school improvement. She argues government needs to “do less, better” and proposes an independent body to limit ministerial intervention in core educational matters.

Not all of her proposals are on the policy level. She also hones in on school leadership, bemoaning its transformation into a role for monitoring rather than supporting teachers’ performance. Here, I was primed to disagree, but found myself nodding along instead. This is no SLT-bashing; Bousted is at pains to state that leaders are constrained by a system that puts their “heads on the metaphorical chopping block”.

I may not agree with every word, and a less polemical tone may have won more plaudits, but there is no denying that this is indeed both unashamed and evidenced.

More than that, it’s a timely reminder that there is hope of a better way – and that’s as good a reason as any to stay.



## Reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is **Melissa Jane**, class teacher, Castle School, Cambridge

@MelHJane

### Do you know your stress signals?

@thosethatcan

Is it a coincidence that all four of the blogs I found to discuss this week are about stress? It seems like there's a lot of it around; exam season is coming, schools are full of Covid and sickness bugs, and many of us are exhausted. Emma Kell's piece about paying attention to 'stress signals' is a useful reminder to get in touch with the ways our minds and bodies tell us our stress is becoming unmanageable.

Stress, Kell says, can be visualised as a traffic light, with productive and motivating "green stress", tricky but manageable amber stress, and "chronic, dangerous" red stress. The latter kind "threatens our health, our relationships, and our precious happiness". Becoming familiar with the warning signs of approaching red stress (which are different for all of us) can help us take control of it.

### What are neurodivergent masking and burnout?

@neuroteachers

While I find it helpful to be reminded to tune into my own signs of stress, I find that posts about mental health aimed at

## TOP BLOGS of the week

a general audience can miss some of the specificities of my own brain's workings. Catrina Lowri's post is a good illustration that not all stress manifests in the same way, or arises for the same reasons.

Here, she describes how many neurodivergent people have to adopt a "very heavy mask [...] to survive in the neurotypical world". The stress and exhaustion of wearing this mask, hiding the traits of a neurodivergent condition, can result in burnout and exhaustion. For neurodivergent people (and perhaps for everyone else too) it's not simply a case of noting the signs of approaching stress, but restructuring our environments and interactions to minimise stress from the start.

Lowri suggests redesigning the way we teach social skills to neurodivergent young people, focusing less on outward signs of compliance and more on making interactions that are "useful and meaningful".

### Is the school system traumatising young people?

@stephstwogirls

This would presumably be a change welcomed by Steph, who describes how schools remain "unsuitable environments for many of our children". By "our children" she means her own child - who has a form

of autism known as Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) - but also many others.

Quoting a Twitter thread by Dr Chris Bagley (@hiddendepths), Steph reflects on the way schools can damage students' mental health by forcing them into a "one-size-fits-all" system, with rigid behaviour policies and curricula and high stakes. This is not a case of any particular school or teacher damaging a child's mental health intentionally, but rather a system that does not have mental health embedded within it as a priority - for anyone.

### Setting boundaries to stay sane

@Missymusician81

If our school system is causing unmanageable stress for both staff and students, who is it working for? Cate Knight encourages reflection on this question in her post about boundary-setting. As she explains, avoiding overwork and over-commitment is easier said than done; it requires careful thought about our priorities. These are "not determined by the government, ingrained culture, school leadership or even HoDs. These are YOURS. What do YOU believe is important in education?"

Often, mental health in schools is presented as a zero-sum game: either we take care of students' needs and exhaust teachers in the process, or we make things easier for staff by demanding rigid compliance from students. Either way, somebody's mental health is harmed. Knight challenges this idea, reminding us that teacher and student mental health can often go hand-in-hand: "Young people are bombarded by trauma left, right and centre in this modern world. [...] Honestly, they'd benefit far more from a teacher who is calmer, happier and less pressured. It means you aren't inadvertently transferring your stress and pressure on to them!"

