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NEWS

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Zahawi changes tack on 'kryptonite' reforms

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Ministers plan to water down their controversial schools bill to "constrain" its scope and stop future governments "misusing" broad new powers, *Schools Week* understands.

The draft legislation, which is making its way through the House of Lords, is also likely to be updated to include new regulations for academies.

Nadhim Zahawi, the education secretary, and Baroness Barran, the academies minister, this week signalled a row-back on reforms that have been criticised as a government push for more power.

The new bill includes a wide-ranging list that new academy standards – which all trusts must follow – could cover. It also includes new powers to intervene where trusts fail.

But Zahawi told trust leaders on Thursday he would not impose "any new burdens" that would restrict the "freedoms" of academies.

And Barran told the Lords on Wednesday that she planned to "clarify and confirm the government's position".

A rebel group of former Conservative ministers has vowed to keep pushing amendments to gut the bill if it remains in its present form.

But *Schools Week* understands officials will amend it themselves when it reaches the report stage, due next month.

They are said to want to "constrain" the scope of a clause on academy standards, amid concerns about what future governments might do.



Nadhim Zahawi

The bill as it stands would also allow any future minister to add new standards without a full vote.

Lord Baker, a former education secretary and one of the rebel group, warned against handing "absolutely overwhelming" new powers to a "maverick" future minister. He "shuddered at the prospect" of a Jacob Rees-Mogg or "Corbynite" education secretary.

Signalling the row-back, Zahawi told the Confederation of School Trusts yesterday that excellence was "not something that can be achieved by a list of standards, or a piece of regulation".

It followed a bruising committee stage this week.

Lord Agnew, a former academies minister and founder of the Inspiration Trust, said the legislation – coming before the promised academy regulation review – had "landed like a lump of kryptonite among all of us who are trying to educate children in the system".

Agnew said the government had already managed to "squeeze out the mavericks" from

the academies sector. When he arrived at the Department for Education, he was "probably getting three or four cases a month of maverick trusts on the brink of failure financially".

He claimed that Barran and officials recently told him such "mavericks" now made up only 1 per cent of the sector.

"We are going to spend days going through this for 1 per cent, without having had any consultation and without any regulatory framework in place. I do not understand that, so I urge the minister, however uncomfortable it might be in the short term, to back off and reconsider."

Lord Nash, another former academies minister and chair of Future Academies, said beefed-up powers to replace entire trust boards could affect trustee recruitment.

"Thousands" of people had been willing to serve a "very good public purpose. But I wonder how many we would have found if they knew they could be chucked out by the DfE at its whim."

Several peers are also worried that the proposals could affect the status of academies as charitable organisations.

Lord Baker said a legal expert had advised him that the new powers to replace boards were "incompatible with the independence of an academy trust as a charitable company".

But Barran said the government had "engaged with the Charity Commission" about intervention, and there were "currently no concerns about the interaction of these powers with the independence of charities".

A spokesperson for the commission said it was "assessing the latest amendments".

How the sector reacted to Zahawi's assurances

Professor Peter Heathcote,
University Schools Trust
chair of trustees

"We need to see more than reassuring words [on clause one] – we need to see a change to those aspects of the legislation.

"All the intervention strikes us as having the potential to do what they say they don't want to do – interfering in schools."



Maria Hamblin,
Fierte Multi-Academy
Trust chief executive

"I think he [Zahawi] reassured trusts that they are going to work with us as partners, and that they are not going to take away the autonomy they wanted trusts to have.

"At the moment trust leaders are juggling trying to ensure we are meeting the needs of children post-pandemic, with all the other agendas nationally."



Penny Silson,
Pennine Academies
Yorkshire trustee

"Results are being achieved by trusts – so why would you upset the apple cart? To be honest, the Confederation of Schools Trust, has so many members as it is. I think the government wouldn't be able to tell them how to do things.

"We belong to a trust, I'm clearly sold on it, as long as schools go into like-minded trusts."



NEWS

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Expansion tops trust concerns, study shows

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Academy trusts see growth as their biggest challenge – with leaders concerned about SEND support and governor recruitment, a new study shows.

The Confederation of School Trusts published its first national survey of trusts yesterday. Its report is based on a survey in March of 328 trust accounting officers, senior leaders involved in both accountability and governance.

1. Growth focus as trusts eye ten-school sweet spot...

Fifty-seven per cent of trusts said growth was one of their top three priorities, second only to improving the quality of education (75 per cent).

The government wants all schools in “strong” trusts by 2030. Ministers also “expect that most trusts will be on a trajectory to either serve a minimum of 7,500 pupils or run at least ten schools”.

Trusts with between two and ten schools were most likely to say growth was a priority (65 per cent), compared with 47 per cent of single-school trusts and 13 per cent of trusts with more than 20 schools.

Workforce development was a much bigger focus for larger trusts. Half of single-school trusts said financial sustainability was a priority.

2. ...but two in five say it's also biggest challenge

Just over two in five trusts described growth as their biggest challenge – way above any other concerns (second highest was financial sustainability and improving quality of education, with 13 per cent).

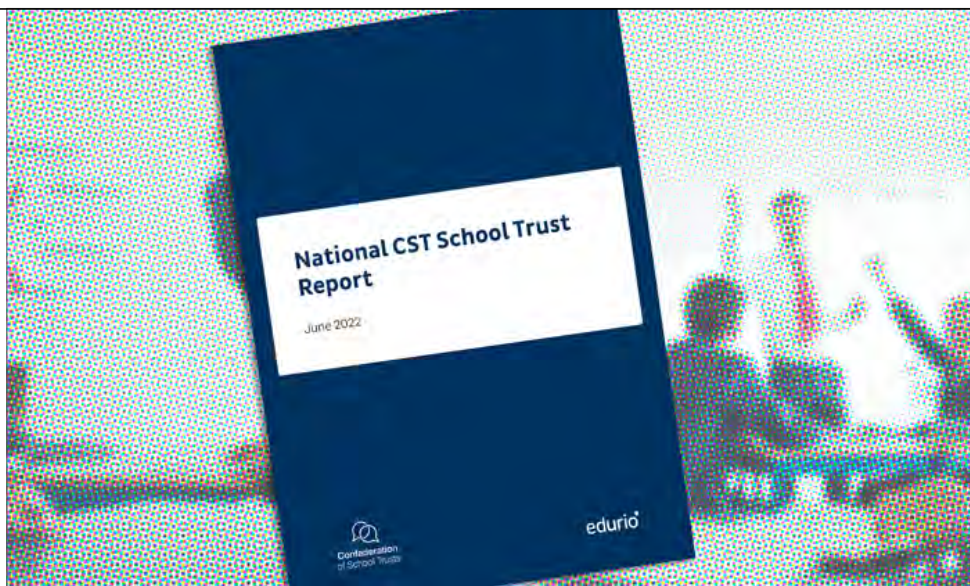
The report said this could be seen as a positive, however, as it “shows a realisation that achieving growth without sacrificing educational quality requires careful thought and leadership”.

Some 53 per cent of trusts have one school, and 75 per cent have less than five.

3. SEND is major concern for big academy trusts

SEND was the third highest priority among trust leaders to improve their quality of education.

But SEND support is where leaders expect the



biggest challenge, and is a greater onus for larger trusts.

One trust said “huge energy will be taken up responding to” council cuts to SEND top-up funding of 14 per cent, which it said was “catastrophic”.

“This will detract from capacity to focus on school improvement as it will necessitate remodelling work.”

A Schools Week investigation earlier this year revealed that 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 12 months.

4. A third of trusts do not have a recovery strategy

More than three-quarters of leaders said that professional development and national qualifications for teachers and leaders were their most impactful interventions.

Support for early career teachers (64 per cent) was second, followed by counselling (62 per cent).

Just 43 per cent said tutoring – either school-led or the Randstad-run national programme – were the most impactful.

Only two-thirds of trusts had an education recovery strategy.

Steve Rollett, the deputy chief executive of the confederation, said this was likely “more about trusts recognising the long-term nature of the problem, and viewing its solution as residing in high quality teaching over a long period rather than adopting a short-term bolt-on approach”.

Meanwhile, one in seven trusts is also pooling

recovery premium cash at trust level, rather than giving the grant directly to schools.

5. Trustee vacancies a ‘key concern’

More than half of the trusts have vacancies on their trustee board. Only a quarter do not have any governance vacancies.

One in five anticipate the positions will be easily filled, with three in five saying it will be difficult.

The report described this as a “key concern”. Lords scrutinising the new schools bill raised concerns the all-academy system push would require more than 10,000 new trustees.

Rollett said it was important trusts consider ongoing trustee development, alongside recruitment.

But he added: “Given the fundamental differences involved, it’s likely that those moving from roles as governors in the maintained sector will need to acquire the specialist knowledge and understanding necessary to discharge their responsibilities as trustees.”

6. Trusts go green

While only a few trusts said environmental sustainability was a top priority, more than half were developing an environment strategy. Just under 20 per cent have a strategy to become carbon neutral.

The report said the “ongoing quest for environmental sustainability is clearly gathering momentum in trusts... This is a promising development, especially in light of the challenges of, in many cases, an older estate and sometimes poor public transport links.”

NEWS

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'Soul destroying': SATs markers say pay slashed under Capita

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

EXCLUSIVE

Teachers recruited to mark SATs are threatening never to work for contractor Capita again after claiming their "soul destroying" pay has more than halved.

Markers opening their first payslips this week found they were being paid as low as 4p for each batch of questions.

They allege that questions about how much their pay rates would be set went unanswered in recent weeks.

This follows the outsourcing giant having to pause marking for nearly two days to allow more test scripts to be scanned, and markers being locked out of a training webinar.

Due to the pandemic, it is the first time that Capita has overseen the testing and marking arrangements for a full set of SATs under its £107 million contract. Previously, the contracts were run by different companies.

One marker, who wished to remain anonymous, told Schools Week that marking roughly 4,000 "segments" – which normally contain one or two questions – would have earned them £750 in 2019.

However, this year the marker earned around £160. The average rate of pay for marking each segment was 4p.

Another marker said the pay change could be due to the way in which Capita organises questions. They claimed these were previously at a rate of about 7p to 8p per question. But there are now several questions per segment.

Previously this marker was paid about £750 for 42 hours of marking. But they claim 38 hours of



marking this year will come out at about £300 – less than half the amount.

The marker said it worked out at about £7 pound per hour. The minimum wage is £9.50.

"I will never work for them again," they added. The marker plans to challenge Capita on the pay rates, adding: "I won't stop until I get my proper pay."

A first-time marker said their 6p per segment was "soul destroying" adding: "The pay isn't very good for the amount of work done, and I won't be doing it again."

Last financial year, Capita reported an adjusted profit of £93.5 million before tax, up from £5.4 million in 2020.

A Capita spokesperson said each marker received an "indicative estimate" of what they could earn in their "letter of appointment". Any markers with queries should contact their marking team, the spokesperson added.

However, one of the markers said they had been trying to get answers for weeks on pay, but with no answer. They said if the 4p figure had been shared they would have "resigned immediately".

"I'm an experienced A-level and GCSE marker for several exam boards," they added. "Capita's lack of transparency on pay is unique in my experience."

Capita refused to comment on the claims that marker pay had dropped dramatically. The spokesperson added the value of each segment "varies between different subjects and papers and each allocation corresponds to a payment higher than the national minimum wage".

"Markers can be paid for each allocated segment they mark, the training they complete and if they have a role, such as supervising a team, for which they may receive an additional responsibility fee for."

Three markers said they are now questioning whether to do it again. Capita previously said it expected its new secure access portal to be used by 4,000 test markers each year.

However, the contractor has already run into problems. It had to pause marking for almost two days after teachers "exceeded expectations". The firm needed more time to scan scripts in for them to mark – but it left markers up against it to fulfil their quotas.

Headteachers also complained of being on hold for hours to the Standards and Testing Agency helpline, also run by the firm.

Trainee teachers, teachers in primary schools or teachers in secondary schools specialising in English or Maths can apply to be SATs markers.

Specialist markers must have either qualified teacher status or have marked SATs in the past five years.

Markers also receive additional payments for trainings days and printing allowances.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Two-person admission appeal panels axed

The government will no longer allow school admissions appeals to be heard by panels of two people, after fears over fairness were flagged during a consultation.

The Department for Education consulted earlier this year on whether to make certain changes to admissions appeals brought in for the Covid pandemic permanent.

In its response, the government said it would keep flexibilities which allow appeal hearings to be held remotely by video, with schools and councils also allowed to offer hybrid models.

Appeals will also be able to be held by telephone, but "only where video conference cannot be used for reasons relating to connectivity or accessibility and where the appellant and presenting officer agree".

But another flexibility that has allowed appeals to be determined by panels of two if the third member needs to withdraw from the process will not be kept.

In its response, the DfE said it had heard concerns "about the fairness or perceived fairness of a panel of two deciding an appeal".

