

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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

'It keeps me up at night: I can't do it anymore'



P20-22

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FRIDAY, FEB 24, 2023 | EDITION 313

The south-west's home-grown model for social mobility



P24

Unions must do battle for the soul of teaching



P25

Council asks SENCos to clear its EHCP backlog (for free!)



P11

## 'Disturbing and difficult to see the level of neglect'



- Severely vulnerable children left hungry amid chronic lack of staff
- But small trust sat on £6m reserves, six times above required level
- Evolve Trust broke academy rules on staff awards party booze spend
- Investigations to review national policies as parents concerns missed

SCHOOLS WEEK

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# Headteachers are crying out for help too

Sleepless nights over whether she has enough staff to cover classes. Supporting pupils over suicide idealisation. A staff member saying they “might take these pills”. Increasingly negative behaviour from parents.

Evelyn Forde, in her brutally honest profile this week where she announces she can't take it any longer and will quit headship, is not just speaking for herself. She is speaking on behalf of many school leaders, who will recognise those issues all too well.

While the needs of pupils and staff have risen, the support available to them has been eroded.

As schools step into the void, to be that unshakeable lynchpin for their communities, they need the most experienced leaders.

The sector cannot afford to lose people like Forde, and the experience she has gained after 23 years in the sector and nine as head.

But last year, headteacher turnover rose

by a third on pre-pandemic levels. One in ten schools in September welcomed a new headteacher.

The government's reluctant willingness to look at some of the issues causing staff to leave classrooms – as well as pay – is welcome, although it won't solve the current strikes stand-off with unions.

(NAHT general secretary Paul Whiteman described the government's latest pay talks offer as an “olive branch with thorns attached”.)

And it honestly looks like too little, too late – with dwindling time left before, more than likely, a new government takes office.

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer this week listed education as one of his five “missions” should his party win the next general election.

He vowed to listen to experts and frontline staff to inform any future education reforms. So now is the time for the sector to seize the initiative and shout for what needs to change.

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# DfE eyes trustee pool for failing academies

**TOM BELGER**

**@TOM\_BELGER**

**EXCLUSIVE**

Ministers' plans to build a reserve army of trustees to parachute into failing academies are set out in a rehashed version of a board recruitment scheme abandoned last year.

The Department for Education is testing the water with suppliers about effectively reviving the Academy Ambassadors programme, while tightening eligibility rules and taking more control over who gets support.

The move to bolster the current intervention toolkit comes only two months after the government formally abandoned the schools bill, dashing ministers' hopes of securing further powers.

The previous trustee recruitment programme, DfE-funded but run by the New Schools Network (NSN), allowed any trust to apply for free tailored support to find business leaders to join its board.

The NSN said it had placed more than 2,000 trustees since 2013, and its latest deal had been due to focus more on boards "in most need".



But the programme was derailed when the network closed last year after it lost its separate free school support contract. The DfE then reviewed the programme, but issued no details or timescales, leaving trusts in the dark.

The latest proposals suggest the government is leaning towards preserving subsidised recruitment help, but solely for the most in-need trusts – chosen by officials. Other trusts are likely to have to go to the market or manage recruitment themselves.

A new market engagement notice seeks

potential providers to recruit trustees to academies with "significant challenges with financial or educational performance", as identified by DfE regional directors' teams.

The government has long parachuted board members into failing trusts, but it appears to be the first time it has floated paying a provider to recruit a bank of them.

It also states boards need "volunteers with the expertise and commitment required for effective governance of large charitable organisations" – but does not mention business experience, a key focus of the Academy Ambassadors programme.

The document stresses plans are at an "early stage", with the DfE reserving the right not to go ahead. It is understood no funding has yet been committed, and precise eligibility criteria not yet developed.

Hannah Stolton, chief executive of Governors for Schools, a governance recruitment charity, said many trusts had been "waiting around" in case subsidised help was restored.

"It'd be good for the market to know there may be money, but only if trusts are in difficulty. Trustees get it – if you want good people, you're going to have to pay."

**TOM BELGER | @TOM\_BELGER**

## Ministers told to fix teacher disability data gap

Experts have called for new guidance to fix gaps in data on disabled staff, despite annual workforce censuses.

New research warns of a "lack of awareness" that schools need to "complete data from a diversity and inclusion perspective" – and recommends the Department for Education communicate this.

The qualitative study, commissioned by the DfE itself to understand barriers to collecting data, is based on interviews with 20 school and council staff.

The most recent national staff census showed schools had not gathered disability data for 53 per cent of teachers.

The DfE then left disability out of its analysis of staff characteristics – looking only at gender, ethnicity and age – because of the "large amount of missing data".

The government has said previously that the schools' census in November 2021 found 1 per cent of teachers were disabled, but this might not

"truly reflect the real position".

Recent Office for National Statistics data found 17.7 per cent of the population, including all age groups, are disabled.

The new study, by BMG Research, recommended fresh guidance to encourage schools to "regularly ask for" disability status, and raise awareness of what was classed as a disability.

"Encouragingly, the schools in this sample were willing to take steps to improve the completeness of their data, but they all stressed the need for guidance from DfE to achieve this, suggesting that the current guidance is perhaps not sufficient."

The study added that data was "key" to improving recruitment and retention, and supporting policy development, pastoral care and practical adjustments to "ensure the needs of disabled staff are accounted for".

Most participants said their data was not complete, and some said it was "not something they often looked at".

They "tended not to perceive a need to collect complete data on disability for the purpose of reporting on the diversity and inclusion of the workforce internally or for reporting in the school workforce census".

Their main focus was on collecting information specifically "to be able to support individual staff members ... by ensuring any necessary adaptations are in place in the workplace".

Two schools were concerned that storing complete disability information might not be "appropriate" under data protection legislation. But some multi-academy trust respondents did "describe an increasing desire from their boards to report more fully on diversity within the workforce, including disability".

University of Cambridge academics behind another small study in 2021 claimed disabled teachers "seem to have been sidelined".

The DfE said in 2018 there was "more to do" to support disabled teachers. It was approached for comment.

NEWS

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# Absence rates still high as trials for solutions launched

AMY WALKER  
@AMYRWALKER

About one in four pupils continues to persistently miss school, new government absence data shows, with high levels of illness last term partially to blame.

Statistics published by the Department for Education on Thursday show 23.4 per cent of pupils have missed at least 10 per cent of sessions so far this academic year.

This represents a slight fall on the figure for the autumn term, when persistent absence stood at 25.1 per cent, but it remains much higher than pre-pandemic autumn in 2019 (13.1 per cent).

The rate for last autumn is higher than the 23.5 per cent peak reported in autumn 2021. But Covid absences were recorded differently, and the DfE said the actual number of pupils persistently absent had fallen.

According to the government, the high figure so far this year has been driven by higher rates of illness, with data from the UK Health Security Authority (UKHSA) showing winter illnesses peaked in December.

### Trial to see if pupils can influence attendance

Recent analysis from FFT Education Datalab of this year's autumn term showed year 10 and 11 pupils were most likely to be severely absent.

Within these year groups, almost 5 per cent of all pupils were classed as "severe absentees" – meaning they missed at least 50 per cent of sessions last term.

Many school leaders have previously said successful attendance policies are not working, with the education select committee in January launching an inquiry into persistent absence.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) announced a trial of the Grassroots programme this week to find out if supporting pupils to positively influence classmates' behaviour could boost attendance.

Another randomised control trial will be run into the BITUP programme, which aims to boost attendance by sending parents personalised updates about how many days their children have missed.

Three other research projects will also



investigate the impact that different school practices have on attendance and exclusions.

ICF Consulting will look into how effective attendance and family liaison officers are, the National Foundation of Educational Research will look at difference approaches to internal alternative provision, while NatCen and UCL will investigate the impact of "authoritative" behaviour policies on attendance rates.

Earlier this week, Lee Elliot Major, the professor of social mobility at the University of Exeter, said personalised text messages to parents could help.

"I'm convinced that developing school-parent engagement plans would be a potential game changer, encouraging more children to attend school and enabling them to be better prepared

to learn in classrooms," he said in a submission to the education committee.

### Drop in winter illness driving attendance

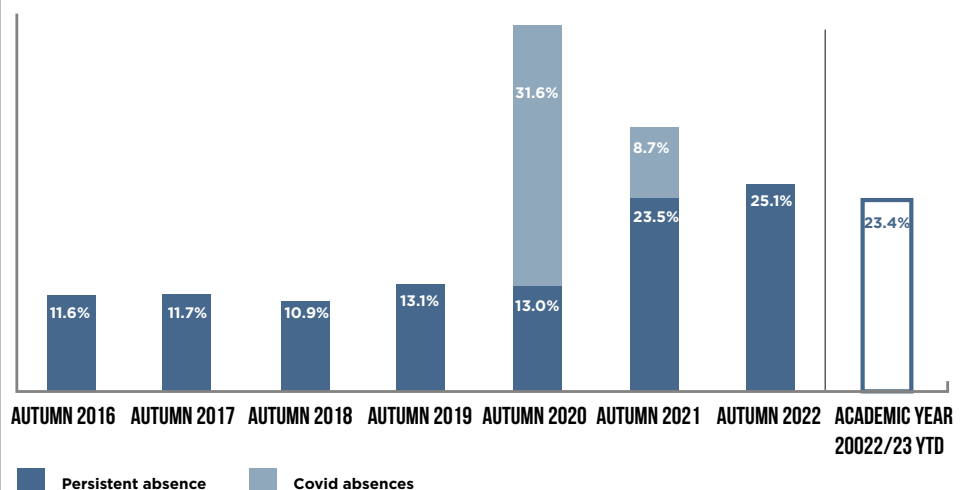
However, the latest DfE data shows overall absence has improved since last term, when winter illnesses drove up absence rates.

In the week commencing February 6, the overall absence rate was 7.4 per cent. Authorised absences stood at 4.9 per cent, unauthorised at 2.5 per cent.

This compares with the last week of the autumn term, when the absence rate was 14.3 per cent, 10.4 per cent of them authorised and 3.9 per cent unauthorised.

In the first week of term last September, the absence rate stood at 5.4 per cent.

## % OF PERSISTENT ABSENTEES IN SCHOOLS



Source: School census (2016 to 2021) and daily attendance data (2022/23)

# Walk-out remains on as strikes hit stalemate

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**  
**@FCDWHITTAKER**

Teachers across England look set to strike next week after unions and the government reached a stalemate on pay talks.

The dispute over this year's pay deal, worth 5 per cent for most teachers and leaders, escalated this week as both sides issued demands – ministers for a pause to industrial action and unions for an improved pay offer.

On Tuesday, education secretary Gillian Keegan said she was prepared to enter “formal talks” on pay, conditions and reform, but only if planned National Education Union strikes next Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are called-off.

The NEU responded on Wednesday that it was “prepared to recommend a pause” to members, but only if government came forward with a “serious proposal to end the dispute” ahead of its executive meeting on Saturday.

The Guardian reported this week that cabinet ministers had been given more freedom to talk to unions about pay settlements, including backdated or one-off payments. But Schools Week understands nothing along these lines has been put on the table for teachers so far.

A key criticism from unions of the talks so far is that Keegan and officials have refused to re-visit this year's pay settlement.

But the government's hopes that its

willingness to enter intensive talks would avert upcoming teacher walkouts – as it has with nurses – seem not to have come to fruition. No further talks were scheduled by Thursday evening.

Dr Mary Bousted and Kevin Courtney, the NEU's joint general secretaries, said this week it was “unacceptable that ministers are not willing to give any information about the scope of the proposed negotiations”.

“Ministers are requiring the NEU to give up the only thing that has brought government to the negotiating table, without any assurance that the negotiations are, indeed, serious and in good faith.”

Paul Whiteman, who leads the NAHT heads' union, accused Keegan of holding out “a public

olive branch with thorns attached that make it impossible to grab”.

Ministers also inflamed tensions this week by recommending pay rises of 3 per cent for most teachers next year – as this is what schools can afford.

A larger rise might be feasible if energy costs fall. But public sector earnings growth should “retain broad parity with the private sector and continue to be affordable”, they claimed.

A DfE spokesperson said: “Our hope is that we can find a fair and reasonable settlement that recognises the vital role teachers play, while acknowledging the wider economic pressures facing the country and the government's priority to halve inflation.”