I agree with Knight that taking care of ourselves and managing our stress is closely linked with taking care of our students. But I can't help but wonder whether a system where we need so many reminders to do so can really be changed from the inside.



# Research



Ambition Institute will review a research development each half term.  
Contact @Ambition\_Inst if you have a topic you'd like them to explore

## What are the common myths (and truths) about CPD?

**Jennifer Barker and Peps Mccrea, Ambition Institute**

Earlier this year, the Research Partnership for Professional Learning (RPPL) reviewed the evidence around professional development, with the goal of identifying “commonly held beliefs about professional development (PD) that were not supported by research findings”. They represented their conclusions in a report outlining six ‘myths’ and ‘truths’ of PD.

RPPL is a collective of individuals and organisations that aims to advance educational equity and pupil achievement by studying and sharing the features of effective PD. They are mostly from the US, so we’ve set out to apply their myths to the English context.

### **Myth 1: PD is a waste of time and money**

**Truth:** evidence shows that PD can lead to shifts in teachers’ skills and instructional practice and significantly improve student learning.

England is undoubtedly ahead of the curve on this one. Recent reforms such as the ECF and new NPQ suite have systematically increased investment in PD. Grassroots communities such as ResearchEd and eduTwitter are also continually catalysing critical conversations about how we can make sure PD is a good use of resources.

### **Myth 2: PD is more effective for early career teachers and less so for experienced ones**

**Truth:** PD has been shown to support teacher development at all levels of experience.

While England certainly has some examples of PD designed specifically for more experienced teachers, such as Ambition’s

Masters in Expert Teaching, there’s probably more we can be doing to support, develop (and celebrate) this essential segment of the workforce.

### **Myth 3: PD programmes must be job-embedded and time-intensive to be effective**

**Truth:** programmes of varying lengths and formats can produce wide-ranging effects depending on how time is used.

The tl;dr here is that quality beats quantity. The recent systematic review of PD by the EEF is a great example of how informed UK thinking is becoming on the quality side of things. Granted, PD is complex, and it will be decades before we have the level of nuance we want, but it’s hugely valuable to see progress happening in this area.

### **Myth 4: improving teachers’ content knowledge is key to improving their instructional practice**

**Truth:** PD programmes that aim directly at instructional practices are more likely to shift student learning than those with a focus on content knowledge.

One of the things that the EEF review solidified for us is that effective PD needs to do both, and more. It requires know-how about effective teaching, examples of what this looks like in practice, opportunities for rehearsal with feedback, and support for habit building. This is no easy task, but nonetheless, PD programmes in England are increasingly weaving these ‘active ingredients’ into their offer.

### **Myth 5: research-based PD programmes are unlikely to work at scale or in new contexts**

**Truth:** Programmes can have positive effects across a wide range of schools, but strong implementation can help sustain effects at scale.



We’re seeing this right now with the ECF and new NPQ suite. Scaling such programmes is possible, but it requires heavy attention to implementation. Implementation is notoriously difficult, but not all programmes fail to scale. There’s a lot we can learn from these when it comes to ensuring positive effects of PD at scale.

### **Myth 6: districts should implement research-based PD programmes with no modifications**

**Truth:** practice fidelity first, and adaptation with guard-rails second.

The evidence around active ingredients of effective PD are helping to steer us in the right direction when it comes to how PD can be most effectively tailored to individuals and school settings without losing what is core to impact. A means of better capturing and sharing these insights would be of real value to the system.

If these myths are less prevalent in the UK than in the US, it is partly because reform in England is steering welcome attention and investment towards PD. It’s also thanks to the many generous individuals and organisations working hard to understand and optimise their PD offer for teachers and school leaders.

And that’s an encouraging sign for our burgeoning evidence-informed profession.



Week in

## Westminster

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

## FRIDAY

Education secretary Nadhim Zahawi's speech from the launch of his climate change strategy at the Natural History Museum was published today (for those of us who didn't get to try the tasty canapes, see page 10).