For example, in cases where a two-member

panel disagreed, the chair would have the deciding vote, meaning the appeal was "effectively being decided by one person".

The DfE concluded that, given the flexibility was expected to be used "only very rarely", it had decided not to proceed "in order not to compromise fairness, or perceived fairness, and to avoid over-complicating the system further for parents".

The changes are subject to parliamentary approval. If they receive it, they will come into effect on October 1.

INVESTIGATION

'We're now part of the welfare state'

TOM BELGER

@TOM_BELGER

School leaders have told the “heartbreaking” stories of pupils living without electricity, wearing dirty clothes that are too small and withdrawing from school dinners and clubs as the cost-of living crisis bites.

Schools Week spoke to leaders across the country to uncover how even working families are now struggling to feed and clothe their children.

Despite inflation wrecking school budgets, leaders are launching their own foodbanks, uniform swap shops and hubs to help parents manage their finances – with one saying: “We’re now part of the welfare state.”

'Tops are greyer and trousers shorter'

The spending power of families is falling at the fastest rate in two decades, as soaring energy and food costs outstrip income growth.

New figures last week show that nearly a quarter of pupils are eligible for free school meals – up a third since the pandemic hit.

Chantelle Lee, a parent at Tidemill Academy in south London, has been using the school's foodbank since it launched in February.

Her energy bills are up £100 a month, with “everything” pricier in supermarkets.

“My universal credit only went up about £10. I know how to budget effectively, but it leaves me with hardly anything.”

At William de Yaxley Junior School in Peterborough, some “tops are becoming greyer, and trousers shorter”, says head Kay Corley.

Parents cannot afford to replace or wash clothes as much and ask if their children can wear trainers instead of buying new shoes. Six have asked directly for foodbank referrals since Easter – something that has never happened before.

Some children at Hexthorpe Primary Academy in Doncaster wear uniforms at weekends.

When pupils at Calthorpe Park School in Hampshire came to school dirty, staff found that the leisure centre showers they'd been using were out-of-service. Their parents could not afford to replace a broken boiler in their home.

Other families revealed their children with long commutes were absent because they could not afford fuel.

Meanwhile, several siblings at Illminster Avenue E-ACT Academy in Bristol were found to be living without electricity, and another without a cooker. Some asked to take home spare fruit.

COST OF LIVING

Head Marion Drake at the Tidemill Academy foodbank

Pupils missing breakfast

Parents are now cutting back on school activities they “perceive as a luxury”, such as music lessons, says Emma Jones, deputy head at Calthorpe Park.

Three schools say the uptake of after-school clubs has fallen, and two say more parents are swapping school dinners for packed lunches to cut costs.

Corley says ten pupils, instead of the usual “two or three”, did not go on a recent year 6 trip. The school also has had to “really chase for payments”, despite spreading them out and covering costs for pupils on free meals.

Forty pupils now use Tidemill Academy's Gregggs-funded breakfast club, up from 18 in December.

Nationally, the Magic Breakfast charity – part funded by the People's Postcode Lottery – is supporting twice as many schools (2,500) in disadvantaged areas as pre-Covid, and twice as many pupils in each school (209).

The government this week snubbed its own food adviser's recommendation to extend free school meal eligibility to all children with household incomes of less than £20,000 – an extra 1.1 million youngsters. Free meals are currently limited to parents earning under £7,400.

Lindsey MacDonald, Magic Breakfast's chief executive, echoes the warnings of four heads that working families who “just about managed” are now struggling.

At least four William de Yaxley pupils ineligible for school meals regularly tell its head “they've not been fed breakfast”.

Ruth Perry, the head of Newall Green Primary School in Manchester, says parents in minimum-wage jobs cannot cover their bills or school meal costs. The school has stepped in to subsidise lunch and breakfast.

'Wealthiest' area feels the pinch

Problems are not limited to poorer areas.

Calthorpe Park is in Hart district – in 2019 judged England's least income-deprived area.

“We've got children hungry, in dirty uniforms or without basic equipment – and yet we're in one of the most privileged parts of the country,” Jones says.

Hart Foodbank fed 259 children between April and June, compared with 206 in the same period in 2019.

Jeni Harrison, head of Hexthorpe Primary, says that while hunger affects learning, incorrect uniforms impact how pupils see themselves. Watching their parents struggle can also affect their mental health.

Tidemill Academy's inclusion group meets to discuss supporting pupils, and to help each other – with some staff witnessing “heartbreaking” things.

E-ACT's counsellor “supervision” sessions run for safeguarding leads at Illminster Avenue help head Felicity Hawkins “make sense” of what she sees. “You think – is what we do enough?”

Schools become one-stop shop for services

Tunde King, E-ACT Blackley's new social resilience co-ordinator, says increased mental health problems amongst parents left many “scared to search for help”.

His school is one of many stepping up with new forms of support, going way beyond a school's conventional role.

Head James Hughes hired King last year, prompting the launch of a new “hub” in April.

The school lacks space, but families can find housing, welfare, addiction and other service representatives at twice-weekly sessions at the nearby St Paul's Church.



INVESTIGATION

It also runs ten-week programmes aimed at families “cut off from services and even family activities” during Covid – helping with budgeting, cooking, bills and meeting families with similar experiences.

“We thought unless we do some preventive work, we’ll be putting on sticking plasters forever,” Hughes says.

Meanwhile, many schools are no longer referring parents to foodbanks, but launching their own.

Sir Hamid Patel, the chief executive of Star Academies, says a quarter of schools run them already, but they will be in all 31 from September as family circumstances are expected to “worsen”.

An “increasing number” of families depend on the banks, with the trust and schools fundraising to cover the growing gap between demand and donations.

“Helping to alleviate food and fuel poverty will remain a key trust priority for the foreseeable future: children cannot learn well if they are hungry or anxious,” Patel says.

Tidemill Academy recently became the latest REAch2 primary to launch a “community fridge” alongside its food cupboard. It tops up donations with £50 of supplies weekly.

It is open during school hours, with 20 parents typically using it on a Friday.

Stephanie Skierlo, a Tidemill parent, says she once had a “nice life” working in finance, but mental health problems forced her on to universal credit. “You can’t judge somebody.”

‘It’s a plaster – not a long-term solution’

Several schools say they are now regularly providing uniforms, secondhand or new. Hexthorpe Primary Academy – which has about 400 pupils – has issued 154 this year.



Gemma Trattles, an associate executive principal at Outwood Grange Academy Trust, says uniform requests through its hardship fund have increased in its northern schools. They are no longer just “one-off loans until pay day”.

Corley says William de Yaxley is also “providing uniforms for different reasons now – not because of scabby knees, but because we’re going: ‘that looks short’”.

Other schools are subsidising meals and activities or “having to advocate for families and broker support” from other services, as Jones puts it. “We’re happy to, but boundaries have become blurred.”

Perry agrees: “We’re putting a plaster on; it’s not a long-term solution. But for as long as we do, we’ll be expected to.”

King says the hub at E-ACT Blackley makes him feel “like I am part of the welfare state”, prompting “serious questions about the government’s role in the true meaning of it”.

School budgets squeezed

But these extra services mean extra costs.

Marion Drake, Tidemill’s head, says maintaining its food cupboard and fridge is a “massive task”, while



Tunde King



budgets for other needs have become “tight”.

“We’ve got a rich curriculum. We don’t want to drop it, but it’s a constant balance.”

Perry says Newall Green’s energy bills have jumped by “the equivalent of four teaching assistants”, while the school has a “printing ban” as paper costs double.

Corley says fuel prices pushed up coach costs for a recent trip, while income from fundraising activities has fallen.

Clothing donations have similarly dropped at Hexthorpe Primary.

The funding rate for universal infant free school meals has been raised to £2.41 per meal – an increase of 7p. It increases annual per-pupil funding from £444.60 to £457.90.

Nadhim Zahawi, the education secretary, says the £18 million rise recognises the rising cost of living. But it equates to about just 3 per cent. Inflation hit 7.8 per cent in April.

Dr Patrick Roach, the general secretary of the NASUWT teaching union, says: “Without increased investment in expanding free school meal eligibility and action to tackle the cost of living crisis from this government, many more pupils risk having their health and welfare damaged.”

HEAD BOY TELLS PM: ‘GOING HUNGRY WILL COST CHILDREN THEIR FUTURE’

Haider Nasser, the head boy at Carlton Keighley, near Bradford, has been gathering signatures for the Magic Breakfast charity’s petition to spend £75 million more on school breakfasts in deprived areas. Youth campaigners will hand it to Downing St next month.

Magic Breakfast makes a “better, brighter atmosphere” at his school, he says, helping people to make friends and allowing pupils to take home leftover bagels.

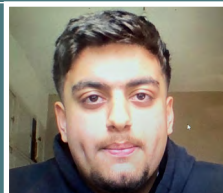
At a recent staff meeting the 16-year-old highlighted the reality of many of his peers’ lives.

“As head boy I see lots of things. Some students don’t have meals at weekends. The cost of living’s made parents work double shifts and longer hours.

“I know lots choose between feeding children and having a roof over their heads. It’s inhumane.”

He plans to start working part-time alongside his studies next year “to support myself financially”.

Asked what he’d tell Boris Johnson if he had the chance, he said: “He needs a huge focus on deprived areas as we’ve been



Haider Nasser

forgotten. The attainment gap’s got bigger since the pandemic.

“Someone said if levelling-up fails in Bradford, it fails everywhere. There’s huge gaps in the levelling-up scheme – it

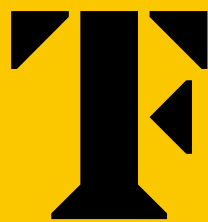
doesn’t talk about children and breakfast.

“If the only thing children have on their mind is food, how are they going to progress? One day they might become something great, but it’s going to cost children the future they have if they’re hungry.”

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Governance 'diminished' in new inspections, Ofsted told

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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School governors are "increasingly concerned" their work is becoming less visible in Ofsted inspections.

The National Governance Association has written to chief inspector Amanda Spielman to warn the implementation of the new inspection framework in 2019 has "led to the role of governance being diminished within the inspection process".

The new framework introduced new, shorter inspection reports, which are supposed to be more accessible for parents.

But the NGA called for a return to a "more informative format of reports which in addition to the information for parents, would include information targeted at those responsible for school improvement, including school leaders and those governing".

How well governors understand and carry out their role is a metric on which schools' leadership and management is judged.

But analysis by the NGA of 120 Ofsted reports published between September and December last year found almost a third (31 per cent) did not mention governance.

Where governance is mentioned, the NGA found a "disparity between the extent to which governance is reported on".

A survey of 111 governors and trustees also found an "inconsistency between the questions inspectors ask governing boards about the curriculum and the depth the questioning goes to".

"Despite the quality of education having the greatest weighting of all the judgment areas, governing boards are not always asked about their role in the curriculum and the depth of these conversations differ from school to school."

In her letter to Spielman, Emma Knights, the NGA's chief executive, said "while we applaud the principles that underpin the EIF, it is NGA's view the format of Ofsted reports are not fit for the improvement purposes to support Ofsted's mission to raise standards".

"NGA asks for a return to a more informative



Amanda Spielman

format which in addition to the information for parents, specifically includes information targeted at those responsible for school improvement, including school leaders and those governing."

Sam Henson, the NGA's director of policy and communications, said a "decisive picture has now emerged of the declining visibility of governance through the way inspections are reported".

"This study reveals an increasing trend towards Ofsted inspection reports more generally lacking sufficient depth."

A spokesperson for Ofsted said the inspectorate "values the role governors play in schools, and it is an area that is looked at during inspections and evaluated as part of the leadership and management judgment... We welcome the NGA's report and will reflect on its findings."

EXCLUSIVE

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBBOOTH

Universities piloting scheme 'to export excellence' fail reaccreditation

Half the universities piloting the new international teacher training qualification have failed the first reaccreditation round to run training in their own country.

The government-backed qualification iQTS was announced as part of the International Education Strategy 2021 to help "export excellence in teacher training". English teacher training providers will run the courses for schools abroad.

But three of the six universities chosen to run a pilot of the scheme failed their reaccreditation to continue training in England from 2024-25.

James Noble-Rogers, the executive director of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), said it was "somewhat perplexing" that providers "judged to be good enough to deliver" the iQTS "appear not to be seen by the Department for Education to be OK to run teacher training in this country".

"These are just a number of examples

of where the Qualified Teacher Status accreditation process seems to be flawed."

Only 80 of 215 providers that applied for reaccreditation to continue teaching in England were successful in round one. Rejected organisations, which have a second chance to gain accreditation, told *Schools Week* they were treated "disgracefully".

The Universities of Warwick, Birmingham and Sunderland are all reapplying in the second round, which closes this month.

A Warwick spokesperson said it was "in a strong position" to be approved.

Birmingham, also a specialist partner in the new National Institute of Teaching, said it was "frustrating", but it was "confident of securing accreditation in the next round".

Sunderland did not comment.