## THE 2023 PAY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **3 % rise for those on the upper and leadership pay ranges (this is most teachers and leaders)**
- **7.1 % increase in point 1 of the main pay range, taking starting salaries to £30,000 outside London**
- **'Commensurate tapered uplifts' to remaining pay points in the main pay range**

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## Undergraduate teaching apprenticeship under development

The government is developing an apprenticeship route for non-graduates so they can become teachers without running up hefty student loan debts.

Trainees would gain both a degree and qualified teacher status, under plans drawn up by officials.

The idea has been considered repeatedly amid pressure to create more options for schools to spend apprenticeship levy funding.

But the Department for Education confirmed this week it was now “working with the sector and with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to develop a new degree and QTS-awarding apprenticeship in teaching”.

The aim was to boost the availability of

apprenticeships for aspiring teachers, “allowing them to gain a degree and QTS without incurring student debt”.

Previous attempts have stalled in the face of technical barriers in the way apprenticeships work, and rumoured opposition from long-serving schools minister, Nick Gibb.

One big question is over what level the new apprenticeship would be, and at what level qualified teacher status would be awarded. A current postgraduate teaching apprenticeship exists at level 6.

The government will also have to decide whether the route will have to be overseen by universities, or whether other types of teacher training provider should be given degree-

awarding powers.

Last year, Gillian Keegan, the education secretary, tasked officials with looking into the feasibility of undergraduate apprenticeships for physics and maths teachers.

It is unclear whether the DfE will design separate frameworks for different subjects and, if it does, whether it will focus on those where there is a current shortage of applicants.

The DfE is also “reviewing” the level 6 postgraduate apprenticeship route, “with a view to making it more effective for the sector”.

Fewer than 800 trainees picked the route this year.

# What you need to know about the DfE's case for a 3% rise

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The government has published the evidence behind its recommendation that salaries for most teachers rise by 3 per cent next year. Here's what you need to know ...

## 1. Extra funding 'strengthens' case for higher rise

A 3 per cent rise was actually the recommendation made by the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) for 2023. But the Department for Education chose to only accept its recommendation of 5 per cent for 2022.

However, the department said it now "recognises the merits of a 3 per cent uplift and that the case for this award has strengthened in light of additional schools funding provided since the autumn statement". School funding increased by £2 billion.

## 2. But there's no new money coming

The DfE said the proposed 3.5 per cent rise overall would be "affordable" for schools from their current budgets, given the recent boost.

However, "significant change" in coming months "may support delivering a higher award for experienced teachers" – for example, if more "headroom" became available because of changes to energy costs.

This would "of course have recruitment and retention benefits", it said.

## 3. ...and it could force schools to make 'efficiencies'

However, the benefits of a higher award would need to be "considered carefully alongside the impact that a higher award could have on schools' budgets, which could require schools to make savings with more significant trade-offs", the DfE said.

A pay award above amounts that budgets could cope with might mean reductions in other areas of spending and the "need for schools to make efficiencies".

A higher pay award "would also risk the fight against inflation, as it could require further government borrowing during a time when sustainable public finances are vital".

School support staff who work for councils



were also offered a pay rise of £1,925 from April. It works out as 9.42 per cent for the lowest-paid, and 3.88 per cent for those at the top.

## 4. Teacher leaving rates rising again

So-called teacher "wastage" rates – the proportion of teachers leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement or death – had generally been falling since a peak in 2016.

However, the latest data shows a slight uptick between 2020 and 2021.

According to the school workforce census, the number of teachers becoming "out of service" rose to just over 32,000 in 2020-21, up from just over 27,000 in the previous year.

## 5. Generosity of £30,000 starting salary will 'diminish'

The DfE has recommended a 7.1 per cent increase in starting salaries next year to take them to £30,000 outside London "without further delay".

This meets a 2019 manifesto pledge, albeit later than promised.

However, the department acknowledged that "the perception of £30,000 as a financially rewarding figure is likely to diminish, as other graduate professions match or begin to exceed this figure".

## 6. No sign of key teacher survey data

Unions had been pressing the government to include in its evidence the outcome of the government's new "working lives of teachers and leaders" survey, carried out by IFF Research and the Institute of Education for the first time

last spring. The findings are now due.

The DfE said the STRB "may wish to consider the evidence presented" when it was published and said it hoped to "conduct more detailed analysis" of the data "in future years".

## 7. Falling pupil numbers may 'alleviate pressure'

Schools have grappled with increasing pupil numbers, following a baby boom in 2000s. However, DfE estimates show pupil numbers will fall by 9.4 per cent between 2022 and 2030.

This "could serve to alleviate some of the pressures on classroom teacher numbers", the department said.

However, the graduate-age population is also due to shrink, offering a smaller pool to recruit teachers.

## 8. £2.1bn 'headroom', but don't blow it all on pay rises

The DfE estimates schools, on average, could afford £2.1 billion in "new spending" before facing a "net pressure on their budgets" (although it points out this won't apply to all schools).

But this does not take account of pay awards or likely increases to energy bills.

The DfE also said the headroom figure "does not represent a sum that could be directed in full to teachers' pay without very significantly impacting on other areas of schools' spending".

Each 1 per cent increase in staff pay costs schools collectively about £270 million a year, the department said.

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# HE SAID SHE SAID

By **Magero Otieno-Magero** Directed by **Esther Baker**

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# 'Disturbing neglect' as severely disabled children left to go hungry

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

INVESTIGATES

Severely disabled pupils were left hungry and "contained" in classrooms during breaks because of chronic understaffing at a special school, despite its small academy trust sitting on reserves of nearly £6 million.

Harlow Academy in Nottinghamshire was immediately closed after a damning Ofsted inspection last year found pupils, many who were non-verbal, "at imminent risk of harm".

An investigation by Schools Week can now reveal the harrowing details.

- Ofsted inspectors said it was "disturbing and difficult to see the level of neglect" at the school, show notes from the inspection.
- Despite inadequate staffing levels, the Evolve Trust, which ran Harlow, held reserves centrally that were six times higher than required.
- The trust broke academy rules by buying booze for a staff awards party a month before the Ofsted visit.
- The council dismissed safeguarding concerns raised by parents months earlier. The government gave the trust a clean bill of health months before the Ofsted visit.
- Nottinghamshire council has now launched two independent investigations, one that will review whether national policies around academy whistleblowing is an "obstacle to timely action". It will report this summer.



### 'Not enough staff to meet toileting needs'

Harlow catered for 3 to 18-year-olds with severe or profound disabilities, including some with life-limiting conditions.

Previously called Fountaindale School, it became an academy under Evolve in April 2021 after falling from 'outstanding' to 'inadequate' the previous year.

The trust, which ran two mainstream schools and another special school in Nottinghamshire, pledged on its website to provide a "stimulating, challenging and caring environment" for children.

But just 10 months after Evolve took over, Ofsted rated it 'inadequate' across all areas. The report said senior leaders "failed to ensure adequate levels of staffing".

Pupils were "not safe... The lack of staff leaves pupils at imminent risk of harm."

The school was closed and did not open again until April.

Official notes made by inspectors during their visit, obtained by Schools Week, shed further light

on how serious the safeguarding failures were. Inspectors wrote it was "disturbing and difficult to see the level of neglect".

The lead inspector flagged the "potential for a series [sic] incident because children are at imminent risk".

Notes record that "pupils going hungry because not enough staff trained to feed, pupils becoming distressed because not enough staff to meet toileting needs. Pupil snot [sic] being postured or moved because staff are unsure how to do it or it takes too many staff to use equipment."

They said pupils "remain strapped in and contained in" classrooms at lunchtimes "because don't have staff to take them outside".

Some who should be taken for a walk daily were going "at best once a week."

There were "no swimming activities", despite the school's specialist pool.

The notes flagged "systemic failure across all leadership levels. This is leadership, not staff. Staff have prevented catastrophe but there is a real

## 'The academy sector stepped in to help when most needed'

The government allowed leaders parachuted in to sort out the Harlow Academy scandal to break funding rules to speed up intervention.

The school had to be closed between the Ofsted inspection in January 2021 and April that year.

Staff from Greenwood Academy Trust and Nexus Multi Academy Trust were sent into the school

The Department for Education said the "experienced leadership team" would ensure "rapid progress on the most immediate and serious issues".

The ESFA also agreed to take "no action" after the new appointments meant there was unapproved related party transactions, Evolve accounts stated.

Auditors said the ESFA "acknowledged the extenuating circumstances and need for decisive action".

Wayne Norrie, parachuted in as interim chief executive at the trust, said it was "a case of the academy sector stepping in to help when children needed it the most".

While "some critics of the academy sector" tried to label the collapse of Evolve "as a failure

of the academy system", it was a "failure of leadership and governance", he added.

During a monitoring inspection in June, Ofsted said the school was still 'inadequate', but leaders are "taking effective action".

The trust's two special schools joined Nexus, while the two mainstream schools joined Greenwood.

Norrie said it was a "massive challenge" but they "managed to secure much-welcomed changes and put into place the support children, families and staff needed".

Evolve will be shut down.

INVESTIGATION

danger that a catastrophe will happen.”

Inspectors didn’t “feel safe leaving the school without stressing the importance of how urgent this is”.

The trust “have been aware for a long time of the issues”, inspectors said.

**‘Accumulation of high reserves at detriment to education quality’**

Despite the understaffing, annual accounts for the four-school trust published last week show its “free” reserves sat at £5.8 million in August last year. Its income for 2021-22 was £16.8 million.

New trustees, parachuted in after the government intervened in February last year, said “that this accumulation of such high reserve has worked to the detriment of the quality of educational provision in the schools”.

The new trustees set an appropriate reserve as £950,000. Accounts stated the money spent compared to income “did not result in an adequate level of education and safeguarding”.

Average reserves for a small MAT last year was £1.3 million, according to the Kreston’s academies benchmark report.

The trust pooled the funding for all its schools and held the cash centrally. Trustees commissioned Wayne Norrie, who took over as interim chief executive after the Ofsted report, to “ensure schools received more funding” from the pooled pot.

Norrie said they needed to recruit and train 30 staff to open the school again, alongside support for existing workers.

He leads Greenwood Academies Trust, whose staff were parachuted in by the government alongside leaders at the Nexus Academy Trust, which now runs the academy.

A “root and branch reform of the leadership and governance” followed, “allowing for a clean break with the personnel responsible for the failings reported by Ofsted”, accounts stated.

An investigation by auditors UHY Hacker Young, commissioned by the government, found the trust broke academy rules by purchasing alcohol for a staff awards party in December 2021, just a month before the damning report. The event cost £1,700, Schools Week understands.

The husband of Claire-Marie Cuthbert, who was appointed trust chief in 2016 but left after the government intervention, was hired as a caretaker during 2021-22.

The related-party transaction broke academy rules because it had not been reported to the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA), accounts



Claire Marie Cuthbert



The specialist swimming pool at Harlow Academy, now known as Fountaindale School

stated. He has since left.

Cuthbert did not respond to requests for comment.

**‘I will fight to my dying day to get the truth’**

Schools Week understands parents first blew the whistle about potential safeguarding failures in September 2021.

Michelle and Jonathan Carr removed their eight-year-old daughter Evie from school several weeks before it closed. She was one of six children kept off school “due to safety concerns”, the Ofsted notes reveal.

Evie, who has cerebral palsy, epilepsy and is non-verbal, was having more frequent seizures and retching with anxiety if anyone mentioned “school”.

Seven-year-old Ruby Pycroft has a chromosome deletion and uses a wheelchair. Her mum Victoria, a mental health nurse, said they noticed her walking had “massively gone downhill” and she came home “a lot more agitated”.

Another parent, who did not want to be named, became concerned when their son was screaming in pain because of an issue with his genitals. She suspected this was because his incontinence pad was not changed regularly.

A staff member told Schools Week that soiled children would normally wait a few minutes to be changed. But that rose to up 30 minutes because of the lack of staff.

The Carrs complained to Nottinghamshire County Council’s children’s safeguarding hub in December 2021 about “terrible” staffing levels. But the hub said the referral did not meet its threshold.

The ESFA also said in a letter to the trust in November 2021, seen by Schools Week, it had

“received satisfactory assurances” on concerns about “safeguarding, leadership and management and financial regularity”.

Jan Collins, the then headteacher of Harlow, wrote to parents later that month to “offer you reassurance that, despite the rumours you

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Evie Carr in her school uniform

may be hearing, staffing levels in our school are perfectly safe and your children’s learning is carrying on in a completely normal way”. She was approached for comment.

However, later that year, Nottinghamshire Healthcare – which provided specialist staff – raised “some issues about the leadership culture and the safeguarding of children” with the council and Ofsted.