"The entrepreneurial, that can-do, Bear Grylls spirit in this country can make all of us, certainly me, much more confident that we will win this fight."

We look forward to seeing Nadz scale Mt Everest, trek to Antarctica and survive in the wild armed with just his wits over the summer break.

\*\*\*

Organisations have 20 working days (four weeks) to respond to freedom of information requests.

We know some – including schools – aren't big fans, but duly comply with the legal duty to respond (and mostly on time).

Warwickshire County Council, however, set a new record at *Schools Week* towers. It apologised today for not coming back sooner on a request we sent in November last year, 105 days ago!

After a spate of school buildings partially collapsing, we asked whether the council's schools had any building safety issues so we could flag this to ministers. Thankfully, they hadn't!

## TUESDAY

We all know that ministers \*love\* social media, with some even branching out into viral video land TikTok.

Will Ofsted follow their lead? The watchdog's five-year plan pledges to "continually seek out new platforms and channels to reach an ever wider and more diverse audience".

As former think-tank chief Loic Menzies says, we look forward to inspectors "communicating judgments through the

medium of dance".

The 'outstanding' TikTok tango? The 'requires improvement' salsa? Here for it.

\*\*\*

One of the four "values" listed in the plan was for Ofsted to be "accountable and transparent".

Kudos to education journalist Warwick Mansell for showing this up for the hot air it is. A really simple way for government departments to be transparent is to publish the minutes from board meetings in a reasonable time, allowing anyone to see how key decisions are made (although, IRL, such minutes are depressingly lacking in detail).

Anyway, the last board meeting that Ofsted published minutes for was ... drumroll please ... February 2021. And even that was published five months later in July.

The board meets at least four times a year.

## WEDNESDAY

"We have got to do better" at getting Department for Education staff back to the office, the education secretary told the education committee this month. "You will see us improve."

But we hear that delegates attending the National Association of Head Teachers conference in Telford on Saturday will only hear from Zahawi remotely, as he's delivering his speech via a pre-recorded message.

We look forward to school leaders taking inspiration from Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg by leaving a note pinned to Zahawi's empty conference seat: "Sorry you were out when we visited. I look forward to seeing you in the office very soon."

Fun fact: Zahawi's constituency is less than a one-and-a-half-hour's drive from the conference.

## THURSDAY

Justine Greening probably thought she had got away from any parliamentary fallouts after she stood down more than two years ago.

But the former education secretary has been named among MPs sanctioned by Russia and banned from entering the country. Those opportunity areas must have really annoyed someone in the Kremlin.

Others on the list include children's minister Will Quince and schools minister Robin Walker. But – bizarrely – the education secretary does not seem to have made the cut.



Dino Sofos  
@dinosofos

Jacob Rees-Mogg is leaving this note for civil servants who aren't at their desks...





## PRINCIPAL - HOLYHEAD PRIMARY ACADEMY

REQUIRED FOR SEPTEMBER 2022

LEADERSHIP L15 - L21 £59,581 - £69,031

FULL TIME PERMANENT

Holyhead Primary Academy is part of the Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust formed in September 2007 with a shared aim of providing the very best for all of our children, families and staff. Our Trust is built around our shared vision - to be a first class, inclusive, collaborative and forward-thinking family of local academies - and in relation to our Primary Academies the values of Excite, Explore and Excel drive our Collaboration at every level across the Trust. Having opportunities to share the breadth of knowledge and experience of our staff across the Trust ensures we are able to provide high quality, vibrant and inspiring learning journeys for our children to enjoy.

At Holyhead, we are looking to appoint a new Academy Principal who possesses outstanding leadership skills, is dynamic, has a sense of humour and who has the vision to continue developing our already successful academy.