Other pilot organisations Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Derby were approved. Canterbury Christ Church University did not confirm its status.

The pilot will run from September.

Applications will open next month to find an expected ten providers to run a wider roll-out in 2023-24.

Only 'good' and 'outstanding' providers can apply. Accredited providers who have not been inspected are also barred.

Meanwhile, the DfE announced that teachers from across the globe would be able to attain QTS under plans to increase the pool of staff available for English schools.

From 2023 a new professional recognition service called "apply for qualified teacher status in England" will judge candidates against a consistent set of standards.

The current system only recognises teachers from a list of 39 countries, including across Europe, the United States and Australia.

The changes allow teachers from countries not on the list to gain QTS here without retraining.

NEWS

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Williamson ally steps down from DfE board

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The former government adviser Nick Timothy has resigned from the Department for Education's board after he made several criticisms of the prime minister.

He was appointed as a non-executive director in March 2020 when Sir Gavin Williamson was education secretary.

Board members normally serve three-year terms, but the department announced the departure of the former Downing Street chief of staff today, about nine months early.

Timothy, a former director of the New Schools Network, has been a fierce critic of Johnson in recent months following the Partygate revelations.

He told *Schools Week* that while the DfE was appointing a new round of directors, he had "taken the moment, having criticised the PM for his conduct, to leave the board myself".

"I wish Nadhim, the ministerial team and department all the best in their vital work."

The DfE said non-executive directors were "not directly employed by the department", and were "appointed to the board and depart periodically".

Timothy's appointment in 2020 prompted



Nick Timothy

criticism, in part because of his pro-grammar schools stance. It also was made outside the usual recruitment procedures.

Correspondence seen by *Schools Week* shows Timothy, an ally of Williamson, was given the role before officials received his declaration of interests. His appointment was rushed through at Williamson's behest. The former education secretary served as chief whip during Timothy's time in Downing Street.

A month later, Timothy was accused of breaching impartiality rules over tweets expressing partisan views and criticising opposition parties.

His recent criticism of the prime minister's

conduct has been wide-ranging.

In his *Telegraph* column in April, he wrote that there was "no chance of the PM doing the honourable thing" and called for him to go.

And during a television interview in April he said: "The prime minister imposed laws on the country, he broke them personally and then it's very difficult to avoid the conclusion that he misled the public and Parliament about having done so."

On June 7, Timothy said Johnson "broke his own laws, lied about it, and now Tory MPs are catching up with the public and saying enough is enough".

Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith stood down in January after six years on the board, while Ian Ferguson stepped aside this month after two three-year terms. Irene Lucas stood down in December after three years.

A DfE spokesperson said: "We thank all of them for their service and look forward to welcoming their successors."

Replacing them are private equity boss Stuart McMinnies, consulting firm chief Suzy Levy, TV executive Sir Peter Bazalgette, and former Academies Enterprise Trust chair Jack Boyer.

Non-executive directors get paid £15,000 annually for about 24 days' work.

EXCLUSIVE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

AQA 'sorry' for A-level law advance info confusion

The exam board AQA has apologised to A-level law students for "confusion and stress" after complaints that a 30-mark question in a recent paper was not included in advance information.

But pupils will have to wait until after the paper is marked to find out what the board will do about the issue.

Pupils, parents and teachers tweeted their dismay about a question in AQA's A-level law paper 2, which was sat on Monday.

Twitter users complained that the topics of a question on nuisance and the *Rylands v Fletcher* ruling were not covered in advance information which was aimed at making the first public exams since 2019 fairer.

Although advance information is not meant to cover every topic that may come up, pupils said they were led to believe it would cover all topics for questions attracting more than five marks.

One said advance information was meant to "level the playing field for those caught worse

[sic] by Covid, not to trick people".

Another tweet said: "It explicitly states that topics not listed will be the lower-tariff questions!! Disgraceful."

In guidance issued ahead of advance information, AQA said it would provide a "list of topics from the specification content that will be assessed on each paper", and said higher-mark questions would "draw on these topics".

"Topics not included on the list may still be assessed in low-tariff, multiple choice or synoptic questions," the guidance continued.

AQA told *Schools Week* that advance information "wasn't designed to cover everything in the exam".

But they acknowledged that "many students expected us to include the focus of both the 30-mark questions – especially in light of guidance we gave before we released the advance information".

"We didn't mean to cause any confusion or

stress for students and we're sorry that we did. The fairest way to address this is for us to look at how students performed on this paper after we've marked it, and we'll take any action necessary to protect them."

It is the second time in a week that AQA has apologised after complaints about advance information.

The board apologised last Friday after a GCSE physics paper included a question on a topic that had been specifically ruled out in advance information.

All pupils who sat higher-tier paper 1 last Thursday will be awarded the full nine marks available for all parts of a question on energy transfers and circuits.

Edexcel this week also apologised for an error in its GCSE geography B paper 3 which labelled Gabon as the Democratic Republic of Congo on a map of Africa.

SPEED READ

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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The five proposals to overhaul SEND inspections

Council services for children with special needs would be given Ofsted ratings under new inspection plans to drive “urgent improvement” in the crisis-hit SEND system.

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission have launched a three-month consultation on the new framework for local area SEND inspections.

A *Schools Week* investigation last year revealed how vulnerable children and their families were being left to fall into crisis before getting help.

More than half of areas inspected under the current framework had to produce statements of action after inspectors found “significant concerns”.

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted’s chief inspector, said the new framework would “strengthen accountability” and help drive “urgent improvement in the SEND system”.

Inspections would be aligned to the government’s SEND review to “help prepare areas for future reforms”.

New inspections would be introduced in “early 2023”. The current framework ended in April.

1 INSPECTIONS WILL NOW FOCUS ON IMPACT

Ofsted and the CQC say the current inspection framework, introduced in 2016, places a “significant focus” on whether areas are meeting their legal responsibilities, introduced by the 2014 reforms.

While statutory responsibilities have an “important role”, it will “not be enough to simply” meet these.

Inspectors would now “focus more” on the impact that SEND arrangements have on “the lives” of children and young people.

To do this, Ofsted has drafted “core criteria” inspectors will look at. This includes whether children’s needs are identified in a “timely and effective way” and whether youngsters “participate in decision-making”.

2 CHILD’S EXPERIENCE WILL BE ‘STARTING POINT’

Ofsted says that while the inspections have taken account of children and their family’s views, they want to provide “more opportunities to engage” and collect evidence from them.

The “reviews and experiences” of children and young people with SEND will be “the starting point of inspections”, the consultation proposes.

Inspectors will have “in-depth” discussions with youngsters about their “experiences and outcomes”. They will also use “tracking meetings” where they select a sample of children to follow their experiences.

Surveys that are currently only given to parents and carers will be extended to 11- to 25-year-olds and their practitioners.

3 THREE NEW RATINGS PROPOSED

Currently, the SEND inspection reports don’t have an overall outcome, but they instead highlight findings. Areas have to produce statements of action if inspectors have “significant concerns”.

But inspectors now want three “distinct” inspection outcomes,

including when another inspection is due (see image).

The proposed outcomes:

The worst outcome, where widespread failings have been found, would result in a monitoring inspection within 18 months after the initial visit.

Inspectors also propose inviting each local area partnership to “engagement meetings”.

These would focus on the “continual improvement” of the local SEND system and “help keep a spotlight” on SEND between inspections.

Inspection outcome	Subsequent meetings and inspection activities
Local area partnership’s SEND arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND	Annual engagement conversations Full inspection usually within 5 years
Local area partnership’s arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND	Annual engagement conversations Full inspection usually within 3 years
There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND	Annual engagement conversations Submission of priority action plan (area SEND) Monitoring inspection usually within 18 months of the publication of the full inspection report Full reinspection usually within 3 years

4 ‘PRIORITY ACTION PLANS’ FOR WORST AREAS

Inspectors also want to introduce “clear and succinct” recommendations on which weaknesses an area should address to “improve the lives and experiences” of children and their families.

They would indicate which local services should take forward specific recommendations. Where inspectors identify widespread or systemic concerns, areas will have to submit a “priority action plan”. This would then be published by Ofsted and CQC.

Inspectors propose that all local areas should update and publish their strategic plan for SEND following an inspection.

5 ALTERNATIVE PROVISION TO BE INCLUDED

The new SEND framework would “increase scrutiny” on how local authorities use, commission and oversee alternative provision (AP). More than 80 per cent of those attending AP are identified as having SEND.

Ofsted says it is concerned AP “may sometimes be used inappropriately to supplement the SEND system”. For example, as a “temporary placement while children wait for an EHC (education health and care) plan or assessment or a place in a special school”.

Inspectors would include pupils with SEND who attend AP as part of the tracking and sampling exercises.

NEWS

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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'Revalidate' teachers every 5 years, study says

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Teachers should be “revalidated” every five years to make sure they have completed professional development, suggests a report from The Times Education Commission.

The report, published on Tuesday, said the British education system was “failing on every measure”. It made 11 recommendations (see list) after its year-long inquiry.

The 22 commissioners included Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the school leaders' union ASCL, Lucy Heller, the chief executive of Ark, and Kiran Gill, the founder of The Difference.

One recommendation is that professional development should be “backed by revalidation every five years by a beefed-up Chartered College of Teachers (CCT)”.

The commissioners say this would “mirror” the certification process for doctors run by the General Medical Council and “put an emphasis on excellence while ensuring that all teachers were up to date with new technology as well as developments in neuroscience and pedagogy”.

The GMC's revalidation is based on a recommendation every five years whether a doctor is still fit to practise. The council can decide to revalidate, defer or withdraw a licence.

The Times told Schools Week it was not suggesting teachers would have to reapply for their jobs. But there “should be an expectation that they will continue with their professional development”, a spokesperson added.

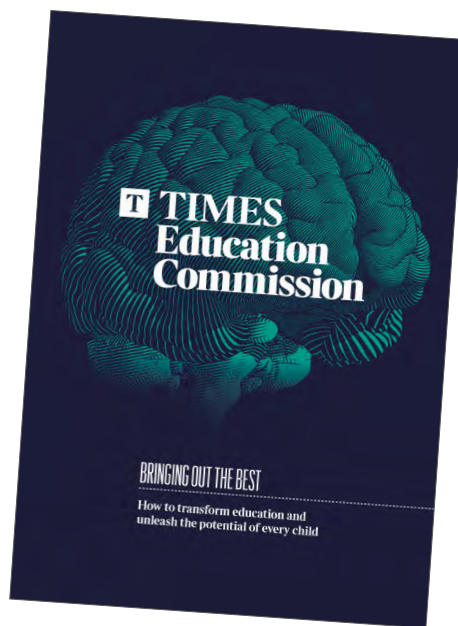
The commission said: “The status of the teaching profession in this country should be raised and the job made more intellectually engaging.”

The CCT told Schools Week it did not suggest the idea to the commission.

Dame Alison Peacock, its chief executive, said access to training “should not be forced”, adding: “It cannot become a series of hoops teachers must jump through when already so much is expected of them. It needs to be voluntary.”

“Teachers need to be trusted to do what they feel is right for their children and that they are empowered to make a difference.”

Sara Tanton, ASCL's deputy director of policy, said it had “concerns” about revalidation as it was a “huge undertaking and would need to be handled very carefully”.



The commission also called for a new category of “consultant teacher” so staff “can work towards promotion within the classroom, rather than having to move into management”.

The Times said this would be a “new title classroom teachers could work towards as an alternative progression route to management”.

It pointed to trusts such as Harris that already employed 60 specialist subject consultants to work on professional development.

Ofsted should also be reformed to feel less like a “big stick” and more like a “helping hand”. Schools should get “report cards” and inspections planned in advance.

It should focus on assessing pupil wellbeing, the quality of enrichment activities, teacher morale, attendance and inclusion.

The Times will also review its own school league tables to see how it could reflect a “wider definition of success”.

There was no overall cost for the commission's proposals, but it estimated a new “elective premium” to fund extracurricular activities – one part of the report – could cost up to £215 million.

The commission also called for a laptop or tablet for every child and a “greater use of artificial intelligence in schools” to “personalise learning, reduce teacher workload and prepare young people better for future employment”.

A Department for Education spokesperson said it always welcomed new ideas and views from the sector and education experts.

The 11 recommendations:

1. A British Baccalaureate offering “broader” academic and vocational qualifications at 18 and a “slimmed-down” set of exams at 16.
2. An “electives premium” for all schools to be spent on activities such as drama, music, dance and sport. Includes a National Citizen's Service “experience” for every pupil.
3. New “career academies” which would be “elite technical and vocational sixth forms with close links to industry”. Sounds similar to university technical colleges, several of which have struggled in recent years.
4. A unique pupil number from birth for each child and a library in every primary school.
5. An “army” of undergraduate tutors earning credit towards their degrees.
6. A laptop or tablet for every child and greater use of AI.
7. A counsellor in every school and an “annual wellbeing survey of pupils”. Government has so far rejected MPs' calls for all students to undergo a mental health assessment.
8. Better “career development” and revalidation every five years for teachers, alongside a new category of consultant teachers and a teaching apprenticeship.
9. A reformed Ofsted with a wider “school report card” with metrics such as wellbeing, school culture, inclusion and attendance.
10. “Better training” for teachers to identify children with special educational needs with a greater focus on inclusion.
11. A 15-year strategy for education drawn up after sector consultation.