Laurence Jones, Nottinghamshire’s services director, said changes over how different teams and services shared information about concerns had been implemented.

John Dryden, former chair of governors, said: “When I heard about the level of what had been happening, clearly I was completely taken aback. I don’t wish to make any excuses whatsoever, but just to sincerely apologise that those things happened under our watch.”

The Department for Education did not provide an on-the-record comment.

The school has since reverted to its original name, Fountaindale. Ofsted said in July leaders were “taking effective action” (see box out on page 9). The trust’s two special schools joined Nexus, while the two mainstream schools joined Greenwood.

**HARLOW ACADEMY SCANDAL: TIMELINE**

**SEPT 21:** Parents raise concerns

**NOV 21:** ESFA gives trust clean bill of health

**JAN 22:** Ofsted ‘inadequate’, school closed

**FEB 22:** New leaders parachuted in

**APRIL 22:** School reopens

**JULY 22:** Ofsted says ‘effective action’ being taken

# Kent wants school 'volunteers' to clear its EHCP backlog

SAMANTHA BOOTH  
@SAMANTHAJBOOTH

EXCLUSIVE

One of the country's largest councils has been accused of "passing the buck" after asking school SENCOs if they will volunteer to clear a bulging backlog of special needs support reviews.

In an email to schools seen by *Schools Week*, Kent County Council said it was an "exciting" and "behind the scenes" opportunity for special educational needs co-ordinators.

The council asked for staff who could commit up to one day a week for 12 weeks to clear its logjam of "several thousands" of annual reviews of education, health and care plans (EHCPs).

In a damning inspection last year that found "significant weaknesses" in Kent's SEND provision, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission said that only half of annual review meetings happened on time.

Parents and school leaders were "disheartened and frustrated", with plans "years out of date" and negatively impacting a child's education, the report said.

In the email, the council said it wanted to develop "collaborative working".

The offer to SENCOs could "support both your professional development and, should you wish to cascade your learning, the wider school community".

Tasks for SENCOs would include looking at annual review paperwork to determine if an EHCP needed changing and reviewing it against a quality assurance checklist.

Training was available, but there "would not be an expectation" of direct contact with families or the named school.

The role would not be paid and needed a headteacher's agreement.

A council spokesperson told *Schools Week* there were "challenges recruiting staff" to the SEND service, so a



We write to you with an exciting opportunity to become involved in the local authority's improvement journey for SEND. It is a fantastic opportunity for you as a SENCO or aspiring SENCO to experience, and be a part of, the annual review process from the perspective of the local authority.

This 'behind the scenes' opportunity aims to develop collaborative working between schools and the local authority and will provide valuable insight into the annual review process. We foresee this will support both your professional development and, should you wish to cascade your learning, the wider school community.

"temporary arrangement" with SENCOs was "a good use of resources".

But Dan File, headteacher at Elham Church of England Primary School, said the move was "passing the buck".

"My SENCOs are so busy that they wouldn't be able to get these completed to our required standard without extra time," he said. "Extra time means extra money and the funding is not there."

Frazer Westmorland, headteacher at Mundella Primary School, said he would only be able to release his SENCO for two days, adding: "The capacity for offering support, particularly with strikes looming, although willing, will most certainly be challenging for the majority of schools."

The Kent Association of Headteachers helped distribute the message to schools, in which Mike Walters, its chair, said the backlog was "several thousand" long.

He told *Schools Week* the initiative was "an attempt to use the expertise" of Kent schools to help and ensure "matters are addressed as swiftly as possible".

"We hope and expect that this will be another in a series of co-constructed solutions to the issues that we face with SEND provision in the county."

Kent issued 51 per cent more EHCPs last year than in 2019, compared with

a 33 per cent rise nationally. It said it had a further 1,600 needs assessments in the pipeline.

The council is in line for a government "safety valve" bailout, to plug financial blackholes in exchange for reforms to its SEND provision.

It estimates its high-needs funding deficit will hit £147 million this year and "continue to grow" if the current trajectory continues.

James Bowen, a policy director at school leaders' union NAHT, said it was "abundantly clear" many councils were "really struggling with the SEND demands place upon them".

"The reality is that most SENCOs are themselves already snowed under with work and it is highly unlikely that many will have the time or capacity to support a local authority team in this way."

It's not clear how many SENCOs have signed up, but Kent said it had "some interest".

A council spokesperson said it had also "welcomed the many offers of support from individual schools and MAT leaders as it is important that we work in collaboration to improve the SEND system.

"It is entirely a matter of personal choice for any SENCO as to whether they wish to participate."



James Bowen

## ANALYSIS: SEND

# Parents wait up to a year to challenge SEND support

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOOTH

EXCLUSIVE

Parents of vulnerable children are being forced to wait nearly a year to challenge refusals by councils to offer SEND support.

The special educational needs and disability tribunal (SENDIST) gives parents the right to appeal a council's decisions on educational, health and care plans (EHCPs), such as refusals to issue one or disagreeing with its school provision.

When they do reach court, nine in ten of the cases are found in the favour of parents. But more appeals than ever are being lodged, with a growing backlog.

A freedom of information request from *Schools Week* now shows just 79 per cent of cases were completed within 22 weeks this year, down from 91 per cent in 2018-19.

This is still above the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) own target to complete 75 per cent of cases within the timeframe. But the department admitted an appeal registered this month would now not be listed for an in-person hearing until January next year.

Paper hearings – often used in cases where a council refuses to assess the child in the first place – are quicker and would be listed five months from now.

Matt Keer, a SEND specialist, said that the SEND tribunal system was “creaking ... it's taking longer than ever to process the highest-stakes appeals.

“Only local authorities benefit from the logjam. Pupils, parents and schools suffer.”

Ed Duff, a senior solicitor at Education Law Advice, said that when he started in 2007 the whole process would take about 16 weeks. Some of his cases were now listed for 12 months' time.

“The impact depends on what [the child] is going through, but in the most extreme cases you could have kids sitting at home, self-harming for a year with no provision.

“They are not going to school so, by the time you do get to a hearing, the whole situation has become worse than six or seven months ago.”

A total of 11,052 disputes were registered last academic year – a 29 per cent rise from



8,579 the previous year.

The outstanding tribunal caseload has also soared to 5,554 by the end of September, up 44 per cent in a single year.

Duff said it was “primarily terrible local authority decisions” that were behind the rise.

Sir Keith Lindblom, the senior president of tribunals, said in a report last year that “regrettably” SENDIST cases had to be postponed in some cases “due to a lack of judicial resources”.

But 70 more judges, 120 more special panel members and 40 extra tribunal staff have been recruited.

However, the MoJ will start to prioritise cases that involve children moving phases, such as from primary to secondary school, from September.

David Barber, a former headteacher and tribunal panel member, said delays made it “very difficult for the school both in terms of the impact on staff time and resources”.

“If the SENCO feels that the child needs an EHCP, usually it's because the school has reached the end of the road with support they are able to offer for this child in school.

“They may have used all of their resources and can see that month after month the child is falling further and further behind their peers.”



Sir Keith Lindblom

The government's SEND review proposed controversial mandatory mediation for parents, making it “easier to resolve disputes earlier”. Tribunals would be used “for the most challenging cases”, the review said.

But experts worried the move could introduce “more bureaucracy and slow things down even more”. The government's delayed SEND review response is due next week.

The Local Government Association said the appeals situation “is indicative of a system that is not working”, adding councils needed “long-term” funding.

The MoJ said it recognised that vulnerable children with SEND “must receive support quickly”.

## SPEED READ: ART

# Art and design need more time, says Ofsted

Ofsted has warned against art and design curriculums that are a “mile high and an inch deep”, and said fears that the subjects do not get enough time are “not unwarranted”.

The watchdog published its latest curriculum research review on art and design education in schools on Wednesday.

It sets out some of the key principles Ofsted has identified for a “high-quality” art curriculum. It is the eleventh such review.

Here’s what we learned...

## 1 Art needs time

The review said leaders who wanted to develop ambitious art curriculums “need to consider whether they have allowed enough time for the subject”.

This was important if pupils were to meet the high-level outcomes of the national curriculum.

Previous research found most primary teachers think there is an “insufficient emphasis” on the arts.

Ofsted added that in secondary schools an art curriculum that “significantly limits” the amount of time given to the subject at key stage 3 “is unlikely to benefit pupils”.

“Concerns about the amount of curriculum time given to art, craft and design are not unwarranted,” it said.

## 2 Curriculum should not cover all areas of ‘making’

The subject covers several areas of “making”, including drawing, painting, sculpture and photography.

But Ofsted said curriculums were unlikely to be able to cover all areas of making in sufficient depth “for pupils to engage meaningfully with them”.

Subject leaders and curriculum designers therefore needed to choose which areas to include, and should have a “sound rationale” for why the combination they choose is cumulatively sufficient.

Ofsted warned pupils would not be able to engage “meaningfully in each tradition if the curriculum is a ‘mile wide and an inch deep’”.

## 3 Expectations for SEND pupils

Ofsted said it would be “inappropriate” to adopt a single approach for all pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

“Sometimes, teachers unnecessarily lower their expectations for pupils with SEND,” it said.

Schools should adapt the curriculum, such as providing alternative, quieter spaces.

## 4 Practice must be ‘built in’

The review said it was important that leaders and planners recognised that practice should be “built in to the curriculum”.

“Sequencing for practice” occurs when subject leaders give pupils enough chances to work with related content to help them learn the content in the longer term.

It also helps to support learning by breaking down the main components they need to practise.

For example, teaching pupils how to use watercolours would be broken down into parts that could involve practising adding and removing washes and glaze with one type of tool and then trying a range of tools.

## 5 Disciplinary and theoretical knowledge

Ofsted broke down the knowledge pupils needed to learn into practical, theoretical and disciplinary.

Previous research, it said, had highlighted that art education often focused on practical skills, sometimes at the expense of theoretical knowledge.

But when pupils learned theoretical knowledge – which enables them to draw connections between art’s past, present and future – they could understand themes and diverse connections that have existed over time.

“If teachers do not contextualise art, craft and design traditions, pupils can build profound misconceptions about the ways that humans make and understand art,” it said.

Disciplinary knowledge helped pupils to learn how art is studied, discussed and judged.

Ofsted said this was important as it “enables pupils to see how (what might appear to be) contradictory ideas can co-exist and be connected within the traditions of art.”

## 6 What pupils need to know and what they create

Leaders have been told that when setting “ambitious end goals” for the curriculum, “it is important that they do not confuse the content pupils need to know with the artwork that they create”.

While the curriculum sets out what pupils need to know, it might not specify ways for them to use the knowledge.

Schools are advised to “think carefully” about which end points of the curriculum need to be convergent – where the outcome is prescribed and which need to be divergent – where it is not known how pupils will use their knowledge.

Schools are advised to “think carefully” about which end points of the curriculum need to be convergent – where the outcome is prescribed and which need to be divergent – where it is not known how pupils will use their knowledge.

INVESTIGATION: FINANCES

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# Agnew's crusade uncovers financial mishaps in maintained schools

TOM BELGER  
@TOM\_BELGER

EXCLUSIVE

A government crackdown has revealed the extent of mismanagement, deficits and fraud among maintained schools nationwide.

More than one in three councils reported school funding fraud over two years, and eight councils stripped schools of budget powers because of financial issues in 2020-21.

*Schools Week* obtained data that local authorities are now forced to hand over to central government following ex-academies minister Lord Agnew's crusade to bring transparency and accountability in line with academy rules.

Yet some experts suggest the Department for Education should go further, claiming controls remain weaker than for academies.

## Ghost of ministers past

A "clampdown" on academy financial mismanagement – triggered by multiple high-profile scandals – has been extended to maintained schools, with the DfE saying it had now fully implemented Agnew's reforms.

Local authorities have to disclose dedicated schools grant (DSG) fraud reports and any interventions over financial challenges.

Those figures, obtained by *Schools Week*, provide some of the most detailed national data yet on maintained school finances.

They show more than a third of councils (58) reported fraud involving day-to-day school funding between 2019 and 2021. The 185 fraud cases totalled £2.4 million.

Cheshire and West Chester schools had the most cases (32), while Buckinghamshire saw the highest-value estimated losses at £1.51 million.

Separate figures

Andi Brown



show the government received less than half as many fraud and irregularity allegations (71) involving academies over the same period – despite them educating more pupils. Confirmed fraud, irregularity and theft totalled £2.1 million.