### We are looking for:

- An inspirational senior leader that will continue to nurture and motivate our hard working and committed team
- A creative, innovative and forward-thinking educationalist with a proven track record of success in teaching and leadership
- A person who has an up-to-date knowledge of the current, ever-changing educational landscape with the ability to continue driving this forward by working with and supporting our teaching staff
- Experience of successfully developing and nurturing high achieving teams with the instinct to empower people and encourage new ideas
- An engaging communicator who will continue to develop strong relationships with our children, our staff, our governors, our parents and our community
- A person who understands the principles that underpin an outstanding primary education
- A team player who will embrace the collaboration that a Trust provides through learning with and supporting other colleagues



### We will offer you:

- Delightful, happy pupils with high standards of achievement and a pride and love for their school
- A strong ethos and vision that means something to everyone connected to the school
- A highly supportive and committed Standards and Performance Committee (governing body) who care very much for the school
- Highly motivated and supportive parents
- A strong collaborative network within the Trust and well-established relationships within the wider school community
- A school which was recently judged to be strongly Good with Outstanding Personal Development

We pride ourselves on being an employer of choice where all staff can thrive. We believe that supporting our staff both personally and professionally allows them to give their very best to our students. Our aim is to foster a working culture that recognises and reflects the importance of good mental health and wellbeing and provides effective support when colleagues need it.

Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects its entire staff to share this commitment. All post-holders will be required to have an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), including a Children's Barred List check for post carrying out a regulated activity.

### Applications

To apply go to: <https://careers.shirelandcat.net/>

Interviews Monday 16 May 2022

Please note that we reserve the right to close this advert before the closing date stated below.

Closing date for applications is Monday 9 May 2022





### Education Project Manager – Remote

A 90-year-old charity and social enterprise dedicated to connecting people with nature, the outdoors, culture and heritage through brilliant hostel stays and experiences. We operate hostels throughout England and Wales and welcome all but specialise in creating opportunities for young people. As well as memorable holidays and short breaks, we deliver education residentials, group trips, day stays and a variety of volunteering opportunities.

An exciting opportunity has arisen to appoint an experienced teacher or youth worker (or with equivalent experience) who has a passion for outdoor education and who has delivered high-impact education and/or youth work projects to join us as Education Project Manager.

This is a new post, created at an exciting time for YHA to develop and manage the 1 to 3-year education growth plan.

[Click here to find out more](#)



### HEAD OF SIXTH FORM

I would like to thank you for your interest in the post of head of sixth form.

This exciting vacancy has arisen as a result of the current post holder taking a curriculum responsibility within the school. Chilwell school's sixth form has grown over the last four years and with significantly larger numbers in key stages three and four and a number of students who join us from nearby schools, we anticipate further significant growth. The school has taken a leading role in developing provision and support for students and families, resulting in frequent features on local and national media.

This is a key role in our provision for students and the successful applicant will have a significant responsibility in further growing and developing our excellent support and development of our students.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

### Weatherhead High School

A high performing academy providing excellence for all

### HEAD OF MUSIC

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

Due to the relocation of the current postholder, we are seeking to appoint a well-qualified and motivated Teacher of Music to lead this vibrant department within the Performing Arts faculty.

The school has an excellent reputation for Performing Arts and the Music department also plays a very active role in the wider community and our extensive extra-curricular programme.

Weatherhead offers a comprehensive leadership and professional development framework and this is an exciting opportunity for someone to join our World Class School and develop as a teacher and a leader at an outstanding school

For further information about the school and this opportunity, including an option to visit the school, 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.

**Closing date 9th May 2022.**

### Weatherhead High School

A high performing academy providing excellence for all

### HEAD OF GEOGRAPHY

**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. We have a track record of excellent academic results in GCSE & A Level courses with many of our students going on to study Geography and related subjects at University.

Weatherhead offers a comprehensive leadership and professional development framework and this is an exciting opportunity for someone to join our World Class School and develop as a teacher and a leader at an outstanding school.

For further information about the school and this opportunity, including an option to visit the school, 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.

**Closing date 13th May 2022.**

Bennett Memorial  
Diocesan School



## Deputy Headteacher

Salary: L20 - L24

We seek to appoint a Deputy Headteacher to join the leadership team of this large and growing Church of England school. This is a career defining and rare opportunity for an ambitious school leader who shares our approach and wants the professional growth that this school offers.