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NEWS

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Middlesbrough gets help to tackle absences

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

Middlesbrough has been chosen as the first area to receive government-funded mentoring support to boost school attendance.

Schools Week revealed last year that the government was seeking an organisation to provide mentoring interventions over a three-year period in up to five of its "education investment areas". The pilot project offered £5 million funding.

But a tender notice published this month shows a contract value of £2.32 million. The Department for Education was asked to explain the discrepancy, but did not respond before *Schools Week* went to press.

Tackling persistent absence has become a key priority for ministers after rates soared during the pandemic.

The latest data shows almost one in four pupils (about 1.6 million children) in England was persistently absent in autumn last year, missing at least 10 per cent of sessions.

Middlesbrough had an absence rate of 5.7

per cent and a persistent absence rate of 16.7 per cent last year, higher than the national averages of 4.6 and 12.1 per cent.

Two areas had higher persistent absence rates: Bradford (18.5 per cent) and Knowsley (17.5 per cent). Salford's rate was 16.7. All three are also education investment areas.

Contract documents, seen by *Schools Week*, state the chosen provider will support up to 350 pupils in years 6 to 11 in the first year, before expanding in the next two years to four more areas and supporting up to 1,700 pupils in total.

Councillor Mieka Smiles, Middlesbrough's executive member for children's services, said attendance was a "key priority" and the "ground-breaking programme has the potential to shape lives for the better" across the country.

"We want our children and young people



to have the best possible start in life, but too many are missing school, and in doing so are harming their life chances.

"We're not alone in this, but it's vital that we build

on the great work we already do to ensure students fulfil their potential and don't get left behind."

It comes after Dame Rachel de Souza, the children's commissioner, said schools should "obsess" about attendance – but needed more support to provide counselling and to intervene after exclusions.

Her research found children often felt things were "done to them rather than with them", leading to a "breakdown of trust and disengagement from their education".

The report also recommended that schools be supported to provide a "range of early support services", such as in-house counselling. It said this was "easiest to do" through "strong families of schools".

EXCLUSIVE

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBBOOTH

Study of flagship tutoring scheme delayed until autumn

A deep-dive into whether the government's flagship national tutoring programme has helped children to catch up will not be published until the autumn.

The delay means the independent evaluation is likely to be published two years after the scheme's launch in November 2020.

It is also likely to be on its third contractor, with a raft of changes to encourage school take-up.

The study, run by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), is looking into the scheme's effectiveness, take-up and impact on pupil progress in its first year, when it was run by five founding charities.

The Education Endowment Foundation led the tuition partners, which allowed schools to

hire tutors from approved organisations. The academic mentors' route, which placed tutors in poor areas, was run by Teach First.

The evaluation was due to be published in the summer, but it was confirmed this week it would now be the autumn.

A EEF spokesperson said researchers had planned to use key stage 2 and GCSE assessment data to investigate the impact on attainment.

But because exams were cancelled, with GCSEs awarded through teacher grades, the evaluation "had to be replanned" and analysis "was more complex than originally anticipated".

Interim findings have been shared with government so "ongoing evaluation can be

fed into policy-making", the Department for Education said.

The NFER is also evaluating the programme under HR-firm Randstad's stewardship this year, including the new school-led tutoring arm. This is expected to be published in 2023 "at the latest".

As *Schools Week* revealed, the government is axing Randstad, with the cash going straight to schools from September.

The DfE is currently selecting new suppliers on smaller contracts for the next academic year. They will manage quality assurance, recruitment, the deployment of mentors and training. It is understood Randstad has rebid for one of the contracts.

EXPLAINER

The plan for schools to shave another £1bn off budgets

The government wants schools to shave another £1 billion off their spending to free up cash to “prepare for and manage” rising energy and other costs.

School leaders warned the strategy would not be enough to make up for soaring costs and “inadequate” funding, and said the cost-cutting drive could prove controversial.

But officials say everyone has a “duty” to spend wisely and the strategy is not about reducing spending, with schools able to keep and reinvest savings made.

The new plan would aim to “unlock” savings by driving a “step change” in the way school resource management is “prioritised and delivered”.

Schools Week recently reported on the DfE declaring victory on a similar previous push for £1 billion of savings. A teaching union dubbed it “shameful” and experts called some savings claims “eyebrow-raising”.

Much of the latest strategy includes existing support, but new plans to save money include:

School business leaders: new professional standards and training

- Funding for a second round of aspiring chief financial and operating officers to study relevant diplomas from “early 2023” after a pilot, plus more free webinars for all from the autumn.
- Cutting bureaucratic burdens, including improving digital services schools find it “difficult to navigate”, taskforce to look at potential “rationalisation” of guidance, and cutting “planning time and workload” through the DfE’s new curriculum body
- A “refresh” of Institute of School Business Leadership’s professional standards on “what good looks like” to help staff “tailor and manage” their own professional development, and support other leaders and boards to understand roles, skills and knowledge for effective resource management. Research to be published April 2023.
- Promising to “invest” in trust board training, and new board guidance on multi-year planning and budget-setting in the autumn.
- Potentially expanding the school resource management adviser programme. *Schools Week* recently revealed that more than half of schools said advisers found them no new savings, though most still recommended and praised them. Government currently has capacity to support at least 600

visits each year, up to August 2024.

- Supporting new induction materials and development materials for school business professional guidance.

Staff ‘efficiencies’: teaching assistant review and vacancy website expansion

- Reviewing its policy and support for teaching assistants to ensure “their impact and effectiveness is consistent across the system”.
- Consult on expanding the free Teaching Vacancies website to include more roles. The Supply Teachers deal – a Crown Commercial Service deal to help schools recruit – will have increased number of suppliers so more schools can benefit from savings. However, a quarter of school business professionals said such Department for Education money-saving frameworks didn’t save either money or time.
- Updating workforce guidance to “maximise” staff deployment, updating financial checklists and value standards for schools.

Slashing non-staff spend: capital cash advisers and CCTV

- Helping schools “monitor and reduce” energy and water usage – including potentially using smart meters and energy-management systems. A new code of conduct and guidance to help schools negotiate deals with “comparable”, approved suppliers.
- Better resilience against crime, such as “CCTV or better securing schools’ perimeters” and offering cyber-attack insurance to trusts through the risk-protection arrangement.
- Working with schools most at risk of flooding to install “resilience measures”.
- “Expecting” all schools to use integrated curriculum and financial planning (ICFP). A survey released alongside the strategy shows just 54 per cent of school business professionals use such budgeting techniques.
- Widening the rollout of the “capital advisers programme” after a pilot, with expert support on improving estate management capability at “trusts who need it most”.
- New guidance to help schools who “often struggle to choose, switch, or implement the best, most secure and cost-effective management information systems (MIS) to meet their needs”.

NEWS IN BRIEF

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New expert mentor status revealed

Teachers who mentor school staff can gain chartered status from next year.

The Chartered College of Teaching (CCT) says the move will give school-based mentors, such as those guiding early career teachers, a "real sense of professional recognition".

It follows greater emphasis on mentoring in the recent reforms to the early career framework (ECF) and initial teacher training.

Cat Scutt, the CCT's director of education and research, said that while there were "huge



Cat Scutt

expectations" of mentors, there was "not necessarily recognition for them".

Chartered teacher (mentor) status will be made up of four assessment units, including exams on teaching and effective mentoring.

Upon successful completion, mentors will receive CTeach (Mentor).

Mentors with two years of ECF experience will be exempt from one exam, while those who have completed the new national professional qualifications will be exempt from one assessment unit.

ECF mentors have complained of heavy workloads under the new programme, with some working at the weekends to complete training.

Scutt said the college was mindful not to duplicate work and was aiming to build on training "they will be doing anyway".

The college will consult with the profession over the summer on the design of the new accreditation. Registration is expected to open in the 2022-23 academic year.

[Full story here](#)

Admission appeals changes

The government will no longer allow school admissions appeals to be heard by panels of two people, after fears over fairness were flagged during a consultation.

The Department for Education consulted earlier this year on whether to make certain changes to admissions appeals brought in for the Covid pandemic permanent.

In its response, issued today, the government said it would keep flexibilities which allow appeal hearings to be held remotely by video, with schools and councils also allowed to offer hybrid models.

Appeals will also be able to be held by telephone, but "only where video conference cannot be used for reasons relating to connectivity or accessibility and where the

appellant and presenting officer agree".

But another flexibility that has allowed appeals to be determined by panels of two if the third member needs to withdraw from the process will not be kept.

The DfE had heard concerns "about the fairness or perceived fairness of a panel of two deciding an appeal".

For example, in cases where a two-member panel disagreed, the chair would have the deciding vote, meaning the appeal was "effectively being decided by one person".

The changes are subject to Parliamentary approval. If they receive it, they will come into effect on October 1.

Long Covid affects one in 20 teens

Almost one in 20 secondary school pupils have experienced symptoms of long Covid following their most recent infection.

Infected pupils are also much more likely to have a mental health disorder, suggests the Office for National Statistics' school infection survey.

It found 4.8 per cent of secondary pupils and 1.8 per cent of primary pupils had symptoms that persisted for 12 or more weeks.

A study from last year suggested 5.8 per cent of the population had had long Covid.

The proportion of school pupils with long Covid has increased since the last survey in November and December last year. It found that 2.7 per cent of secondary pupils and 1 per cent of primary pupils had symptoms.

Latest government estimates for the wider population show that teachers and those working in education had the second highest rate of long Covid (4.6 per cent), more than health care workers and second only to social care staff.

TES reported that Nadhim Zahawi, the education secretary, has asked officials to draw up guidance for schools on how to tackle long Covid.

The study found 28.1 per cent of secondary pupils with long Covid had a probable mental health disorder, compared with 12.3 per cent of those without long Covid.

[Full story here](#)

New post for Nash trust boss

Paul Smith, the chief executive of Future Academies, is leaving to run the White Horse Federation.

Smith was the first regional schools commissioner to quit for an academy trust when he joined Future, set up by Lord Nash, the former academies minister, in 2015.

Dr Nicholas Capstick, the current White Horse chief executive, will retire in December after a three-month transition.

Smith oversaw Future growing from four

to ten schools. White Horse has 32 schools.

Lord and Lady Nash thanked Smith who had "substantially improved the performance of a number of schools, thereby improving the life chances of many children and young people".

Smith said it had been an "absolute privilege" to lead a trust "united in its common belief in the power of a knowledge-rich curriculum to transform lives".

[Full story here](#)

EDITORIAL

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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7p to solve cost-of-living crisis is a disgrace

The stories of families hit by the cost-of-living crisis are heart-breaking. The clear message from school leaders is that this is not just a crisis affecting the very poorest; many working families previously just about managing are now sinking.

And after years of austerity, stripping bare many support services, it has fallen to schools to keep their communities afloat.

It is simply amazing to see how leaders and school staff are meeting the challenge. Things such as one-stop hubs for money-saving services, community fridges or uniform swaps are great initiatives to provide that extra bit of help.

But we've gone from school foodbanks being a rare occurrence to mainstream, with the choice between heating and eating becoming somewhat of a cliché.

One of the country's largest academy trusts will open foodbanks at every one of its schools this September. This should not be the norm in one of the richest countries on earth.

And it should not be down to schools to solve

these problems. Leaders will never shy away from trying to fill the gaps – be it delivering hot meals directly to families, or helping to fix a broken boiler.

But the government cannot just expect schools will continue to do this. Their own budgets are taking a cost-of-living hit, too.

More importantly, it's just a sticking plaster – not a long-term solution that addresses the underlying issues.

One obvious answer is to extend the eligibility for free school meals, which is currently a household income of just £7,400.

The government rejected the call of its own adviser to up this to £20,000 – which would pick up many of the children school leaders told us are now really struggling.