## LA controls 'weaker'

Andi Brown, the founder of consultancy SAAF Education, said current controls over maintained schools varied by authority but were "significantly weaker" than academies, with regular audits less common.

Multi-academy trusts typically applied "more scrutiny" and had greater financial expertise because of their accounting and auditing duties, size and budget powers.

While many early academies "fell foul" of unfamiliar funding rules, restrictions have since tightened with regulators recently

praising a more "mature" sector. An ongoing review could even loosen requirements on trusts.

Trusts also still typically face greater transparency over financial problems, with detailed accounts and any government "notices to improve" published online. Thirty-nine trusts received such notices in 2021.

Councils only publish authority-wide accounts and do not routinely publish their similar school warning notices.

## Some schools stripped of budget powers

Twenty-six authorities issued 94 notices in 2020-21 for schools not meeting funding rules. These are similar to academy improvement notices, also issued when funding rules are breached.

However, each council sets its own rules

**'All schools need the same regulatory rules and high standards'**

## INVESTIGATION: FINANCES

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on finances and intervention, whereas the government sets academy rules nationally – and academy notices only relate to trusts, not individual schools.

On council notices, Liverpool issued the most (18). Eight councils even stripped 23 boards of budget powers.

Meanwhile, more than two-thirds (109) of councils ordered at least one school to write “recovery plans” to tackle deficits, another Agnew-initiated requirement. More than one in five (34) had 10 or more schools on such plans.

But Brown said suspension levels were “tiny” and that several high-deficit schools were not stripped of powers. Guidance says substantial or persistent rule breaches can trigger suspensions.

**‘Greater scrutiny’ needed**

The DfE ditched further reforms in 2020 to mandate three-yearly maintained school audits, however.

This was despite *Schools Week* having revealed in 2018 that 2,200 maintained schools were not audited for more than five years.

Brown said “greater scrutiny” was needed – potentially through a planned scrutiny and transparency drive by the new “Office for Local Government”.

Trust chiefs have previously suggested councils’ interventions amounted to marking their own homework. One trust leader said all schools needed “the same regulatory rules and high standards”.

Steve Edmonds, director of advice at the National Governance Association (NGA), said boards should “prioritise obtaining capacity” to oversee finances effectively. The NGA supports “the principle of intervention” where necessary.

Julia Harnden, a funding specialist at the school leaders’ union ASCL, said the “vast majority” of schools were well-run. Council controls “should be regarded as sufficient unless there’s clear evidence to the contrary”.

**Super-head pursued over lost cash**

The figures come in the same week school business manager Debra Poole was convicted of abusing her former position at Hinchley Wood Primary School in Surrey by stealing more than £490,000. She

## Agnew lives on: Ex-minister’s clampdown on LA finance troubles

**Maintained schools now have to:**

- Write ‘recovery plans’ for deficits
- Report on related party transactions (RPTs)
- Reveal any £100,000+ salaries on their websites
- Write three-year budget plans

**Local authorities now have to:**

- Make ‘action plans’ if deficits are widespread
- Report on efforts to recover cash lost to fraud
- Disclose the number of warning notices and budget suspensions

**But the DfE abandoned plans to:**

- Order three-yearly internal audits of maintained schools
- Force schools to get sign-off for big RPTs - as academies do

## ‘More than a third of councils reported fraud involving day-to-day school funding’

was found guilty of four counts of fraud.

Surrey Police detective constable Lloyd Ives said her “elaborate deception...afforded her luxury holidays and cars”, but the conviction showed criminals they would “get found out”.

A Surrey council spokesperson said it had supported the since-academised, now “thriving” school and welcomed the verdict, but added: “Wrongdoing went undetected for too long”.

Meanwhile Dudley is currently seeking to recover funds after David Bishop-Rowe, a former special school “super-head”, was jailed last December.

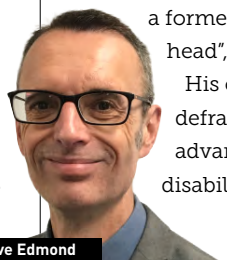
His conduct “ranged from defrauding HMRC...to taking advantage of [an individual’s] disability ...to personally benefit

from salary enhancements to which he was not entitled”, according to a previous disciplinary tribunal. He bought a second home in Spain around the time of his offences, according to the council.

Cash had not been recovered in more than three-quarters of council-reported DSG fraud cases in 2020-21, although the process can be lengthy. A whistleblower first reported Bishop-Rowe in 2013.

A Buckinghamshire council spokesperson said it had “zero tolerance” of fraud, with seven of 10 reported cases “closed with appropriate sanctions and redress pursued”.

A Liverpool Council spokesperson said notices were issued to support schools plugging deficits, including guidance and monitoring.



Steve Edmonds

# Few details in Labour's 'mission' for education

**TOM BELGER**  
@TOM\_BELGER

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer has pledged to reform the education system if his party wins the next election, promising "real-world impact" and consultation with experts and frontline staff.

The opposition leader used a speech in Manchester yesterday to set out five "missions" that will shape a Labour manifesto and the party's focus if it gains power.

One of the missions in a document published alongside the speech focuses on education. It promises to "break down the barriers to opportunity at every stage, for every child, by reforming the childcare and education systems, raising standards everywhere, and preparing young people for work and life".

But neither the speech or document included specific reforms, and there was little mention of schools.

Labour promised more information over the coming months, including "measurable ambitions" and "some of the first tangible steps".



Sir Keir Starmer

## Labour to consult frontline staff

Starmer said his shadow cabinet would meet "frontline practitioners" and experts – "we still believe in them" – to shape each mission.

"We're going to ask them, what will it take? What are the barriers? What needs to change to bring these missions alive?"

He also vowed the plans would end "sticking-plaster politics", as well support a drive for economic growth.

Following his speech he was asked by a reporter if the missions were "just a way of telling the public – sorry, there isn't more money".

He replied that this was "not right". While some missions would require funding, "reform is as important as the money we put in".

## Unions to 'press Labour' for cash

Kevin Courtney, the joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said it would "press Labour" to make education investment an "urgent priority". But he welcomed the party's willingness to consult, which was a "far cry from the present government".

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the school leaders' union ASCL, said it was looking forward to more detail.

He also warned that Starmer's ambitions would "not be possible" without investment, improving recruitment and retention, and reforming a "harsh and counter-productive" accountability system.

Stephen Morgan, the shadow schools minister, said this week that too many children arrived at school behind their better-off peers and that gap widened. "Too many children do not get the opportunity to experience music, art, sport or drama which enriches lives and embeds a love of arts and culture which are so important for our heritage. This has to change."

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

# Unsafe buildings close 39 schools

Thirty-nine schools have temporarily or permanently closed since December 2019 because their buildings were unsafe.

The government admission, made in answer to a parliamentary written question from Liberal Democrat education spokesperson Munira Wilson, is the latest evidence of the crumbling condition of England's school estate.

The Department for Education last week admitted it did not know which schools were at risk of collapse, despite escalating the risk level to "very likely".

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said that since December 2019 the DfE had been "made aware of 39 schools that have closed on a temporary or permanent basis, because one or more school buildings have been deemed unsafe".

A "range of reasons, including structural concerns and general condition issues, such as roofing and boiler failures" were to blame.

Wilson said the statistics were "shocking",

and showed how "crumbling schools have now become commonplace".

Of 31 schools that temporarily closed, 23 closed fully and eight partially. The remaining eight were permanent closures, with three closing fully and five partially.

Pupils from the schools that closed were relocated to other spaces on their sites or to alternative accommodation "until a long-term solution is in place".

The government has been under mounting pressure to publish more detail on the condition of the school estate. A 2021 document revealed that repairing or replacing all defects in England's schools would cost £11.4 billion.

The DfE escalated the risk level of school buildings collapsing to "very likely" in its annual report and accounts last year.

But when asked for details by support staff union Unison, the department said the number of buildings at risk and the names of the

schools affected were "not held".

Gibb said this week that responsibility for ensuring the safety and condition of school buildings "lies with the responsible bodies, such as local authorities, trusts and voluntary aided bodies".

The government provides "support to schools" and has allocated more than £13 billion since 2015 for "keeping schools safe and operational". This included £1.8 billion this financial year, "informed by consistent data on the school estate".

However, Gibb said responsible bodies were "not obliged to report building-related school closures" to the DfE.

"The department does not routinely collect or hold complete data of the information requested. Since 2019, the department has been capturing the closures that have been reported due to a range of issues, including building safety."



EVENTS: MAT AWARDS

# Winners revealed for MAT finance awards

A leader who kept staff onside while implementing the sometimes controversial process of pooling funding across an academy trust's schools has been won a finance award.

The winners of the MAT Finance Awards 2022, set up to celebrate and showcase the work of school finance professionals, were announced today.

Judges included Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, and Stephen Morales, who leads the Institute of School and Business Leaders.

Will Jordan, co-founder of IMP Software, which supported the awards, said judges were "blown away by the quality of entries". He added MAT finance teams were "critical for supporting expansion and sustainability in the sector going forward".

Schools Week was media partner for the awards.

### MAT Finance Leader of the Year

**WINNER:** John Halstead, chief finance and operating officer, Consilium Academies

**RUNNER-UP:** Lucy Flavell, chief finance officer (CFO), Innovate MAT

The judges said Halstead led the centralisation and general annual grant pooling across the nine-school Consilium trust

– delivering savings of more than £1.4 million. This ensured resources had the most significant impact on students and school leaders who had lost confidence in the previous financial leadership were re-engaged. Halstead's ability to build a finance team who went out of their way to support all schools was also impressive, the judges added.

"Excellent customer service is often the forgotten part of a strong finance function, and perhaps the hardest to instil into your team as a leader. "However, John has managed that successfully whilst also spearheading some key changes across the trust."



John Halstead

### MAT Finance Champion of the Year

**WINNER:** Jackie Hawksworth, finance and HR director, Infinity Academies Trust

**RUNNER-UP:** Chris Hyland, trustee, The Weydon Multi-Academy Trust

Hawksworth was "clearly a champion of the financial community within this trust, leading by example", said the judges. "She is always available for support and keeps in regular contact with all schools within the trust to offer assistance and guidance as appropriate. She steps into the breach to help out when needed and supports the team through monthly meetings."

The nomination also outlined how Hawksworth "fosters an inclusive team environment where everyone feels valued and offering empathy when staff may be struggling with issues, either personal or related to their school role".

### MAT Finance Rising Star of the Year

**WINNER:** Jade Bennett, senior management account, The White Horse Federation

**RUNNER-UP:** Keiran Humphreys, finance manager, Maritime Academy Trust, Ebbsfleet, Kent



Jade Bennett

After joining White Horse Federation as an apprentice in 2016, judges said Bennett had enjoyed a "meteoric rise".

Achievements included being involved in testing potential finance systems, stepping up to cover the central accounting manager who was deployed to a school with financial issues, and taking on line management responsibilities of some of the central finance team and co-ordination with the external auditors.

Bennett is now qualified with the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants.

"She is a true example of the quality and commitment of the finance professionals the education sector can produce from those willing to undertake an apprenticeship with MATs," judges said.

The award recognises MAT finance team members aged under 30.



### MAT Finance Team of the Year

**WINNER:** Chiltern Learning Trust

**RUNNER-UP:** South East Essex Academy Trust

The judges said the team at Chiltern Learning Trust was "truly inspirational" with an "innovative approach to problem-solving". Led by Teresa Kelly, it supported 15 schools and two teaching school hubs.

"It is a strong finance team with demonstrable outputs and achievements, and there is clear evidence of cross-departmental collaboration, with financial and school improvement KPIs linked," judges said.

"The finance team is regarded as enablers, not administrators, and provides training for future leaders who aspire to become headteachers. Teresa has been described as a truly exceptional leader, leading a team of unsung heroes."

### MAT Finance Project of the Year

**WINNER:** SENDAT in collaboration with John Milton Academy Trust and Active Learning Trust

**RUNNER-UP:** Peterborough Diocese Education Trust

"This award recognises innovative MAT finance projects which have had a direct impact on the financial operations of the trust," said the judges.

SENDAT partnered with John Milton Academy Trust and Active Learning Trust to run specialist learning centres for children with cognition and learning difficulties outside mainstream schools.

Pupils remain on roll at the mainstream school trusts, but staff are employees of SENDAT, which is a specialist SEND trust.