If appointed, you will exercise strategic leadership for all aspects of student welfare including safeguarding and behaviour in the school.

Central to our work as a school is the provision of a quality of education which is second-to-none. We are seeking applicants who recognize what this entails and are wholeheartedly committed to achieving this.

**Closing date: 09.00 Tuesday 10th May**

**Shortlisting: 10th May**

**Interviews: 18th -19th May**



**Worsbrough Bank End Primary School**  
The best in everyone™  
Part of United Learning

## Principal, Worsbrough Bank End Primary School

Closing date: **12 noon, 6th May 2022**

Start date: **September 2022**

Worsbrough Bank End is a one form entry primary for children aged three to eleven years and is full of potential. Its recent Ofsted inspection confirmed it as a securely good school with a great sense of community that places families at the heart of all it does.

As Principal you will have the opportunity to lead the school on its continued journey of improvement, providing children with an inspirational

learning environment and the very best opportunities.

United Learning is deeply committed to the progress, success and safeguarding of all children and young people. As a Group, we aim to offer more by working together than any single school could on its own; we aim to support and develop leaders, provide professional development and offer broader experiences for children and young people.

Apply here:

<https://unitedlearning.our-careers.co.uk/>



## Vacancies



### Head of Design and Innovation

Ensure Voice 21's model of teacher development and school improvement is sector-leading, strengthening and innovating our approach to drive long-term change in our schools and transform outcomes for students in our target population.

**Salary: £40,000-£46,000, depending on experience**

Where you'll work: Remote, with regular travel to our London Office and elsewhere. Occasional overnight stays required.

Contract: Permanent, subject to successful probation review at 3 months.

Terms: We welcome applications on a full-time or 4-day per week basis.

**Closing date: 12pm, Monday 9th May**

### Research and Policy Lead

Work with our large and growing network of Voice 21 Oracy Schools to support both practitioner-led and co-constructed research in order to develop our understanding of high-quality oracy education and support Voice 21 to set a research-informed policy agenda.

**Salary: £32,000-£36,000, depending on experience**

Where you'll work: Remote, with regular travel to our London Office and elsewhere and occasional overnight stays required.

Contract: Permanent, subject to successful probation review at 3 months.

Terms: We would welcome applications on a full-time or 4-day per week basis.

**Closing date: 12pm, Monday 9th May**

### Impact Officer

Generate and communicate insights into how our programme of professional learning, 'Voice 21 Oracy Schools', transforms outcomes for students in our target population, including gathering, synthesising and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data to support evidence-informed decision-making throughout the organisation.

**Salary: £27,000-£31,000, depending on experience**

Where you'll work: Remote, with regular travel to our London Office and elsewhere and occasional overnight stays required.

Contract: Permanent, subject to successful probation review at 3 months.

Terms: We would welcome applications on a full-time or 4-day per week basis.

**Closing date: 12pm, Monday 9th May**



## Deputy CEO

**Salary:** Highly competitive  
**Hours:** 37 hours per week (permanent) | Probationary period: 6 months  
**Pension:** Local Government Pension Scheme  
**Location:** BDMAT Central Office, Daleview Road, Birmingham B14 4HN  
 (some of the time is spent visiting schools)  
**Start:** 1st September 2022 or as soon as possible after that date

Do you want to be our Deputy CEO?  
 We are looking for a Deputy Chief Executive Officer who is able to combine humility with determination. You will be a nurturing leader who does not seek credit but wants success to be sustained over a longer period of time, long after you are gone. We are looking for an excellent communicator who sees their role as serving others.

We are looking to appoint someone who shares our vision and values and can contribute to the direction of the Trust, as well as having the skills and knowledge needed to meet our objectives. We need our Deputy CEO to ensure our finances are optimised to deliver high standards for our pupils and achieve our vision and ensure we meet our regulatory duties in a number of key areas, such as health and safety and data protection.