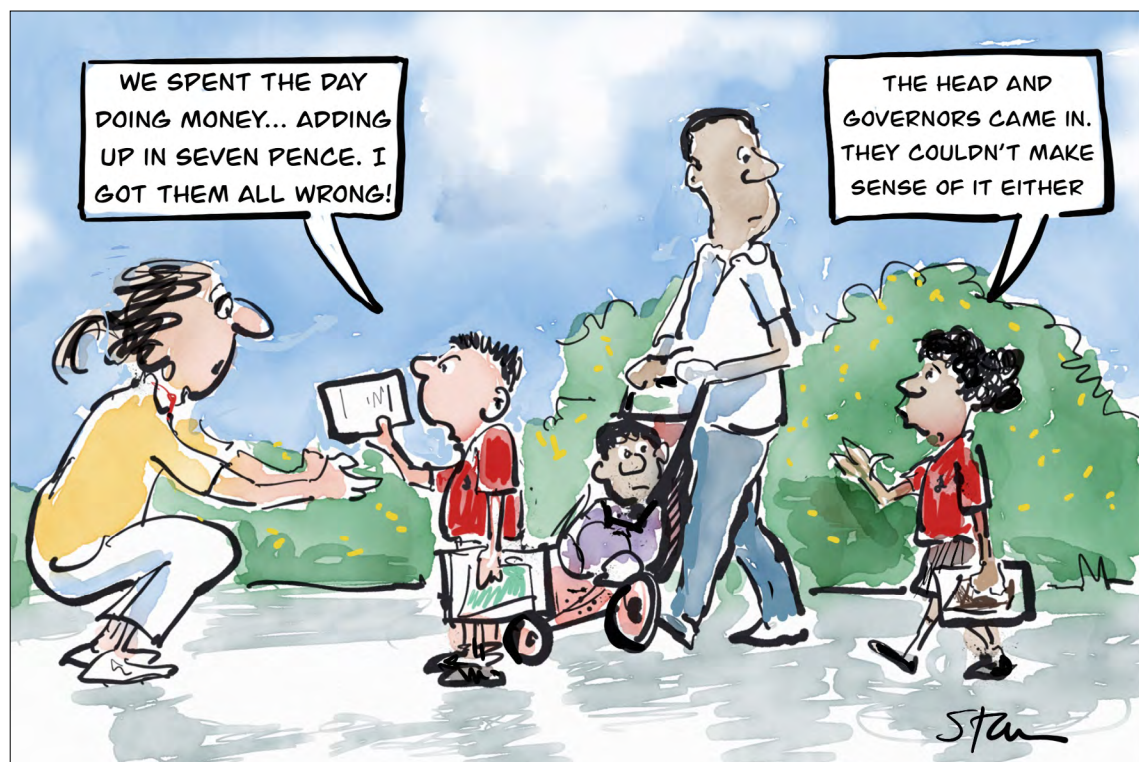
Instead, it was announced the funding rate for universal infant free school meals will increase by just 7p – a pittance that solves no problems. Ministers cannot keep relying on school leaders to solve their problems – time for action.

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Profile

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ

'I want to create a place-based ecosystem of teacher support'

Raksha Pattni, national partnerships director at Ambition Institute, tells Jess Staufenberg why new CPD partnerships with councils will be a game-changer for schools

Raksha Pattni, who oversees partnerships at teacher development charity Ambition Institute, is someone who deeply understands the impact of place and geography on one's life chances. Her family are from India, she was born in Tanzania and her nationality is British. As with her own life, place has played a big part in her professional work.

At Ambition, she was director of the north for almost four years – focusing on helping teachers tackle north-south disadvantage gaps.

Now in a national role, Pattni is driving

forward "place-based" partnerships – providing training for lots of schools in one area who then learn from each other too. In January, she signed up Liverpool City Council and 80 of Liverpool's schools to Ambition's CPD programmes over the next three years.

"Currently we just work anywhere with individual schools, but I want us to work with multiple layers of teachers over a sustained time in one location," she explains. "With individual schools you still get that impact, but it's just so intensified this way."

Signing up so many schools in one city is a

big win for Ambition. Liverpool City Council will pay £754,000 from its own budget so that both maintained schools and some academies access Ambition programmes for free. It is the first such partnership in the country, the pair say.

Participating schools are in groups of nine, with three senior leaders and three middle leaders selected to access Ambition's Transforming Teaching programme from each school. It's a one-year training course that "tackles entrenched underperformance in the classroom and improves the quality of teaching and school leadership", explains

Profile: Raksha Pattni



Pattni with HRH The Prince of Wales

Pattni. All 27 senior leaders in one group of schools work together, and the same for the 27 middle leaders. In total, 400 educators will be reached.

"[CPD] is so impactful when you bring big groups of people together," smiles Pattni.

"There's a real momentum that builds – it has a multiplier effect."

The schools volunteered themselves for involvement. About ten teachers on the Transforming Teaching programme will also be selected for Ambition's two-year 'teacher education fellow' programme on delivering effective CPD, which the 'fellow' then spearheads back in their own school. Last of all, 25 staff will be selected for Ambition's two-year 'future heads' programme on preparing for headship.

"You don't want schools working in isolation," nods Pattni. "For me, this is about creating that ecosystem of support at a place level."

Pattni has an impressive professional history of creating opportunity in local areas. It may be a quality she inherited from her grandparents and parents, who both made big global moves to improve their families' chances.

Her ancestors were jewellers and goldsmiths in Gujarat, but her grandfather left aged just 18 for Tabora, a district in Tanzania, to be close to the area's goldmines. Her father was one of 14 children, and later he and her mother had seven daughters. As the youngest, Pattni felt "very loved" by a big



Pattni with her sisters

"All of us children had jobs cleaning the school"

family.

Pattni's parents also drummed a social conscience into their daughters. "They were very philanthropic, giving food and clothes to local orphanages, and buying books or paying for the cost of teacher training for schools."

School here was very different to the British schools she'd attend later. "There would be about 50 to 60 children in a class, and our school day would start with cleaning the school. All the children had jobs in the morning, cleaning the yard or the staffroom, or, if you were really unlucky, you were selected to clean the toilets – every child's worst nightmare!"

Pupils arrived in school "with their school bag and cleaning kit", she continues. It was a happy environment, and together she and her Asian and African friends would share chapatis and mangoes at lunchtime.

But a war between Tanzania and Uganda brought a terrible incident into her young life. Crime and civil unrest were increasing, and one night, intruders broke into the house.

"All I remember is a massive noise... I think they'd got a massive rock to fling the doors open. The lights had been cut and it was dark,

and one of the gang had a machete or a knife and they were pushing it into my dad and he was trying to hold them off."

At just 11 years old, Pattni saw her father's hands stripped into ribbons from the fight. He needed six hours of surgery. The young Pattni struggled to sleep for months.

Her parents rapidly packed her on to a military plane bound for Britain with her grandmother. She stayed with an aunt and uncle in Leicester, now attending a small fee-paying girls school, Fosse High School.

"I must admit, I did struggle," Pattni says. "I didn't feel included, because I looked different, my accent was different, I wasn't up to speed with fashion and I didn't understand the slang."

Afterwards came Gateway Sixth Form College in Leicester, followed by Coventry University where Pattni studied economics. Aged 23, she got a job at a charity called Belgrave Baheno (baheno means 'sisters' in Gujarati), which supported women into better-paid jobs and education. There she set up a partnership with Leicester's Marks & Spencer to recruit more women from ethnic minority backgrounds: "I'm still very proud of that."

Profile: Raksha Pattni



Pattni in a school play in Tanzania

Building local partnerships became Pattni's specialism. She became head of race equality at Preston City Council, where she set up the town's first 'mela', a big South Asian fair with food, rides and games, bringing everyone from all backgrounds together.

Her work soon caught the eye of the charity Business in the Community, which strengthens links between business, public and voluntary sectors. She became area manager for Lancashire, then regional director for the north-west, and finally, area director covering the north-west, the west Midlands and the south-west. Her legacy was a programme called Business Class, where a school is needs-assessed for how a local business can help, such as in HR or marketing.

"In 20 minutes my CEO had signed off £50,000 to go away and pilot the programme!" she beams. Six months later, she secured a quarter of a million pounds in government funding. It became Business in the Community's flagship national programme, expanding to 500 schools with 300 businesses.

Then in 2017, Pattni joined Ambition as director of the north.

Her focus was helping staff tackle the pupil attainment gap with the south. The statistics in her first year were eye opening: in 2018, only 16.4 per cent of students in the north-east received grades 7-9 at GCSE, compared to 25.7 per cent in London and 20.8 per cent nationwide. Around the same time, northern secondary schools were receiving £1,300 less per pupil than secondary schools in London,



Pattni running an employability workshop with Belgrave Baheno charity

"I want to work over a sustained time in one location"

until a funding formula change in 2018.

So Pattni joined the government-funded Northern Powerhouse Partnership on its education and skills committee, contributing to its 'Educating the North' report. (This included a commitment from businesses to provide career support to 900,000 northern pupils, which sounds straight out of the Pattni playbook.)

Her team at Ambition also "fed back to the government that tutoring is really what was needed in the north," which she says helped prompt the national tutoring programme.

Then in 2020 Pattni took on her national role, tasked with bringing Ambition's programmes to as many schools as possible (Ambition now works with 28,000 participants: that's one in 16 teachers, or the equivalent of working in one in four schools.)

These programmes include government-funded contracts – the early career teacher programme and national professional qualifications – as well as Ambition's own: the trust leaders programme, transforming teaching, curriculum for senior leaders, masters in expert teaching and teacher education fellows.

But last month Ambition lost out, in a high-profile blow, on the government's £121



Pattni at Bamford Edge, Lake District

million contract for the Institute of Teaching, to a group including Harris Federation and Star Academies. The charity dropped legal action after agreeing a confidential damages settlement with the government.

Unsurprisingly, Pattni says she cannot discuss this. Instead, she is jubilant about the "place-based" drive.

Where next? I ask. There is a similar pilot running with Middlesbrough council with seven schools, and Pattni is looking at Leeds, west Yorkshire and Blackpool.

From Tanzania to Tyneside, Pattni has watched and learned from the places she's lived.

Even as the government's rhetoric has shifted from the place-based 'Northern Powerhouse' to the more national 'levelling up', it looks like Pattni will keep the importance of the local in the spotlight.



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Social mobility debate

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KATHARINE
BIRBALSINGH

Chair, Social Mobility
Commission

This is what I really said about social mobility

We should celebrate those who go to Oxbridge, but the social mobility debate shouldn't focus only on them, writes Katharine Birbalsingh

You may have read that last week we launched the “fresh approach” which we want the Social Mobility Commission to take over the next few years. The headline which dominated on the day was the Telegraph's rather odd spin, that “Working class people should aim ‘lower’ than Oxford.” This was not what was said or implied in my speech.

Of course, we all want people to excel, and if this involves overcoming enormous disadvantages to enjoy an ‘elite’ career, then all power to them. You only have to look at the institutions my deputy chair Alun Francis and I both lead to see how high we encourage our students to aim. We want them to be the very best they can be, and want to live in a world where no-one is held back by their background. As educationalists we love to see this and to celebrate it. But we should not uphold it as the model against which everyone is judged.

You will all have your own views about social mobility and what it means. There is a huge academic and policy literature which is very technical about how it is defined and measured. This is one of the things the commission wants to make more accessible.

The problem is that a fair bit of social mobility work tends to

“This is not about lowering expectations

focus on a very small group of very talented people making huge leaps from the ‘bottom’ to the ‘top’. Of course, we should strive for this to happen as much as possible – and indeed my own sixth form is all about getting disadvantaged kids into Oxbridge and Russell Group Universities.

But what about those who do not want to go to university, or feel their skills or talents lie elsewhere? What about the fabulous pupils with great character, who work hard, and are good people, but only end up with average grades? What about those who need second or third chances?

These are precisely the people that we want the social mobility



debate to include. These are young people who you work with, and who often move mountains to make progress in their life, but on the current measures would not even be noticed. They only count if they are among the exceptional few, who

leap from the bottom to the top – usually through extremely high academic achievement.

The focus we want to bring to the Social Mobility Commission is to look at how opportunities can be improved for everyone, including those who make shorter journeys. And as part of promoting that we're particularly keen to focus on the role of family and community circumstances, the choice of pathways into work, and the nature of economies in specific places, in shaping opportunity. Some may want to say this is lowering expectations. But that's not what we're saying at all. High expectations are the foundation of

great learning. Aspiration matters too. You can't be what you can't see – which is why I invite such a different variety of role models to speak to the children at Michaela. Of course we want to celebrate those who go to Oxbridge or become top lawyers.

But we also want to celebrate those who don't follow those routes. Life isn't just about becoming a top banker in the City – we should celebrate that fact and recognise that there are great achievements to be had in other careers and other parts of the country too.

Having high expectations should not mean we judge everyone by the same measures. We want to encourage and inspire everyone to be their best, but we also need to avoid prejudiced views about the occupations and achievements of those who follow a different path.

We need to spend as much time on opening opportunities for them as we do for the academically outstanding. There are different social mobility narratives for different people, and we shouldn't be putting them in hierarchies which implies that some are inferior to the others. We need them all.

Social mobility debate

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Narrowing wealth gaps and celebrating people's varied talents and successes are wonderful aspirations, writes Jeffery Quaye, but they don't amount to social mobility

The United Kingdom has one of the lowest rates of social mobility among countries in the developed world. Irrespective of talent, a child born here to a low-income family does not have access to as many opportunities as their wealthier peers. Levelling-up secretary Michael Gove recently acknowledged the extent of the problem: "Not everyone shares equally in the UK's success," he said. "For decades, too many communities have been overlooked and undervalued. As some areas have flourished, others have been left in a cycle of decline."