Judges said: "An innovative approach around financial arrangements in this project, which have helped to solve some unique challenges, is what stood out. A project of this nature carries a risk, but it was well planned and executed. This important and exceptional partnership work ensures wider access to critical special needs provision."

# Mayor's meal plan could cost London primaries £39m

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**

**@FCDWHITTAKER**

London schools could face having to plug a £39 million shortfall in funding after Sadiq Khan pledged to extend free school meals to all primary pupils in the capital next year.

The London mayor's £130 million announcement has been lauded as "life-changing". Khan said it would save families "hundreds of pounds" when universal eligibility is extended from September to pupils in years 3 to 6.

But the amount of funding for the scheme, which is only guaranteed for one year and does not extend to secondary schools, has been criticised.

City Hall said 270,000 more children would benefit – working out at around £2.54 per meal – with money coming from "additional business rates income", itself a one-off windfall.

Last year, the National Education Union (NEU) estimated the true cost to a school of providing a hot meal for a primary pupil for the 190 days of the school year – once rising costs were factored-in – was £3.30.

If the 77p shortfall was extrapolated out across all the children the policy would help, this would leave London schools facing a shortfall of more than £39 million.

City Hall told *Schools Week* it would work "closely" with schools to "ensure" they were not left out of pocket, but has not said how it would do so, or if further money would be made available.

## Schools will 'end up subsidising' from budgets

School food campaigner Andy Jolley said schools would "end up subsidising from teaching budgets". There was also no additional funding for catering infrastructure, he said.

*Schools Week* analysis suggests schools are already making up funding shortfalls as central government funding for free school meals has not risen in line with soaring costs.



Sadiq Khan

For instance, funding for universal infant free school meals is £2.41 per meal this year, 89p below the NEU estimate of actual costs. Extrapolated across the capital's primaries, this leads to a shortfall of almost £43 million.

The union reached the £3.30 figure for meals in primary schools by taking the cost of providing meals in 2010, and estimating how much it would be today after factoring in rising costs of staffing and food.

Jolley also said Khan's scheme "ignores hungry secondary pupils", and suggested universal free meals should be targeted by area, not by school phase.

He pointed to variations in free school meal eligibility between different London boroughs. In Richmond and Kingston, about 12 per cent of pupils were eligible but that rose to about 40 per cent in Islington and Camden.

"If you're going to spend £130 million to fight poverty, then focus on those in greatest need, not pseudo-universality that ignores teenagers

"Be in no doubt, unless there's more money, this will harm schools."

A spokesperson for Khan said the mayor had "repeatedly called on the government to provide universal free school meals and hopes that the example set in London next academic year will prove the benefit of this scheme beyond any doubt".

## Primaries could lose £5m pupil premium cash

Pupil premium funding could also be impacted.

Impetus, a youth education and employment charity, pointed to a FFT Education Datalab analysis in 2018 that found the introduction of universal infant free school meals led to a 1 per cent decline in the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

The extra funding is paid on the basis of means-tested free school meals eligibility. Impetus said Khan's announcement could mean London primary schools lose out on more than £5 million if the pledge had a similar effect.

Steve Haines, Impetus's director of public affairs, was "concerned that the unintended consequence of this important intervention could end up disadvantaging the children who need it the most".

The shadow health secretary Wes Streeting called the initiative a "welcome opportunity to research the impact of free school meals on childhood health and nutrition and educational attainment".

But Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer would not commit to rolling out the policy.

SEE THE



DIFFERENCE

See The Difference is a project created by a group of young people who are passionate about creating a safer and more comfortable learning environment for students.



Signs to look out for if a young person is being affected by subtle bullying:

- fatigue
- introverted behaviour
- putting head down when others are laughing
- change in behaviour
- not paying attention in class

How would you like a teacher to approach you if you were being bullied in school?

- centred around the person – if they would like someone else there or not
- speaking calmly
- ask if they would like to speak to you or another teacher

What should teachers do if they see subtle bullying?

- address it without saying who is being bullied
- talk to everyone who is involved in the situation
- using a different form of communication e.g. letter box, online support services, support page

What policies should be put in place, in schools against bullying?

- consequences are person specific – based on the background and context of the individual
- relationship building in year groups – team building to help prevent these forms of bullying
- increase student support services and reducing the intimidation surrounding reaching out for support

“ I feel like teachers do see a lot of the bullying that does go on but they don't act because they see it as minor. However, those minor forms can build up and really affect the person. ”

“ Speak to the individuals being teased in private (out of the classroom) and provide support and properly communicate what they can do. ”

“ Digging into why the situation is happening, even for those subtle forms of bullying – talking to the parents would be useful. ”

Email [seethedifferenceproject@gmail.com](mailto:seethedifferenceproject@gmail.com)



# Profile

JESSICA HILL | @JESSJANEHILL



## ‘People might think I’m running away’

**Evelyn Forde has had enough of headship and teaching. She tells Jessica Hill why she’s leaving after 23 years**

**S**leepless nights caused by not enough staff to cover classes has been the final straw for Evelyn Forde. After 23 years in schools – nine as a headteacher – she’s decided to quit.

The school she has led for the past seven years, Copthall Academy for girls in a leafy part of north London, has a ‘good’ Ofsted rating and is in the top 3 per cent of schools nationwide for Progress 8.

But Forde recalls her sense of despair recently when eight supply staff had to be brought in, not all of whom were qualified to teach. Her email inbox that day received just one job application from a prospective teacher.

“It keeps me up at night. When things are out of your control it becomes very stressful. I just thought, ‘I don’t think I can do this anymore.’”

She is worried “people might think I’m running

away”, but believes she’s a living example of “what happens when you don’t invest in education”.

She is not alone. The 2022 Teacher Wellbeing Index found more than a third of senior leaders want to leave.

The 57-year-old Forde, who regularly speaks to other heads in her role as president of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), warns there are many other “good leaders”

## Profile: Evelyn Forde

considering drawing down their pension money early.

SchoolDash analysis found headteacher turnover has leapt by more than a third since before the pandemic, with one in ten schools welcoming a new head in September last year.

Forde is currently chairing Public First's Commission on Teacher Retention, and believes it has "really good data" to present to ministers on why so many teachers are quitting.

Her involvement is, she admits, "ironic", given her own plight.

So what next? Has her resignation anything to do with an upcoming vacancy for a general secretary at ASCL. She hints that when she leaves Cophthall in five months, replacing Geoff Barton may be in her sights.

"Big role and big shoes to fill... I don't want to be a head anymore, or teaching. I think I've got more to give, and I just need to find what that is."

Whatever her plans, she is determined to stay in the sector. "I'd like to be the voice of change. I'd like to work with people in the sector to try and get this voice of change for recruitment retention, mental health and well being."

### 'The issue is here and now'

Cophthall, which has 58 teaching staff, currently employs three maths supply teachers and an unqualified supply teacher across drama, art and geography because "it's all I've got".

She admits having that many supply staff can "destabilise" a school because "with all the will in the world, they are not as invested in its culture and ethos".

But it wasn't always that way. She arrived at the school in 2016 – then 'requires improvement' before the 2018 'good' rating. It "wasn't that hard to recruit" until 2020.

Now, without the "pipeline of new talent coming through" – the DfE missed its target for recruitment of new secondary school teachers by 41 per cent this year – it is hard, she says, to "see the end in sight".

While she acknowledges that falling rolls might mean less demand for teachers in two to three years, "the issue is here and now. You've got young



## 'I'm what happens when you don't invest in education'

people sitting public exams. We're talking about their future chances."

So what can be done? Forde wants the DfE to "listen to the foot soldiers on the ground" and "do more to respect" teachers.

While the department needs to recognise pay is not rising fast enough, she also blames long hours.

She even suggests that moving to a four-day teaching week, as has been adopted in some rural areas of the US, would leave teachers a day for planning and could help make teaching "an attractive profession that people will come and stay".

### The legacy of the pandemic

Forde says other heads share her sense that the pandemic's legacy is greater than has yet been properly realised; Covid "shifted the dynamics in schools" and has left young people with a sense of "hopelessness".

"They look at our leaders ... and you've got bullying and corruption. Then we're saying, particularly to girls, 'come on, we've got to smash that glass ceiling'. Sometimes I think they just feel

'well, what's the point?'"

She believes the Covid legacy of mental health challenges and recruitment pressures mean headships are "not the same" as to what she signed up to.

Back then, heads still had to worry about academic outcomes and young people's pastoral wellbeing. But they did not have to support pupils with things such as suicide ideation.

Shortly after she told governors she was leaving, she was told of an incident involving a vulnerable pupil. Thankfully the right care and support was given to that young person, but Forde realised that "if something had happened to her, I don't think I could cope".

With other support services stripped back and schools now "seen as a fourth emergency service", the accountability on Forde's staff means they carry a "weight of responsibility" for young people who openly declare they are self-harming – which impacts their own mental health.

Some staff also still carry the trauma of losing loved ones from Covid. Their resilience is "not as strong as it was", and they can "go down a dark hole".

# Profile: Evelyn Forde

Last year Forde had to call an ambulance for a member of staff who indicated they “might take these pills”. Forde signposts her staff to professional help; posters inside toilet doors list the counselling offered by Education Support Partnership – “because I’m not a professional counsellor.”

Parental engagement is “more negative” too, she says. They are now quick to complain to Ofsted, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and “their lawyers” if they feel standards are slipping. “All of that takes its toll!”

## Riding the bus instead of going to school

Forde admits she didn’t attend school regularly – although the lack of safeguarding measures made it seem “nobody really cared”.

She recalls hours riding the bus up and down Oxford Street in London and left at 16 with no qualifications.

Her decision to become a teacher years later was prompted by a desire to prevent other young people going down a similar path.

Following stints at a “posh chocolate shop” and as a PA for an Icelandic record company, Forde did a childcare course when she was 24 and moved on to GCSEs.

After studying a degree in African history and literature at the SOAS University of London, followed by a PGCE, she began her teaching career in Tottenham, north London.

She was always drawn to schools with “real challenges”, later working for seven years as head of year at Hornsey School for Girls. Forde, who has three adult daughters, admits she is drawn to a “girls gotta do it!” mentality.

She then joined the DfE’s now defunct Future Leaders programme, which took middle leaders and assistant heads on a fast track to deputy headship. The professional development included a study tour to Chicago. After that, she was “chomping at the bit” for a leadership role.

But things didn’t go to plan. When her placement year at Hampstead School finished, the rest of the 25-30 people on her cohort got deputy jobs but it took Forde “20-plus interviews”



## ‘There is no pipeline of new talent coming through’

before she was offered a “substantive” position.

Only 3 per cent of heads are non-white, and Forde believes governing boards “do not reflect the communities they serve”.

## Headship is not easy for leaders of colour

“There’s an unconscious bias. One feedback I got was, ‘we’re just not sure how the community would relate to you’. What does that mean? It’s ridiculous.”

These days she warns other aspiring leaders of colour that becoming a head is “not a walk in the park”, that it can be more challenging because they have an “additionality ... that we don’t feel is on our non-black colleagues. We carry that and it’s not easy.”

After three years as deputy head at Copland Community School in Wembley, she quit when a teacher she had challenged over poor conduct was overheard referring to her as a “frizzy-haired gollywog”.

She was told the school was unable to act because the comment was heard “third hand”. Forde did not want to work in a place “where that racism can go unchallenged”.

After two years as senior vice-principal at Langdon Academy in Newham, Forde took on her first headship at Ely College in Cambridgeshire,

which had just gone into special measures. She found it a shock after the capital and “lots of investment” through programmes such as London Challenge and results that went “up and up”.

Its staff were highly unionised, which meant Forde “couldn’t do anything without them wanting to call a meeting”.

“It’s really hard when you’ve got large groups of staff who either a) can’t or b) won’t. Then you have to fight. You have to work out, ‘how are we going to manage ‘won’ts?’ And how are we going to manage the ‘can’t?’ The can’ts are CPD support, mentoring, and then the won’ts ...you’ve got to use different policies and structures.”

When the regional schools commissioner rebrokered the school to another trust, Forde says they were “very clear they didn’t want me as a head.

“They were all white men. And it just felt like... am I just not the right fit? Is there something about the optics here?”

“I was disappointed that my 15 months had not been recognised. But I just thought if that’s how you’re going to treat staff, I wouldn’t want to work for you anyway.”

Forde is proud of what she has done to “re-energise” Copthall, although it has not been without its challenges. When she first joined, many would not sign up to her “vision” and left.

“A lot had been here for a long time. It just needed a bit of refocusing on ‘why are we here?’ ‘We’re here for the children, we’re not here for you.”