We recognise that you may come from a different faith background or have no faith yourself. Our priority is to employ leaders that share the same values regarding education provision, as set out above. Whatever your personal belief, we would be seeking to appoint a Deputy CEO who is able

to hold the ethos and values of the Trust and speak passionately and with conviction about them.

**Interviews are scheduled for Tuesday 17th May and Wednesday 18th May 2022**

For informal enquiries, please contact BDMAT's Chief Executive Officer, Christopher Mansell through his PA, Sheila Benbow who can be contacted at [s.benbow@bdiat.org.uk](mailto:s.benbow@bdiat.org.uk) or telephone 07990 949410.

### How to Apply

Please follow this link to apply  
<http://www.mynewterm.com/jobs/884314257/EDV-2022-BDMT-71413>

**Closing date for applications: 12 noon on 6th May.**

### References and eligibility:

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references and eligibility to work in the UK. The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS will be required.



inspiration  
trust



## Teacher of Maths

Permanent, Full Time

Salary: MPS/UPS - plus relocation package

Starting September 2022

Jane Austen College

Be part of the Jane Austen College story! We are seeking to appoint an excellent Teacher of Maths at our thriving academic and inclusive school situated in the heart of Norwich. This role comes with a recruitment and retention package to support the relocation of excellent candidates to Norwich and Norfolk.

To apply for this role, please visit the Inspiration Trust Website

Closing date for applications:  
**12pm on Thursday 5th May 2022**

*Inspiration Trust is committed to safeguarding and all staff appointments are subject to satisfactory references and enhanced DBS checks. You will be required to provide references and undertake an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check.*

*This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We are an equal opportunities employer.*



## Principal Dukesgate Academy

**Location:** Dukesgate Academy

**Closing date:** 12 noon, Monday 9th May

**Start date:** September 2022

Dukesgate Academy is a one form entry primary school for children aged three to eleven years and is a school full of potential. Its most recent Ofsted inspection confirmed that it is a securely good school with a great sense of community that places families at the heart of all it does.

As Principal you will have the opportunity to lead the school on its continued journey of improvement, providing children with an inspirational learning environment and the very best opportunities.

United Learning is deeply committed to the progress, success and safeguarding of all children and young people. As a Group, we aim to offer more by working together than any single school could on its own: we aim to support and develop leaders, provide excellent professional development for all staff and offer broader experiences for children and young people.

Apply here <https://unitedlearning.our-careers.co.uk/>

## 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](mailto:jevon.hirst@alps.education)



new wave  
federation

## Music Teacher

**Salary:** Main Pay Scale

**Contract:** One Year Fixed Term



We are looking for a Music Teacher to join the New Wave Federation who;

- ◆ Is an excellent practitioner with a creative and innovative approach
- ◆ Is committed to the delivery of high quality teaching and learning in music
- ◆ Inspirational and dedicated to making a difference
- ◆ Possess excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- ◆ Is a good team player

We can offer you schools which are;

- ◆ Well-resourced and have high quality music provisions and resources
- ◆ Have friendly, dedicated staff with high expectations
- ◆ Have good opportunities for professional development
- ◆ Are outstanding and hold Apple Distinguished Schools Status
- ◆ Selected as an English Hub by the DfE

In all our schools we have a passion for high standards and want all our children to achieve their potential and be inspired to go beyond that. If you think you can help us on our quest for excellence then please come and join our happy and vibrant teams. The right person will be someone who is up to date with 21st century education through music, who can use new technologies and who is creative and resourceful. Previous applicants need not apply.

**HOW TO APPLY:** Application packs are available from the Federation Business Manager, Ms Alia Choudhry: [achoudhry@newwavefederation.co.uk](mailto:achoudhry@newwavefederation.co.uk) or 020 7254 1415.

Closing date: Friday 13th May 2022 at 12pm

## 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.**

## 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.**

# DID YOU KNOW?



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**David Ross Education Trust**

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