This sets the context for the high expectations surrounding the work of the social mobility commission. But social mobility isn't just an important topic; it is also a complex construct. So while Katharine Birbalsingh raised some fundamental questions in her inaugural address as commission chair, it's disappointing that she did so seemingly without embracing the challenges that need to be addressed to realise the promise of social mobility. Instead, she suggested a deliberate shift from a known and internationally recognised paradigm to what appears to be a very incoherent conception, purely reliant on occupational mobility.

In case you missed it, Birbalsingh argued that levelling up should aim to deliver a fairer model than "Dick Whittington"-style social mobility. But why move away from a model that is aspirational and challenges the intergenerational reproduction of inequality? Is the aim to calibrate social mobility indicators to portray a positive picture?



DR JEFFERY QUAYE

National director of education and standards, Aspirations Academies Trust

Reframing social mobility: the new poverty of aspiration?

Inequality of opportunity

The commission argues that "we could reduce inequality, for example, without improving social mobility: we could just reduce the gap between the top and the bottom, without improving the movement in between." I agree that inequality is

reducing the gap won't do it.

I also agree with Birbalsingh that individuals have agency and aspirations. But I would caveat that by adding that these can be shaped by what people experience and internalise as possible. It is a truism that "those born nearer to the top

"This appears to be a very incoherent conception"

also a pressing problem, and a distinct one from social mobility. But we won't achieve true social mobility – in the sense of movement of individuals and groups across systems of social stratification/hierarchy – until those in positions of power challenge the systemic drivers of inequality. Simply

have advantages over those born nearer to the bottom". And in my experience very few of us "move from this general observation to the conclusion that [...] gaps and disparities [...] are set in stone".

As such, calls for a clearer definition of social mobility seem far from



urgent. Geography, for example, is both far more pressing and more susceptible to policy interventions. Better distribution of high-quality education and employment is surely crucial to addressing both inequality and social mobility.

Poverty of aspiration

The commission's focus on occupational mobility without change in social class means aspiration is in fact absent from its register. More recognition of what amounts to little more than horizontal mobility is no substitute for increased vertical mobility. Birbalsingh asks: "If a child of parents who were long-term unemployed, or who never worked, gets a job in their local area, isn't that a success worth celebrating? Would we really want to say that it doesn't count as social mobility?" Yes, it is worth celebrating. And no, it doesn't count. Social mobility is about inclusion and everyone having a fair chance at the top jobs.

The aspiration that every individual should be able to "apply their talents in ways that they enjoy and gives them purpose, for our wider society and economy" is a fair one. But Birbalsingh's education background could have led to a different set of conclusions. We need more policies, like the national tutoring programme, that ensure children have far less disparate starts in life and access to the same purposeful uses for their talents – whether they are a 'step up' or a 'step down' from the positions their parents hold.

Anything less is simply patronising those who are perennially immobile while leaving the causes of their immobility untouched.

Opinion

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STEPHANIE SLATER

Founder and chief executive,
School Food Matters

Government food strategy: a disappointment voters will remember

The government has chosen to ignore clear recommendations and excellent practice, writes Stephanie Slater, but the issue of school food will only get more pressing

I visited a school this week that is a glowing example of a good school food culture. The headteacher has embraced all the opportunities provided by charities to enrich the food and nutrition curriculum with programmes to get the children at his school growing, cooking and sharing delicious food. He does this because he sees value in teaching children how to eat well so that they can concentrate in the classroom and leave school with the skills they need to live healthy lives.

He doesn't do this to impress Ofsted. Which is just as well, as this week's government food strategy policy paper has brushed over the recommendation that stated: "Cookery and nutrition lessons should be inspected with the same rigour as maths or English lessons", preferring to "consider insights" from an Ofsted review of design and technology.

It's difficult to get excited about this Defra publication when so many of Henry Dimbleby's 2013 school food plan recommendations

are merely being 'considered', 'reviewed' or 'piloted'. All of the announcements around school food are rehashes of the commitments found in the levelling-up white paper, albeit with slightly more robust wording. It moves us from schools being 'encouraged' to publish a report on school food to school leaders and governors being

'required' to publish a school food vision on their websites.

That, alongside the FSA's work with local authorities to monitor compliance with the school food standards, does show some progress towards the ambition set out in Dimbleby's "What gets measured gets done". But once again we're in pilot phase, and proof will be in the pudding (with 50 per cent fruit content in line with the standards).

By far the most glaring omission from this strategy document is any government action on access to free school meals. Putting this in the context of the primary school visited this week, 35 per cent of its pupils qualify for free school meals and a further 15 per cent just miss out.



These are children from working families who fail to qualify under the stringent eligibility criteria (earned household income of £7,400 before benefits), but whose parents struggle to pay for a lunch.

money debt'.

Let's be clear: the need to reform school food funding and policy is urgent. Supported by Impact on Urban Health, School Food Matters joined forces with The Food Foundation and Bite Back 2030 to call for reform to tackle health inequalities and ensure that no child misses out on good nutrition at school. We were hopeful that the Defra response to the National Food Strategy would bring the good news that government would get behind Dimbleby's recommendation to expand free school meal eligibility. But instead of the urgent action that's needed right now, we are offered yet another review.

School Food Matters and its campaign partners, school leaders and our hard-working school caterers will use this disappointing government response as a launchpad for a noisy campaign as we lurch towards a general election. We know that the public supports an expansion of free school meals. So if we haven't won the argument with ministers this time, there's little doubt we will do so on the doorstep.

“This is a government at odds with its own levelling-up agenda

And that school isn't unusual. Its cohort reflects Child Poverty Action Group's finding that one-third of children living in poverty in England fail to qualify for a free school meal. To fail to respond to the pressures experienced by these families in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis shows not only a lack of compassion, but a government completely at odds with its own levelling-up agenda.

Like so many school leaders around the country, the headteacher at the school I visited will support families by paying for meals out of the school budget to avoid an influx of poor-quality packed lunches, stigmatisation of families who can't afford to pay, and spiralling 'dinner

Opinion

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JOAN
MILL

International
managing director,
Renaissance



JON
ANDREWS

Head of analysis, EPI



Making practical sense of Covid learning loss research

New data on the scale and distribution of learning loss is helpful, write Joan Mill and Jon Andrews, but accompanying resources could make the difference for schools tackling the problem

The 2021-22 school year remains challenging for many schools that continue to face high levels of both student and teacher absences as well as, among other issues, invigilator shortages in the lead-up to exam season. As students sit these milestone exams for the first time in three years, recent Teacher Tapp research found only one in four teachers felt that it was back to business as usual.

A new academic year is on the horizon, and while we all hope it will be one without such disruption, now is a good time to reflect on the ongoing effects of the pandemic and how we can continue to address them. Recent research carried out by Renaissance and EPI for the DfE offers invaluable insight to enable teachers and school leaders to do just that.

The scale of losses

The research shows that pupils remain behind in their reading and mathematics skills, compared to

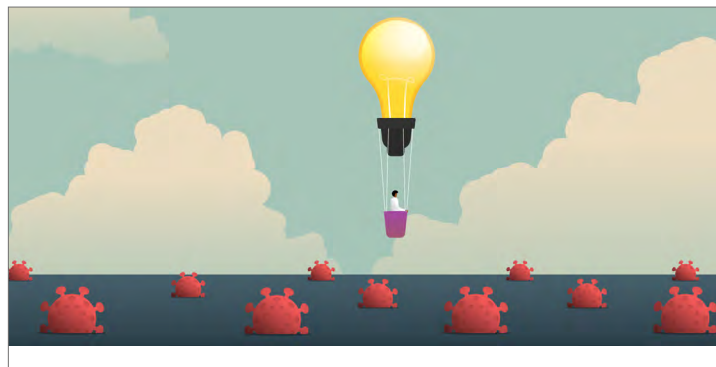
their progress pre-pandemic. In the autumn term 2021-2022, secondary pupils had fallen a further 0.5 months behind in reading, bringing total average learning loss to 2.4 months behind by the end of the first half-term.

This differed at primary level, as learning losses for primary pupils in the 2021-2022 autumn term were

largely unchanged since the 2020-2021 summer term. However, pupils remained around 0.8 months behind where they would be expected to be in a typical pre-pandemic year.

These learning losses are likely to continue to add pressure on teachers and school leaders as they struggle to ensure extra support is in place for those who need it most.

Most worryingly, the gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers widened between the summer and autumn terms in both primary and secondary reading. On average, disadvantaged secondary school pupils were a significant 3.5 months behind in the autumn term, compared to two months for non-disadvantaged



pupils. That gap is 0.9 months in primary reading.

More positively, the gap has narrowed in primary maths. Disadvantaged primary school pupils were on average 2.2 months behind in maths in the autumn term, compared to 1.8 months for non-disadvantaged pupils – a gap of 0.4 months. Nevertheless, this gap must be addressed further, given that all of these losses come on top of the

welcome measures including extra support for in-school mental health services and additional monitoring of children who are not in school, it remains a concern that these policies alone will not close the gap.

Research into practice

A number of useful free resources are available to schools to help them interpret the data and create a tailored action plan. This research allowed Renaissance to develop scaled score averages, which can be used as a benchmark to compare the scores achieved by specific cohorts against those achieved nationally. As well as overall averages, means are broken down by demographics from the national pupil database. These allow schools to benchmark against the national picture, not just at the start of this year but also prior to lockdowns.

Renaissance has also produced a guide to support with this process of understanding and applying the data in your classroom. And if the thought of creating tailored learning plans to address learning loss feels overwhelming, its Focus Skills workbooks are developed to support teachers in the effort.

Together, our research insights and support materials are designed to help schools navigate their way to a full recovery. And we hope they can do so without further disruption.

“ These policies alone will not close the gap ”

disadvantage gap that was already evident prior to the pandemic.

Regional disparities

Substantial disparities are also still apparent at a regional level. For example, learning loss is much more significant for pupils in the North and the Midlands (north-east, -1.3 months; north-west, -1.2 months; East Midlands, -1.0 months; and West Midlands, -0.9 months) compared to London and the south-west (-0.3 months).

The rates of recovery between the end of the last school year and beginning of the current year also vary considerably.

While schools white paper contains some bold aims and a number of

Opinion

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ED REZA
SCHWITZER

Associate director, Public First

Schools are vital to children's social care reform

It can't all be down to schools, writes Ed Reza Schwitzer, but the children's social care review sets out clearly their crucial role in improving outcomes for vulnerable young people

Despite the many challenges they were already coping with, schools met the huge additional pressures of the pandemic head on. Now, with the ink not yet dry on the government's schools white paper and SEND green paper, I know I will not be a popular man for suggesting there is yet another new report that requires schools' attention. But there is.

I must declare an interest: I was the review's working-level contact in my last role at the DfE, which I left last summer. I've moved on, while Josh MacAlister steadfastly spent over a year independently reviewing the children's social care system, and we all have an interest in the outcome, published last month.

The thinking behind this review is complex, but the core message is simple: the children's social care system must be redesigned around the children and young people it serves, not around individual, siloed services, as is too often the case.

This change would mean high-

quality family support early on, rather than waiting for crises to escalate. It would mean bringing services together and removing the need for handovers as far as possible. And it would mean making better use of existing family networks in caring for children.

This is not a niche issue. According to government figures, 1.6 million

“Outcomes for children in need are shocking

children needed a social worker between 2012 and 2018. That's one in ten children, or three in every classroom.

Currently, too many of these children are not being kept safe. Roughly half of local authorities' children's services are rated as 'Inadequate' or 'Requires Improvement' by Ofsted, compared with only 13 per cent of schools.

The review also highlights that outcomes even for children in need (those with a social worker but not looked after or on a child-protection plan) are shocking. They are “50 per cent less likely to achieve a strong pass in their English and maths GCSEs” and “three times as likely to have an unauthorised absence”.



It is no surprise that this has serious ramifications in later life. According to estimates cited by the review, “26 per cent of the homeless population have care experience [and] 24 per cent of the prison population in England have spent time in care”.

MacAlister's report highlights in no uncertain terms that we must do

technology.

Second, it recommends the creation of new 'family help teams' as a core part of the solution to the huge decline in early support for children. These will be “based in community settings, like schools and family hubs”. It calls on the government to properly fund this, with an injection of an extra £2 billion over the next five years. And it also highlights the vital role LA-employed virtual school heads can play in supporting children while they're in school.

Finally, the report wants to see schools made the fourth statutory safeguarding partner. MacAlister finds that “in too many places the contribution and voice of education is missing”. Legislating to change this would be a significant step requiring genuine engagement between the school system and LAs, perhaps made harder by the move to full academisation set out in the schools white paper.