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## DAME MEG HILLIER

Chair, Public Accounts Committee

### Young people deserve more than a maze of bureaucracy

**A new report outlines a costly and decades-long failure to bring services together to support vulnerable adolescents, explains Meg Hillier**

Government retrenches and makes policy in silos in an era of unstable politics. But the real challenges and “wicked” issues cut across Whitehall departments: supporting vulnerable adolescents is a classic example.

As the Public Accounts Committee outlines in its latest report, the issues these young people face cut across agencies, and failure to tackle them has a devastating impact on them, their communities, wider society and the public purse. The estimated lifetime cost of the adverse effects for children who have ever been allocated a social worker is about £23 billion every year.

Yet too often the buck is passed from one organisation to another because none owns the problem. For a parent or carer, and especially for a young person, it can be impossible to navigate the system – or even secure the support necessary to do so.

This is not new. In 1994 as a local councillor I saw the same

challenges – from the sharp end of child protection to the vulnerable young adolescents in children’s homes groomed into sexual activity. As an MP in inner London nearly 20 years on, I see gang leaders adept at identifying, abusing and using vulnerable children – very often in brutal county lines activity.

Too many young people get sucked into crime because they are vulnerable. We have known this for decades and yet the problems go on and on. We also have a growing crisis with young people’s mental health. And the fact that young women and young people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are so disproportionately affected adds to the impetus to act.

The solutions can be simple. Take the Hackney teenager excluded for missing school. A home visit revealed a mother with alcoholism whose two sons owned one pair of school trousers between them and so alternated attendance. A pair of trousers solved part of the problem (he went on to university), but the system took too long to identify it. Today, I fear the home visit would never happen.

The Department for Education is theoretically in charge of support for vulnerable adolescents, but



“ Navigating the complex web of support is hugely challenging

there are so many parts of the system that should work together – schools, colleges, health, police, councils, housing, youth services, courts and voluntary groups. School and college leaders know all too well that the challenges are often beyond the ability of one organisation to deal with; just navigating the complex web of support a young person needs is hugely challenging.

My experience is that often it is schools and colleges that pick up the problems early on. Increasingly, even they are struggling to access support. I have seen cases where schools and colleges have flagged issues, but the young person gets lost in the maze of bureaucracy that is supposed to be supporting them. More empowerment at the frontline and strong advocacy from a named individual could help target support where it is most needed.

We need a more joined up approach. This is financially

possible; a fraction of that £23 billion could divert many vulnerable young people from falling through the cracks.

We need to see evaluation of the cost and impact – and the value to wider society and the taxpayer – of interventions to change the life opportunities of this cohort.

Ownership of such a complex issue by one department means it does not get the attention it deserves. We don’t just need a strategy anymore; we need to see regular reports to parliament of the actual, measurable, long-term impact on young people’s outcomes.

By and large, schools and colleges do a great job of identifying young people who need help early. It’s time they were supported to do so, and to be confident that everyone else will play their part to put long-term help in place. It’s what our education system needs, and what our vulnerable adolescents deserve.

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**We must look past lazy myths of the north-south divide to remodel social mobility around regional needs, say Michael Barber and Lee Elliott Major**

The south-west's sunny shores and lush green landscapes hide a harsh truth. In the places many of us think of as idyllic holiday destinations, the dream of leading a decent life, let alone climbing the social ladder, is all but disappearing for many young people. The peninsula's poor social mobility prospects have become the uncomfortable truth that no-one wants to speak of.

Recent research by the University of Exeter revealed young lives blighted by barriers to opportunity: students in Somerset having to navigate more than a 12-hour round trip to their nearest FE college; pupils in Devon unable to afford the taxi or the kit to take part in after-school sports; teenagers in Cornwall resigned to thinking that university is not meant for them, irrespective of their grades.

The latest statistics paint their own bleak picture. The south-west remains rooted at the bottom of the country when it comes to higher education participation. Just 43.1 per cent of 15-year-olds had visited a university or college by 2020-21 according to the Department for Education, compared with 59.3 per cent of 15-year-olds in London. Absence rates at schools, meanwhile, are unacceptably high. And over recent decades the region has fallen far behind London and the south-east in the managerial and professional jobs on offer.

Catapulting a few academically talented teenagers from poorer backgrounds into selective universities and elite careers is work of national importance. But we view social

SIR MICHAEL BARBER

University of Exeter, chair, South-West Social Mobility Commission



LEE ELLIOT MAJOR

Professor of social mobility, University of Exeter

## Regional self-empowerment is possible. We know how ...

mobility in a much broader sense. The challenge for today's young is that they are less likely to lead decent lives compared with their parents. Just affording to live in the region, earning a wage that can pay the bills, has increasingly become the exception

This is about giving young people opportunities to lead fulfilling lives in their own communities. It is as much about equipping them with skills through apprenticeships and jobs as it is accessing elite education. Our South-West Social Mobility

“Affording to live in the region has become the exception”

not the rule. We need a new model of social mobility that develops all talents, not just academic but also vocational and creative – and creates opportunities in the south-west and other regions, not just in London and the south-east.

Commission has uncovered a burning desire across the region to address current inequities. It brings together leaders from education, industry and the public services willing to do all they can to create a fairer future. Its work will be defined by three broad



aims. Generational change requires a decades-long vision, but we will publish a set of indicators to hold the region to account on progress towards our goals. We believe, for example, that it isn't too much to ask for every pupil to leave school with the basic skills to get on in life, or that every major employer offers high-quality apprenticeships and universal training. We think that a performance measure for multi-academy trusts is how well they are doing for disadvantaged pupils.

We will also harness the best ideas from elsewhere. We've already seen great promise in trials of undergraduate tutors helping local pupils with basic literacy in Exeter and Plymouth, and a scheme enabling schools to serve as community hubs. The region is also ideally placed to pioneer the government's emerging reforms for improving basic skills.

Finally, we will ensure our voice is heard in Whitehall. Too often, national debates fall into the lazy myth of a simplistic north-south divide in opportunities. We will demonstrate how regional self-empowerment can be possible.

Many people conjure up the notion of the American dream when they think of social mobility – that anyone can climb the social ladder, leave where they come from and make it into society's upper echelons. Our dream for the south-west is far simpler: we want to create a fairer place in which young people enjoy a decent chance of succeeding in life, whatever city, coastal town or village they come from. That would be good for this most beautiful of places, and the country as a whole.



# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## DANIEL KEBEDE

National officer and candidate  
for general secretary,  
National Education Union

### Teachers must resist the squeeze on their autonomy

**We must confront the growing centralisation of teaching to reverse the alarming declines in recruitment, retention and job satisfaction, says Daniel Kebede**

I have taught at key stage 4 and in the early years. I have witnessed the love of learning sucked out of children and the joy of teaching turned into drudgery. I am not alone. The recruitment and retention crisis stems not just from problems of pay but from something that runs deep in our school system. It relates to questions that are fundamental to teachers' work and identity – questions that teacher unions must swiftly address.

"Teacher autonomy," found the NFER in 2020, "is associated with higher job satisfaction and intention to stay in teaching." Yet the average teacher reports a lower level of autonomy to other professions. This is especially the case, says the NFER, for curriculum, assessment and professional development.

These findings are echoed by many researchers, and you would think that the DfE, which never stops talking about evidence-based policy, would have paid attention to them. The opposite is true. Since 2020, the space for autonomy has

only narrowed. What is taught and how it is taught have become matters to be decided outside the classroom and the school.

This policy has several drivers. At school level, some multi-academy trusts and school leaders are requiring a common approach to lesson structures, often citing Barak Rosenshine's *Principles of Instruction*. Nationally, we see the growing influence of Ofsted's curriculum reviews and the government's Oak National Academy.

The Ofsted reviews are a mixed bag. In some subjects they endorse aspects of what the teaching community would see as good practice. In others, they are based on ill-informed hostility to mainstream educational practice.

Not surprisingly, educators have pushed back. The English Association saw Ofsted's review of English as "selective in its use of research", working with a "sparse evidence base" and relying on "opinion rather than robust research". Meanwhile, in the journal of the Association for the Teaching of Mathematics, researchers from Loughborough University "strongly cautioned teachers and school leaders against putting weight on [Ofsted's] recommendations" for maths.

Oak, which is promising a free



**“ The government has launched a battle for the soul of teaching**

"full curriculum package", takes no account of such criticisms. It says that it will base itself on Ofsted's curriculum principles and the pedagogic practice associated with Rosenshine. The government's £43 million investment in Oak is likely to apply both persuasion and pressure on schools to take up its offer.

Add to these initiatives the effects of the government's virtual takeover of teacher training and we have a network of powerful agencies pressing down on classroom practice and squeezing teacher autonomy. What is particularly shocking is that teachers have to give up their creativity, not for a model of practice based on serious research and ongoing consultation, but on one that is badly researched, dogmatic and dull.

The government's new ideas imagine teaching as an activity that is all planned out for teachers who are content to deliver content worked out in detail by other people. But the idea of delivering ready-made lessons runs counter

to what brought many into the profession – a commitment to teaching as a dialogue with students, starting out from their unique needs and interests to develop their learning further.

The government has launched a battle for the soul of teaching. The stakes are high: either we defeat these moves or face a future in which the deskilling of an exhausted profession will reach new depths. Over the past few weeks, teachers have spoken out about pay and funding, and we have learned a lot about the difference that good arguments backed by union organisation can make.

We must apply that lesson to other aspects of our working lives and rise to the new challenge of an unprecedented centralisation of curriculum. The NEU must now organise for curriculum change, hold conferences to open up alternatives and seek allies to create change. It must be our priority to reclaim an area of expertise which should be teachers' by right.

# Opinion

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## MILES HUPPATZ

Geography teacher and head of travel & tourism, Hampton Gardens School

### We are sleepwalking into a neo-feudal age of cultural capital

**Cultural capital is becoming the preserve of the few as school trips are pushed out by the funding squeeze, says Miles Huppertz**

Funding cuts are leaving schools sleepwalking into a neo-feudal age of cultural capital. As a middle leader in a state secondary in Peterborough, I believe this could be catastrophic. A senior leader recently said to me: "we just don't have the money to offer what some places do." This is unsurprising in an area of socio-cultural and economic disadvantage such as Peterborough.

Feudalism, the dominant social system in medieval Europe, describes the relationship between the propertied ruling classes and peasants; one of control, exploitation, and inequality. In the 21st century, neo-feudalism mainly refers to the dominance of small, powerful groups of elites. Today, funding cuts risk creating a neo-feudal age of cultural capital between increasingly polarised groups of haves and have-nots.

Cultural capital is about the cultural assets that people develop, but are not explicitly taught. Since 2019, Ofsted has championed developing cultural capital as a

key feature of a rich and broad curriculum. Understood through the lens of education, it is about exposing young people to new experiences and opportunities, something many schools do through trips and enrichment activities.

Like many teachers, I know the transformative impact that enrichment trips can have. Reading our year 11 yearbooks in summer, I saw that several of our most disadvantaged pupils named their year 8 trip to Hunstanton as their favourite memory of school. Recently, I remember talking to Stephen, one of my year 11s, during a trip to Leicester. He told me that he doesn't "really get out of town" and had never been to London. He was excited about visiting somewhere new.

For Stephen, our trip was a unique opportunity to experience an unknown place. Alongside undertaking geography fieldwork, we also visited De Montfort University and the University of Leicester, experiences he would otherwise be unlikely to have. This allowed Stephen and his peers to develop new cultural assets and capital. Stephen, like many of his peers, is hindered by the relatively low profile of tertiary education in the city. The same can be said



“Those on the cultural periphery will continue to be marginalised”

of pupils in other disadvantaged areas.

Aside from Leicester, other trips have included the National Space Centre and London to see An Inspector Calls, broadening and enriching young people's experiences of science and the arts. Cutting funding for trips like this will further hinder opportunities for the disadvantaged to access cultural capital.

At one end of the spectrum, elites will continue to obtain cultural capital as they always have, through trips, family, and nepotism. At the other, many schools are increasingly unable to justify spending on enrichment activities as budgets are stretched and the funding crisis worsens. Those on the cultural periphery will continue to be marginalised, unable to gain what the privileged few take for granted.

One solution is to seek out culturally enriching activities closer to home. Over the past

few months, businesses in Peterborough have helped pupils at my school develop their cultural capital by running careers' workshops and hosting students for outreach activities.