So, while readers may not be part of the 50 per cent who responded positively to Nadhim Zahawi's idea that teachers should become foster carers too, I do hope you will agree that children who interact with the care system deserve better, and the schools system should do all it can to make that a reality.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Now is the time teachers learn that a valued colleague is leaving, write Gavin Simpson and Natasha Lawrence, so here's some useful guidance for coping with the loss

Across the nation at this time of year, teachers are coming to terms with the loss of colleagues for whom family or career has meant a move to another school. We spend a third of our lives at work, and for teachers most of the time not spent in the classroom is spent in the departmental office. So it's normal for family-like bonds to form, and yet there's little guidance on how to cope when that bond is broken.

Most readers will be familiar with the Kubler-Ross theory of the stages of grief. Famously, Michael Fullan adapted it in *Leading in a Culture of Change* to discuss staff reactions to new policies. Here, we are reclaiming it for a more personal part of our professional lives. Our focus is on the one who stays behind but it's worth noting that the departing colleague is likely to go through the same process.

Without further ado then, here are the seven stages of losing a colleague and what you should (and shouldn't) do as you navigate through them.

Shock

The first reaction is usually an understandable state of disbelief, which can last a few hours or even days. Who is going to get the milk in? Will my new colleague appreciate my love of country music? Confusion reigns.

DO: Chat to other staff about it. Maybe meditate.

DON'T: Cry and ask Chess Club what you did wrong.

Denial

The next phase is to reject reality. If you don't accept that they have got a new

GAVIN SIMPSON

Head of economics,
Dame Alice
Owen's School

NATASHA LAWRENCE

Business teacher,
Dame Alice
Owen's School



The seven stages of losing your work buddy

job, then it hasn't happened. They've just asked you for the photocopy code for the 80th time this term, and they will again.

DO: Get your thoughts down in a journal.

DON'T: Ignore your work buddy by throwing yourself into writing the departmental improvement plan.

books out. You get angry with yourself too. You hogged the microwave. You didn't notice their new haircut even though they had highlights. You drove them away!

DO: Sing along to the Tears For Fears classic *Shout* at the top of your voice.

DON'T: Pour out-of-date milk into their cup of tea.

“Who is going to get the milk in? Confusion reigns

Anger

Eventually you go from sad to mad, and it's easy to get very petty when that happens. You stop lending your stapler. You start playing jazz in the office. You tell the librarian that they never encouraged students to take

Bargaining

Now irrational behaviour kicks in. You make sure the kettle is filled every morning. You pop into their lesson to tell them it was 'outstanding'. You ask whether you can photocopy anything for them and genuinely mean it. It's



nice, but it won't bring them back.

DO: Make a list of things that will make you happy next term.

DON'T: Put them on the list.

Depression

When you finally realise that they are definitely leaving, you are overwhelmed by it. They feel the same and slowly personal items start disappearing, like their favourite mug and pictures of Jason Statham. Days pass as files are transferred on to memory sticks. Misery fills the air. It's as if Ofsted are coming.

DO: Surround yourself with radiators, not drains.

DON'T: Attend any meetings. They will only make you feel worse.

Testing

It's turnaround time. Amid moments of sadness, you start to find ways of dealing with the situation through experimentation. You eye up their desk. You find other people to hang out with at break times. This is the road to acceptance.

DO: Try their chair.

DON'T: Try their chair when they are in it.

Acceptance

Finally, you realise you can still make plans for the future. After all, there is a leaving do to organise and new colleagues to induct into The Chicks fandom.

DO: Celebrate your time together.

DON'T: Write a rambling leaving speech for the last day of term. Everyone wants to go home, OK?

Gavin Simpson and Natasha Lawrence share an office. This summer, Natasha leaves. This is their way of processing that fact. They think they're at the acceptance stage, but may still be bargaining.



BAMEed Network invites you to their annual conference 2022: Creating the future with everyone on board

UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON | 2ND JULY 2022

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Join us for an uplifting day of interactive workshop sessions, powerful keynote speeches, exhibition stands and more at the University of Wolverhampton on 2nd July 2022



KEYNOTE:
Dr Halima Begum
The Runnymede Trust



Workshops include:

- Developing racial literacy
- A national approach to anti-racism in education
- Teaching history: Cynefin and the story of diversity in Wales
- Anti-racist approaches to Initial Teacher Training
- Student voices and advocacy work in the East of England
- Leadership and Mentoring and the Humari Pehchan Project (Who Am I?)
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' voices
- Special Educational Needs and Disability awareness
- and more to be announced....



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Reviews

EXHIBITION REVIEW



Breaking the News

Location: British Library

Exhibition dates: April 22 to August 21, 2022

Reviewer: Terry Freedman, freelance edtech writer and publisher

It is easy to believe that 'fake news' is a modern phenomenon, brought about by social media and promulgated by politicians. Yet as the British Library's 'Breaking the News' exhibition demonstrates, fake news – or that unforgettable phrase 'alternative facts' – have been features of news reporting for at least 500 years.

The exhibition is not arranged in chronological order but in themes, including crime, conflict, power and censorship. As the blurb reads, "Whilst the themes that interest people do not generally change, the form and ownership of news does". Neither are the items on display restricted to newspapers. Pamphlets, radio broadcasts, film and video all serve to enrich the experience.

And the approach works well, not least because it illustrates that while the things that concern us (and the English language itself) may change over time, more fundamental issues about reportage do not. These issues include such aspects as who is breaking the news, what particular axe are they grinding, and how the news is reported.

It's interesting to read the way crime tended to be reported in past centuries. Far from reporting the facts, as far as they were known, many pamphlets and newspapers set out to either scare people to death or to sermonise. This suggests a couple of questions to put to students: (a) should news reports set out to do anything other than provide information?; (b) although we may be taken aback by the lurid treatments of

yesteryear, are the issues lessened in any way by the more subtle ways of the modern media landscape?

So far, so interesting. Teachers and students of history, for which the key stage 3 programme of study states that students should understand "how different types of historical sources are used... and interpretations of the past have been constructed", will find plenty to engage with. So will English and media studies teachers and their pupils, for whom learning to read texts critically is central to the curriculum. The latter will find the exhibition particularly apposite. And in light of a recent Ofsted report that found digital literacy wanting because of teachers' tendency to regard students as digital natives who don't need explicit teaching about such matters as e-safety, there's something here for everyone.

'Breaking the News' presents a broad sweep of the (fake) news landscape. In the space of perhaps 90 minutes, one can easily see the similarities between a 16th-century pamphlet and a Facebook campaign aiming to convince others of "your truth". But while breadth is the exhibition's main strength, the trade-off of sacrificing depth and nuance is its major weakness. For example, a section presents a photo of Greta Thunberg accompanied by the text "1970s. Climate change: early reports claim fossil fuels are polluting the planet but sceptics ask 'how bad is it?'". Some sceptics are still asking that, but why no mention of those who have been raising the issue for decades?

So the exhibition should in my view

be regarded as a starting point for questioning and discussion, rather than as the definitive authority on this subject.

Should you decide to take a group of students though, there are a few things to bear in mind. First, be aware that there are some images and film that are extremely upsetting. You may wish to visit first if possible to decide what's appropriate, and perhaps plan to avoid those parts. On the plus side, groups of students and their teacher can enjoy free entry provided they book in advance, and there is even a room where school groups can eat a packed lunch. And for those in year 10 and above, guided workshops, including a talk and worksheets, are also available.

It's worth noting too that if you can't make it, or decide not to, the exhibition has an accompanying book that could prove a useful resource.

Bottom line: it is absolutely worth your time and trouble to arrange a visit. But carefully consider how this important topic is built into your wider curriculum, who will benefit most from it, and how you will build in time before and after for discussion.



Reviews



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

@Ruby_Bhatt_OBE

Creating an Effective School Vision

Daniel Robertson via @nexusEdUK

In this very insightful blog, Twinkl publisher Daniel Robertson argues that creating an effective school vision requires co-designing short- and long-term goals with the wider school community.

Allowing everyone to 'bond over ideas', he says, not only creates an inclusive vision but also makes that vision more realistic. He goes on to outline areas that should be considered when creating the school vision, demonstrating a commitment to diversity from start to end, including in his research.

As chair of trustees, that blog has reinforced for me the importance of having all stakeholders around the table. Their voice and input allows everyone to own the vision!

The Role of the SEND Governor

@wholeeducation

When SEND governors work closely with SENDCos, together they have a great impact on schools' vision, ethos and strategic intent. This blog explains their importance to the core functions of the school and their role in ensuring continual development for pupils with SEND. It also gives some insight into what link governors could be focusing on and to thread their findings through strategic plans.

TOP BLOGS of the week

We Must Commit Now to Address the Inequality that Exists within the Education System

@ClaudeniaW via @Ambition_Inst

Delving into the NFER's recently published research into the representation and career progression of people from ethnic-minority backgrounds in English schools, Claudenia Williams here raises important points about why so many people are leaving the profession. In short, many feel they are not looked after, either in the early part of their careers or when aiming for senior leadership.

Reflecting on her personal experience and the challenges she had to face, Williams makes a compelling case that the NFER's data should support those in senior positions to help drive change. While critical, this is a post full of hope that policymakers will make good use of the best practice the research signposts to build a more inclusive and diverse education system.

But it can't be left to them alone. Governors, trustees and senior leaders must play their part to ensure our staff reflect the communities we serve. Diversity must be at the heart of any decisions and policies we make.

From NQT to Headship and Everything Else in Between - My Journey

@Robin_W_F via @MenTeachPrimary

Having progressed to headship at a very young age, the author of this blog (who only uses his first name) writes here about how instrumental his early career was in setting him on his path. Reflecting on the very start of that journey, he recalls how his preference for teaching his beloved history at secondary was challenged by a placement in a primary school. His stereotyped view of the latter dropped away, and he never looked back!

It's a truly inspirational blog that emphasises how having good colleagues around you who want you to succeed makes such a difference. That, too, should be at the heart of how leaderships teams approach their role: recognising talent and taking every opportunity to support teachers to live their dream.

I will be ensuring link governors have adequate and ongoing training and experience to best support our SENDCo staff. And I'll also be keeping this one close by for a powerful defence of hybrid meetings when we next discuss returning to the traditional face-to-face kind.

Queer Clubbing – Creating Intentional Queer Space in Educational Settings

@MsE_Cronin via @DiverseED2020

Here, secondary senior leader and Bristol Queer Educators founder Edel Cronin sets out the importance of creating spaces and a sense of community for LGBTQ + pupils. Cronin reflects on messages that stayed with her in her early teaching days and how young LGBTQ + people can feel isolated from others and from the history that belongs to them.

Cronin goes on to explain how she implemented her school Pride event and how important it was for building coalitions and reducing stereotypes to get the school to fully support it. It's a powerful argument if you needed one for having policies in place to support staff and pupils from all walks of life to find their space within their schools.

Research



Our guest research post this week comes from Education Endowment Foundation.

To learn more about this new research, contact them @EducEndowFoundn

How can 'quick-fire' research help us answer timely questions?

**Amy Ellis-Thompson, programme manager,
Education Endowment Foundation**

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is probably best-known for commissioning independent evaluations of large-scale randomised controlled trials (RCTs). These are widely recognised as one of the best and least biased ways of finding out what impact a specific programme or approach can have on attainment. Used in conjunction with information on implementation and cost, RCTs can give us powerful information about whether a programme is likely to work in a particular context.

One drawback is that large-scale RCTs take considerable time to deliver and evaluate. The typical EEF-funded RCT takes three to four years from commission to publication. Sometimes, we use a quicker approach.

That's why we commissioned a series of 'nimble' RCTs as part of the first year of delivering the national tutoring programme (NTP). These test elements of a programme instead of the whole thing. Within NTP, we identified the importance of pupil attendance at tutoring sessions and felt there were opportunities to rapidly learn more about how to improve pupil engagement.

The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) developed and tested three different strategies to find out if 'light-touch' interventions could boost attendance at NTP tutoring sessions during the spring and summer terms of 2021. These interventions completed in less than 18 months and the findings, published this week, provide interesting and important insights for schools and tutoring organisations looking to engage pupils in tutoring interventions.

A small number of tuition partners took part in the trials of the three strategies, all of which were based on insights from



behavioural science:

Engagement-boosting reminders, where behaviourally informed reminder messages were sent directly to pupils via email.

Prioritising tutoring relationships, where tutors completed a short web-based activity focused on relationship-building strategies that could be used with pupils and received reminders about the personal strategy they developed in the activity.

Snap surveys, where pupils and tutors answered quick-fire questions about their interests, hobbies and values to identify similarities that could help them build a positive relationship.

The first two approaches performed no better or worse than the control groups, with whom tuition partners used 'business-as-usual' strategies to encourage attendance. However, the approach that aimed to leverage similarities between pupils and their tutors did improve attendance rates.