The government should consider tax breaks to incentivise businesses to run programmes that enrich pupils' lives and develop their cultural capital in disadvantaged areas. This would help to engage businesses in actively levelling up deprived parts of the UK and redress the inequality in the access to cultural enrichment.

As the cost of living rockets, it is imperative that enrichment is not only maintained but expanded. The government and the business community can ensure that the economic downturn doesn't translate into a cultural downturn too, decreasing the richness and fullness of young people's educational experience and sinking us deeper into a neo-feudal age of cultural capital.

# Solutions

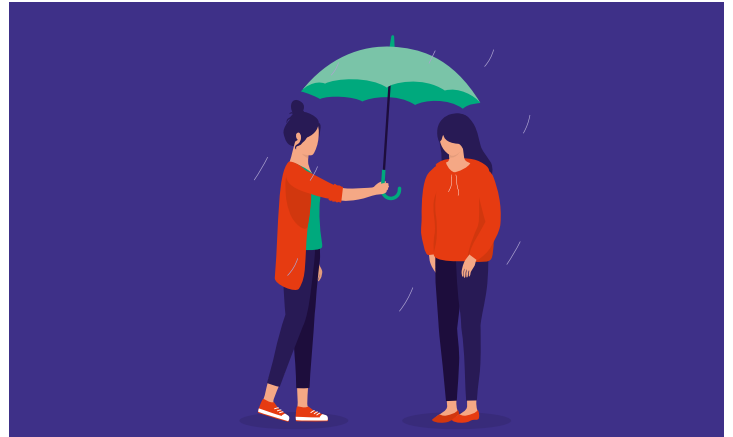
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## BECK FERRARI

Clinical content lead,  
UK Trauma Council, a project of  
the Anna Freud Centre

### Five key principles that will help you to plan for a crisis



“ Young people must not be hurried through their distress

**There is no one-size-fits-all model for how to respond to a critical incident, says Beck Ferrari, but some key principles can promote recovery rather than exacerbate trauma**

Some incidents can rock even the steadiest staff teams. A serious traffic accident. A sudden death. A violent assault. These are tragedies that no school should have to face, but occasionally they will have to and the effects can be profound.

Such events are usually described as “critical incidents”. They are unexpected, making them difficult to plan for.

Many schools will have a critical incident policy to outline their actions and responses to unexpected events, but it can be difficult to know how to adapt that policy to specific circumstances and be confident that the decisions you make promote recovery rather than exacerbate trauma.

Research led by Professor Stevan Hobfoll looked at what helped following traumatic events across communities worldwide. From this, researchers have identified five principles that contribute to creating the best environment for recovery.

The UK Trauma Council, a project of the Anna Freud Centre and the

first UK-wide group bringing together expertise in research, practice, policy and lived experience in childhood trauma, has developed a set of tools to help foster these five principles.

Our new “Critical Incidents in Educational Communities” resources are rooted in research, free and designed to help schools ensure everyone feels safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful when the unplannable happens.

#### Feeling safe

After a potentially traumatic event, as well as tending to any physical safety needs, schools also need to consider psychological safety. As adults who know their pupils well, staff are ideally placed to use their familiarity and the structure of the school day to contribute to that sense of safety.

Information that is honest and in line with young people’s development and understanding is also key to helping them feel safe, knowing they can trust the adults around them.

#### Feeling calm

Distress is an understandable and normal response. As such, it’s important to remember that emotion regulation mustn’t seek to hurry children and young people through their distress. Instead, the aim is to find ways that help them

not to feel so overwhelmed by it.

#### Feeling connected

Feeling connected to and supported by others is central to children and young people’s recovery. By using a flexible approach, schools can facilitate opportunities to further relationships between staff, friends and other pupils to reduce any feelings of isolation.

#### Feeling in control

Critical incidents can diminish the sense of control children and young people might have over their lives and the world around them. Schools can help by finding ways to involve pupils in the decisions that affect them and give them some influence over what happens after the event.

#### Feeling hopeful

Fostering healthy recovery isn’t about seeking to diminish or avoid the negative aspects of the event. It’s about finding ways to be hopeful about the future. Drawing on culturally appropriate concepts of hope is important, whether that’s rooted in pupils’ faith or in their community’s values.

Using these principles to underpin

planning, training and decision-making in the response phases can help leaders to feel more confident that their actions will help promote recovery.

The UK Trauma Council’s resources include templates to help schools review and update their critical incidents policy, and an INSET package to enable senior leaders to deliver whole-staff training. We have also developed specific frameworks, including how to deliver difficult news, how to monitor pupils at more risk of long-term difficulties and how to work with external agencies. Lesson plans offer ideas for supporting emotion regulation, and there’s advice on meeting with parents and carers during emotionally-charged times too.

Every critical incident is unique, and so is every school community. There is no one-size-fits-all model for how to respond to a critical incident, but these research-informed principles demonstrate a way of working that acknowledges the community’s distress while laying the foundations on which a shared, positive vision for the future can be built.

# THE REVIEW

- BOOK
- TV
- FILM
- RADIO
- EVENT
- RESOURCE

## THE CULTURE TRAP - ETHNIC EXPECTATIONS AND UNEQUAL SCHOOLING FOR BLACK YOUTH

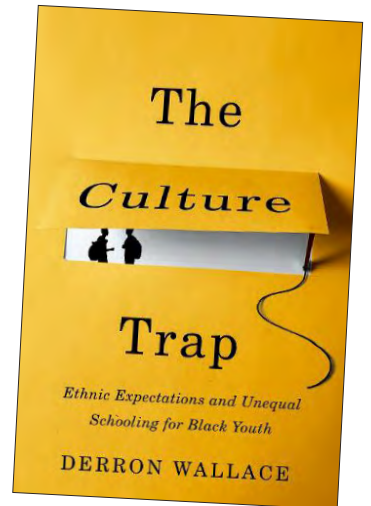
**Author:** Derron Wallace

**Publisher:** Oxford University Press

**Publication date:** 17 January

**ISBN:** 9780197531471

**Reviewer:** Dr Jeffery Quaye, national director of education and standards, Aspirations Academies Trust



The complex and nuanced manner in which class, gender and ethnicity tend to shape and reinforce inequalities in educational outcomes is rightly of great interest to educators, policymakers and researchers here and across the world.

However, little attention is given to how culture intersects with these factors, resulting in unequal schooling experiences and therefore differential outcomes for pupils of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Perhaps that's because it's a complicated task and one that requires a deep understanding of education, its practices and discourses. Into this gap steps Derron Wallace with his new book, *The Culture Trap*.

I first came across Wallace on a BBC Thinking Allowed podcast on Pierre Bourdieu in 2016. He was one of the panellists exploring the legacy and ideas of the French sociologist who, as I previously explored in these pages, coined the term "cultural capital". He made an impression, so I was keen to read his ambitious new book in which he argues that educators' obsession with Black Caribbean pupils' culture is "an alibi for racism in a putatively post-racial society".

Drawing on his ethnographic study of second-generation Black Caribbean pupils in London and New York, Wallace carefully, vividly and critically examines the historical factors and structures that account for differences in their educational achievements. Building on his reading of Bourdieu, he theorises the concept of "ethnic expectation", which shows how ethnic perceptions are used as a lever to form a "culture trap".

Since the 1920s, Black Caribbean pupils have been deemed a high-achieving ethnic minority group in New

York. Later, from the 1950s, perceptions of the same ethnic group in Britain's schools have been the mirror opposite. The perception are borne out by their outcomes. National statistics on Black Caribbean pupils' achievement in England remain nothing if not concerning.

Wallace attributes this gap to expectations, but is it evident in everyday school practices that teachers have accepted a dominant narrative that Black Caribbean pupils are less capable compared with other pupils, even those from other minority groups in the UK? His central premise is that teachers' expectations come to shape their pupils' eventual outcomes, but this argument is not without problems.

Wallace maintains that "in London, [...] Caribbean culture and collective identities are marginalised and stigmatised as 'ethnic penalties'". But I can recall teaching many Black Caribbean pupils who achieved well in school, and while some didn't reach their potential, at least some of their under-achievement could be attributed to sub-cultures that came into conflict with school rather than schools' low expectations.

But any good sociological text should lead you to question your own experience, and Wallace's argument that Caribbean identity has been framed as a liability in the UK and that school practices, such as setting, reproduce racial and ethnic inequalities that align "Caribbean culture to failure" is compelling.

When he elucidates on the logics of school and ethnic expectations, his argument that Black Caribbean pupils have "internalised ethnic expectations which are mostly low" accounts for some of the school-resistant

sub-cultures I've encountered and makes for a persuasive interpretation of the group's persistently concerning outcomes. Indeed, the scope of this study exemplifies how Black Caribbean parents' perceptions impact on their children, perpetuating the problem.

Further, Wallace argues that "Black Caribbean young people confirm their participation in symbolic violence", and I would have liked to know more about the interaction of race and social class at this juncture. But this is a practical book too; part 2 is dedicated to strategies Black Caribbean pupils use to negotiate "the culture trap" to overcome the intergenerational stereotypes that threaten to hold them back – an enlightening read for any teacher with Black Caribbean pupils.

Overall then, Wallace's book did enough to alleviate my concern that the idea of a culture trap was too simply and purely deterministic. I found it a fascinating, timely and beautifully written book, and I will be digesting its arguments about the role of culture in reproducing racialised inequality for a long time.



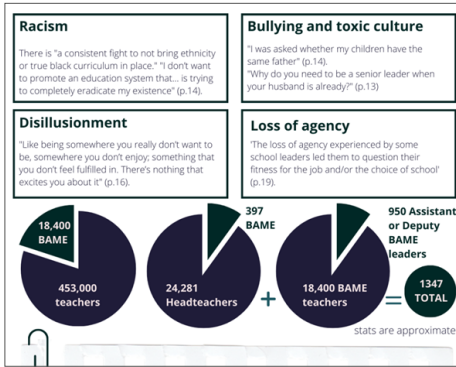
Dr Jeffery Quaye

★★★★☆  
Rating

**THE CONVERSATION**  
LISTENING IN ON THE DIGITAL STAFFROOM



**Penny Rabiger**  
Associate, Centre for Race, Education and Decoloniality, Leeds Beckett University



her so-called ordinary life.

Her latest blog on *BAME leaders exiting the profession* was inspired by a conversation with a group of school leaders at the BAMEed Network conference last month, and by research findings by the Institute for Educational and Social Equity around the factors causing BAME school leaders to leave or accept more junior roles. This important paper looks at their dwindling "quality of life", and examines evidence detailing the cumulative effects of this for black and mixed-heritage leaders when added to school climates where values clash, leaders bully, and curricula eradicate.

Tyreman provides a list of questions that, as members of school communities, we should seriously consider if we are to break cycles of injustice and toxicity in our schools.



### WEDDED TO THE JOB

Misogyny, racism, impossible demands on teachers' time and goodwill, lack of agency, discrimination and bloated workloads. You couldn't imagine anyone would thinking this is all right, right?

And yet... this half term's online staffroom conversation has been dominated with talk about a job ad for a deputy headteacher. I

don't think there is anything I can add that hasn't already been said, so I leave it here for you to draw your own conclusions. It is certainly jaw-dropping in its brutal honesty.

Ask yourself before applying:

Are you ok with the team contacting you in the evening? Meeting in holidays and being prepared to do detentions on a Saturday morning? Can you cope with huge demands throughout the day, which include teaching a high load, managing pastoral issues and being on alert from 7am through until 6pm, once we have walked the pupils safely down the road and finished detentions? High energy and sacrifice are required to excel in this position at Mercia School. We cannot carry anyone; we need a commitment from our Assistant Headteacher to stay until the job is done.

### LOVE AND POWERFUL CHANGE

In a more hopeful vein, headteacher and community organiser, Seb Chapleau's new blog post asks: What if we linked our love for our school communities to the notion of power?

The piece is partly in response to the Confederation of School Trusts' December publication, *School Trusts as Anchor Institutions*. Whatever you think about whether multi-academy trusts can embody a genuine commitment to community, despite their muscly, marketised model of power, Chapleau moves our attention away from structures and towards a different view of *building power*.

The myth of meritocracy and its associated promise of social mobility as the route to equitable outcomes still dominates. The resulting pressure on teachers to produce results through their pupils doesn't leave room to do much else than get your head down and "just teach them". By contrast, Chapleau presents the idea of working across communities locally to find long-lasting, systemic solutions that address the root causes of the injustices young people and their families face. It feels like a much more powerful alternative.