Four of the 33 tuition partners took part in the 'snap survey' trial. Once they'd completed the surveys, tutors and pupils received instant feedback on their similarities. Tutors also received reminders of their

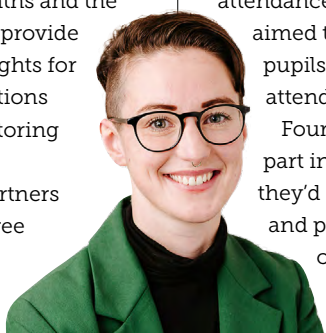
similarities with their pupils for the next five weeks, including some suggested conversation prompts. Tutors then used teaching strategies that incorporated their pupils' interests to help build a positive relationship.

Tutors were randomly assigned to either receive the snap survey or business-as-usual relationship-building activities. The evaluation found that pupils of tutors who received the survey had higher attendance rates than those of tutors in the control group. The same was also true for pupil premium pupils, among whom this activity also led to increased attendance.

Interviews with tutors conducted as part of the evaluation suggested that the intervention may have been particularly effective for tutors who had less experience. Tutors also reported that the survey contributed to the pupil-tutor relationship by stimulating conversation between pupils and tutors which can be difficult, particularly in an online environment. Some tutors perceived the activity to work particularly well for specific groups of pupils, for example, those with SEND, who may find it harder to engage with teachers and tutors or in unfamiliar contexts.

This is a significant finding, particularly as the trials were conducted during a period of widespread disruption to schools, including the school closures that spring term. The findings will allow for purposeful action and improvement to this valuable programme. Armed with this new knowledge, tutoring organisations will know to prioritise and capitalise on commonalities between tutors and their pupils to secure and sustain pupil engagement.

And by highlighting the value that different research methods can bring in helping us to answer meaningful questions about programme implementations quickly and robustly, these reports don't just affect tutoring practice, but the very way we conduct research.



Week in

Westminster

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

FRIDAY

A new schools resource management strategy today stated just how important flexible working is, and that schools should do their best to offer it where needed.

It provided great benefits, the report went on, such as helping to "retain experienced staff, promote wellbeing and improve staff motivation, and are part of effective workforce practice". Quite right!

The report's author? None other than... the Department for Education, which has recently ordered all staff to come back into its offices – despite not even having enough desks, leaving staff working in corridors and canteens. All because Jacob Rees-Mogg said so.

TUESDAY

The widespread concern that the government's plan to ship refugees off to Rwanda might breach their human rights is, according to education committee member Tom Hunt, just "members of elite society who have never had to live with the consequences of uncontrolled illegal immigration".

Yes, that would be the same Tom Hunt who was among the very few privileged seven per cent of kids who went to private school (the prestigious King's Ely school, which charges up to £35k a year, no less).

We know teaching is hard work. But Ambition Institute, one of the country's main training providers, potentially recommending marijuana for stressed-out staff is certainly a new approach to CPD... (editor's note: Are we sure this is weed? Could it be hemp? Make sure to check).

With just a few weeks left until the end of term, the National Tutoring Programme has finally... launched a new website!

It has a "new design and simpler navigation, along with some other improved features including a tuition partner search tool".

As the government scrambles to hit its target on delivering two million tutoring courses this year, one can't help but think it's all a bit late.

BUT, at least HR firm Randstad – which is running the programme – will benefit from its sparkly new website next year.

Oh, yeah. Awks. Randstad has been stripped of its contract, which is currently out to tender to find a new company to run the scheme.

WEDNESDAY

Taking a leaf from his boss's book, schools minister Robin Walker talked about the importance of following the evidence – and he was "really happy" to secure extra cash to keep the "Education Endowment Forum" going.

Oops!

The government has only shoved the Education Endowment *Foundation* £100 million quid over the years, with at least tens of millions more going its way shortly.

It's not like a minister should know their name.

THURSDAY

Author David Goodhart didn't hold back, saying trusts are too small to be "significant players in their local communities". Also pretty brave to make the comment at a conference run by the Confederation of School Trusts, which

represents academy trusts.

It prompted a moment's silence, before a round of laughter from fellow panellists.

Also kudos to Rebecca Cramer, executive headteacher and co-founder at Reach Academy Feltham, who said pointedly later: "Yes, a lot of trusts are schools, but they are mighty."

Meanwhile, Labour's shadow education secretary was seen being stopped for a random bag search heading into the CST conference today.

Unrelatedly, Zahawi was also seen whispering into a security guard's ear just minutes beforehand.



Ambition Institute
@Ambition_Inst



The morning read: How can early years leaders enable the best conditions for effective professional development?

In this @CharteredColl report, Ambition experts @maria_hawkes, @Becca_curtis and @helenamoore_ share advice for early years leaders. 🌱

ow.ly/KbAc50Juyjc



Early Years leadership: Creating the enab...
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Head of Education Outcomes and Partnerships – Education, Inclusion and Achievement

£68,958 – £87,981pa

Permanent – Full time

The London Borough of Newham is a young, culturally diverse, vibrant and ambitious borough with a huge amount to offer. As a Council we put our residents at the heart of everything we do and we promote and embrace innovation and change. Newham is a dynamic and exciting place to work – it has recently seen an impressive investment in services for young people, and our strategy for school effectiveness is leading to sustained successes on our journey to being a centre of excellence for children and young people's services.

We are looking to expand our senior leadership team by appointing a new Head of Education Outcomes and

Partnerships. This role will provide effective and ambitious leadership across the directorate to ensure high quality, inclusive, education experiences for our children and young people. The role acts a senior officer for our education providers, ensuring that the requirements of the Education Inspection Framework (OFSTED) are met whilst overseeing legal duties and responsibilities and the monitoring of statutory functions, such as those required by the DfE.

This is a fantastic opportunity to shape effective, inclusive education for children and young people in Newham, creating a lasting legacy of sustained success.



HEADTEACHER

The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT) and the Local Governing Body are delighted that you are considering applying for the post of Headteacher at Chichester High School. The vacancy follows the recent promotion of the current Headteacher to an Executive Headship and lead school improvement position across a growing Trust within Hampshire.

This is an exciting opportunity to lead a team of dedicated, professional staff on the next stage of the school's journey, with the full support of TKAT executives and a passionate Local Governing Body, aiming to build further on existing strong practice to rapidly increase student outcomes as well as providing a rich curriculum and wider learning experience to our students.

Please do take some time to read the accompanying details in this pack so that you are able to gain a glimpse of the school we are so proud of. In addition we strongly encourage you to explore the school's website and to arrange a visit to see our school in action! We are determined to appoint a Headteacher with the vision, passion, experience and drive to take Chichester High School to new heights, where it becomes the choice school in the area due to its excellence across all areas of education. The job description outlines our expectations along with the person specification which we hope you find useful if and when you apply. Candidates who are shortlisted will receive further information about the interview process.

We thank you again for your interest in this exciting opportunity and look forward to receiving your application.

TRAINER (HOME-BASED)



The Bell Foundation is an educational charity working to overcome exclusion through language education and is delivering its vision through four programmes, the EAL Programme, the Criminal Justice Programme, the Language for Results International Programme and the new ESOL Programme.

The Bell Foundation has a rewarding opportunity for a full-time, home-based online Trainer to work within a growing, dynamic team to develop and deliver training, resources and guidance across its programmes.

Trainer: £29,217- £33,913 per annum
Hours: 35 hours per week, Monday to Friday

You will play a key role in both the development, implementation and evaluation of training as part of the Foundation's EAL, ESOL and International Programmes. You will also provide inputs into the development and review of both the EAL and ESOL Programmes and support the Criminal Justice Programme to develop training and resources.

You will have a proven track record of running high quality EAL and ESOL teacher training to schools and experience of working in a comparable role. You will have experience of creating digital content and resources and a sound understanding of what constitutes effective and evidence-informed CPD.

With excellent digital, communication and interpersonal skills, you will be a self-starter with a can-do attitude with excellent attention to detail and an eye for quality with the ability to critically evaluate and review. This is a home-based role with one day per month from The Bell Foundation Cambridge office.

To apply

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter to recruitment.foundation@bell-foundation.org.uk explaining how you meet the criteria set out in the Job Description. Please note, if you are shortlisted for an interview you will be required to complete an application form as part of our safer recruitment processes.

The Bell Foundation is committed to building a diverse and inclusive organisation to better represent the communities we serve. We welcome applications from all regardless of age, gender identity, disability, first language, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, race or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status, or socio-economic background. The Bell Foundation is committed to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. A DBS check will be requested in the event of a successful application.

Closing date: 17:30, Thursday 23 June 2022
Online interviews: Wednesday 6 July 2022



HEAD OF SAFEGUARDING

FULL TIME, PERMANENT
SALARY: L7-L13 (£49,261- £57,000)

Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT) is a Bradford based Church of England Multi-Academy Trust.

The Head of Safeguarding will create and foster a safeguarding culture across the Trust by being responsible for developing a strategy for implementing high quality safeguarding and pastoral provision across the Trust. This will include creating an environment in which all students are safe and well cared for so that they can realise their individual potential across both in and outside school.

The full information pack and application form please visit
[Vacancies - Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust \(bdat-academies.org\)](https://www.bdat-academies.org)

Closing Date: 12.00pm, 13th July 2022
Interview Date: 19th July 2022



The Omnia Learning Trust is recruiting for an exceptional primary practitioner to fill the role of **Director of Education** to lead on the Quality of Education and Standards across the Trust.

This is a part time role, working from home with regular visits to our schools in South West London and Oxfordshire.

As a Trust, and as individuals, we know that with excellent teaching and high aspirations, all our children can make excellent progress and exceed expectations. We need a Director of Education who knows precisely how schools can ensure this happens. For this role, you will need the interpersonal skills to confidently work with our CEO, Board of Trustees, and school Principals, providing robust support and challenge throughout the academic year. To apply, you must be passionate about children securing the building blocks for academic success and bullish about accepting excuses for underperformance.

➔ Click here to apply



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CELEBRATING PRIDE: TIPS FOR WORKING WITH LGBTQ+ INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

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

Around the world, Pride Month is recognised as a time to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community. It takes place in June to commemorate the [Stonewall riots](#) which began on 28 June 1969 – a protest against the poor treatment of the LGBTQ+ community that is often seen as the spark that ignited the gay rights movement.

Pride Month is the perfect time to celebrate equality, freedom of expression and different kinds of families. It's important to remember that families come in all shapes and sizes. Recent data shows there are 212,000 same-sex families in the UK ([ONS, 2019](#)) – a 40% increase since 2015. Whilst this number is a good indicator, there are no statistics captured on LGBTQ+ families – only "same sex".

Here, I share some tips which may be helpful for anyone working with LGBTQ+ individuals and families. When planning to celebrate Pride Month, keep in mind that the people taking part may be doing so for various reasons – the grown-ups may be LGBTQ+, their children might be, their extended family might be, or they could be allies attending for the joy of celebrating LGBTQ+ lives.

Tips for working with LGBTQ+ individuals and families

1. Staff briefing and training. One of the most important parts of creating a safe, inclusive and comfortable space for everyone is to ensure your colleagues, staff and volunteers are briefed and trained. Gendered Intelligence offer [Trans Awareness training](#) for all public facing organisations, so it's a great place to start. Stonewall offer [training opportunities for school staff](#) and anyone working with children and young people. If budgets are tight, check out the London Museum's free [inclusion training on YouTube](#).

2. Prepare your environment. To make any environment truly inclusive, it's important to pay attention to the spaces you invite families to use. Part of this can



be thinking about decorating with flags or Pride colours. But the most important aspect is ensuring you have fully inclusive and accessible facilities of everyone. [Margaret Middleton's Gender Inclusive Signage](#) article has advice for thinking about toilet facilities and venue-wide signage.

3. Use inclusive language. Always be mindful and ensure that you're using inclusive language which is non-gendered. Brief your colleagues, staff and volunteers to do the same. Examples and ideas could include:

- "Hello folks/everyone!" instead of boys, girls, guys, etc.
- "Grown-ups" or "family" instead of mum, dad, grandma, etc.
- "Partner" instead of husband, wife, etc.
- "Siblings" instead of brother or sister
- Offering your pronouns when you introduce yourself
- Using non-gender specific pronouns for others, such as asking "What's their name?"
- Mirroring (using the terms families use for themselves)

4. Celebrate and support LGBTQ+ families year-round

One of the most important things you can do is show commitment by celebrating and supporting LGBTQ+ families all year round – not just during in Pride Month! If you're not sure how to do this, there are many organisations and charities out

there that provide resources, support and the opportunity for you to volunteer or donate, in support of their activities and work.

Resources for individuals, families and you

I hope that these tips are helpful to you not only during Pride Month, but year-round. For even more ideas and resources, [sign up to our newsletter](#) and download our [free working with LGBTQ+ families resource pack](#).

Further support resources include:

- **Mermaids:** supporting transgender, nonbinary and gender-diverse children, young people, and their families.
- **Stonewall's Parental Rights** support: providing information on parental responsibility, adopting, fostering, co-parenting, fertility treatment and surrogacy.
- **Switchboard LGBTQ+ Helpline:** offering a confidential way for an individual to talk things through.