It isn't just wishful thinking, either; it's backed up by rich evidence of schools taking action to develop civic life. As Chapleau so rightly says, where systems have changed, it's not by luck but "because enough power was built for decision-makers to listen to our communities more seriously".

Here's to more listening that results in powerful change.

### WHO LET THE MISOGYNISTS OUT?

Many teachers are still battling the surge of misogyny reaching their classrooms, thanks in part to media interest in the social media influencer, Andrew Tate. The uncovering of deeply-rooted misogyny in our police service has also brought it home as something that should have us all on high alert.

In this context, I was interested to hear this new podcast episode from Middle East Eye and Zahara Chowdhury, who writes, teaches and supports schools and young people with topics around diversity, equity and inclusion. Aside from the podcast itself, which is as informative as it is challenging, the comments below it are reflective of the views it seeks to address.

We should probably also listen to English teacher and *Guardian* columnist, Lola Okolosie, who reminds us that parents have a responsibility to talk to their children about this. It can't fall on teachers alone.

### ORDINARY LIVES, EXTRAORDINARY IMPACTS

But while teachers can't do it all, we must not underestimate the importance of challenging systems of oppression that are reproduced in our schools, not least racism. Writer, walker, reader and thinker Hannah Tyreman has begun sharing knowledge-filled insights, producing summaries, visualisations and syntheses gained from

# The Knowledge

What we've learned about schools and their communities this week



## How are governors responding to the cost-of-living crisis?

**Steve Barker, school governor and head of governance services, Strictly Education**

**A new survey reveals governors are under increasing pressure to support their schools and communities through the cost-of-living crisis, writes Steve Barker**

"A mother has asked if her children could be given any leftover school meals." It's comments like that – one of several captured in a new survey ahead of the second annual National School Governors' Awareness Day on February 28 – that bring home the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on pupils and their families. It certainly touched a nerve with me, and I've been a school governor for more than 30 years.

Our January survey of more than 300 governors reveals that the cost-of-living crisis has been discussed by more than nine in ten governing boards, with 53 per cent of respondents saying that the biggest impact has been more pupils arriving at school hungry.

Just over half (51 per cent) also said more parents cannot afford school uniform and appropriate footwear for their children.

Governors also refer to a range of other economic impacts on their schools, including more families unable to afford school meals, increased anxiety in children and more children without warm outdoor clothing.

The crisis also affects schools in indirect ways. "More parents are doing extra jobs to make ends meet and they don't see each other because one goes out to work as the other comes in – that means fewer parents are able to volunteer for the PTA and help in school," one governor commented. Another spoke of some children starting school far behind their peers because parents couldn't afford nursery fees.



All this is happening at a time of squeezed school budgets. Most governors surveyed (89 per cent) reported that, unsurprisingly, rising energy costs were the No 1 budget pressure. The reduction in real-terms funding came a close second (76 per cent of respondents). Meanwhile, general inflation and unfunded teacher and teaching assistant pay awards were the top concerns of 65 per cent and 75 per cent of respondents respectively.

Half confirmed that they were unable to balance school budgets without it impacting on vital resources and support for children. The top three were a reduction in the numbers of teaching and classroom assistants (55 per cent of responses), cutting back on school trips and activities (42 per cent) and reducing support staff hours (41 per cent).

While these findings are deeply concerning, there are clear indications that schools are trying hard to support families – and school governors are stepping up and playing their part. Fifty-six per cent of our respondents told us that their schools have put in place additional measures to reduce the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on their families.

These include opening a community shed to provide food and other household items, coat banks, increasing breakfast club numbers and referring more families to social care.

There's a simple reason why the impact of the cost-of-living crisis will be the main focus of our National School Governors' Awareness Day discussions. The core purpose of school governance is to ensure that children and young people receive the best possible learning and care in our schools. If they arrive at school hungry, cold and anxious, this will have an immense impact on their learning, wellbeing and life chances.

My hope is that the conversations we facilitate through Awareness Day will help many more of this huge volunteer force realise that they can play a more active role in helping their schools address the cost-of-living crisis. They are a vital link in making schools fully aware of the extent of the crisis and its impact on their communities, and are crucial in leading on establishing and developing support initiatives.

Our survey found that many governors are already doing great work here, but we all need to step up in the months ahead.

Week in

# Westminster

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



## FRIDAY

Looking for a new job or career change? Want to earn £25,900 impersonating ministers of the crown? Then look no further than the Department for Education, which is after a "ministerial correspondence drafter".

The lucky postholder, working from Sheffield, will "take responsibility for drafting high-quality, signature ready responses".

So when you next receive a letter from a DfE minister, think of the poor soul who gets paid a fraction of their bosses' salaries to write it.

## MONDAY

Jonathan Gullis may only have served as schools minister for 50 days, but his Week in Westminster content-generation seems like it will last a lifetime.

The never-known-to-be-quiet Conservative MP is free to be his bullish self from the backbenches (not that he really held back during his brief frontbench career), and he seems to be pulling out all the stops.

In a video for social media, Gullis claimed his Stoke constituency was full of "scrotes", "scumbags" and "savages", as he demanded more alleyway gates and better street lighting.

A 2021 video in which he was schooled (get it) on the question of why asylum seekers "need to come to the United Kingdom" also did the rounds again on Twitter.

Mr Gullis looks unlikely to maintain

**Ministerial Correspondence Drafter**  
Department for Education  
Apply before 11:55 pm on Wednesday 1st March 2023

**Reference number**  
266768

**Salary**  
£25,900

**Job grade**  
Executive Officer

**Contract type**  
Permanent

**Business area**  
DFE - Strategy Group

**Contents**

- [Location](#)
- [About the job](#)
- [Benefits](#)
- [Things you need to know](#)
- [Apply and further information](#)

**Location**

Sheffield, Yorkshire and the Humber, S1 2FJ

[Apply now](#)

his seat at the next election, but we look forward to his talk (or should we say shout) show on GB News.

## TUESDAY

The government has spent months rejecting the very notion of inflation-busting pay rises for teachers on the basis that they're unaffordable.

The argument might get a little harder to maintain, however, after it emerged that a surprise £5.4 billion surplus turned up in public sector finances last month.

However, although a suggested 3 per cent pay rise for experienced teachers next year has been rubbished by the unions, chancellor Jeremy Hunt is still battling away calls for improved public sector pay offers.

Let's see how long that lasts...

## WEDNESDAY

Ofsted this week published its eleventh curriculum research review, this time on art and design. It warned schools they weren't dedicating enough time to the subject.

Many in education blame the decline in arts subjects to the EBacc performance

measure, which judges schools across a suite of academic subjects.

But Ofsted chief Amanda Spielman has previously defended the measure when it comes to the decline of design and technology, another non-EBacc subject. In 2019, she warned

it was a "mistake to attribute the decline too much to the Ebacc and Progress 8".

Will the latest research review by the watchdog change her mind?

## THURSDAY

Having spotted a fatal flaw in the DfE's approach to school buildings, Labour seems to have identified the issue as a vote winner, and is campaigning hard on the issue.

In an effort to up the stakes, shadow education secretary Bridget Phillipson asked in a written question what the highest compensation was to teachers and children for injuries sustained in school buildings in disrepair over the last five years.

But just as the DfE doesn't know how many school buildings are at risk of collapse, Nick Gibb said it didn't have a handle on compensation data either.

Ministers continue to maintain that keeping up the condition of school buildings is a job for councils and trusts. But they aren't usually so shy about their own involvement when loudly trumpeting their own capital funding initiatives...





# Headteacher – Woodside Primary School

Permanent and Full-Time

No later than a September 2023 Start

Wonderful Opportunity - Competitive Salary

Woodside Primary School is a three-form entry primary school located in Croydon. Part of the Inspire Partnership Academy Trust, we are a family of schools across Croydon, Medway, and Greenwich, who aim to offer a life changing education for all of our children.

The school is a larger than average school with a thriving nursery provision. Additionally, we are a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. We currently hold Silver level accreditation, and are working towards Gold. We support UNICEF’s Convention of the Rights of the child and encourage our children to reflect on their own rights, and those of others in both a local and global context.

We are seeking to appoint a visionary headteacher who will be relentless in the pursuit of excellence across the curriculum, leading our wonderful community into an exciting future. This role offers a fantastic career opportunity for the successful candidate to shape the strategic vision and direction not only for Woodside, but also make a difference across our Partnership. Working in

collaboration with other school leaders and sharing best practice lies at the core of our school improvement work, so the successful candidate would benefit from these opportunities.

We can offer the successful candidate high quality professional development and coaching opportunities, including involvement with our Headteacher Network for Excellence Programme. You will receive the very best support from both our central services and education leadership teams. You will also be joining a Partnership of truly collaborative and values led professionals.

**Further information about our Trust is available at:**

**<https://www.inspirepartnership.co.uk>** or to discuss this opportunity, please contact Mrs Melissa Carpenter, Trust Education Leader at **[mcarpenter@inspirepartnership.co.uk](mailto:mcarpenter@inspirepartnership.co.uk)**.

Visits to our school are strongly encouraged. Please contact Abby Wong, Executive Assistant on **07828 293392** or **[awong@inspirepartnership.co.uk](mailto:awong@inspirepartnership.co.uk)**.



Closing date for applications:  
**9am on Monday 20th March 2023**  
Interview date:  
**28th or 30th March 2023**

*The Inspire Partnership Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an Enhanced DBS check. The Inspire Partnership is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from men and women of all ages from any background and from candidates with disabilities.*



# Principal

**Start date:** September 2023, or earlier

**Location:** Croydon, CR0 6NA

**Salary:** Significant & generous salary + potential relocation bonus



## Ark Blake Academy

We are looking for a new Principal to lead Ark Blake Academy at this important stage of its journey. The leader will join our young and growing secondary school, with great potential and a strong foundation to build on.

We opened our doors to the community of East Croydon in September 2020 and are now an over-subscribed secondary school with over 500 students across years 7, 8 & 9. As a new school with great facilities and potential, Ark Blake is fast becoming the school of choice in the local community.

Ark Blake is part of Ark, one of the most successful school networks in the country. You will join a team of ambitious Principals who work collaboratively to share best practice, provide support for one another, and improve what we do as a school and a network.

We welcome applications from experienced and skilled secondary school leaders with a clear vision for what it takes to establish and sustain an excellent school and the commitment and determination to drive that vision forward.

**What we offer:**

- Influence across network-wide issues through our principal meetings and regional collaboration
- Support from an experienced and nurturing Regional Director
- On-hand expertise from our dedicated network operations teams
- Excellent career development opportunities across both the region and wider Ark network
- Access to excellent senior leadership training
- Highly competitive remuneration

To apply, please submit an application via our online recruitment portal by **9am on Friday 10th March**.

We welcome conversations about the role and visits to our school. To schedule an informal and confidential conversation please contact Siân Maddrell, Regional Director: [Sian.Maddrell@arkonline.org](mailto:Sian.Maddrell@arkonline.org).

**Closing date: Friday 10th March, 9am**



## Director of Learning and School Improvement and Deputy CEO

Staffordshire University Academies Trust is a National Multi Academy Trust comprised of a family of twenty church and non-church, primary and secondary academies, based in Staffordshire. Our mission is to enable our children, young people and their families to report that Staffordshire is a great place to live, play, learn and achieve in; a place where they feel safe and can lead healthy lives and a place that offers them a successful future.

SUAT has an exciting opportunity to appoint a Director of Learning and School Improvement and Deputy CEO, to contribute to the effective leadership of a successful and supportive Trust. This is a very special role, and we are looking for the right person to join SUAT's Executive Team, sharing a collective responsibility for the strategic direction of the Trust, including planning, decision making, management and leadership.

**To find out more about the role and apply, please visit our vacancies page.**



## Director of Studies

£52,659-£56,796 per annum  
(Leadership Scale 8 to 11)

We are seeking to appoint a Director of Studies who will play a central role in both the strategic planning and the ongoing development of the School for the benefit of current and future pupils. They are the academic lead for the Senior School (working closely with the Junior School team) and will maintain and extend the School's reputation for delivering an outstanding, holistic curriculum within our Quaker setting. They will lead by example in establishing a culture of excellence in all academic matters.

You should have a track record of outstanding leadership and management in education – ideally at both middle and senior levels. A background of experience in different educational settings is desirable. A good bachelor's degree (a further educational qualification is desirable) and Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is essential.

**Closing date: Wednesday 1st March 2023 at 5pm.**

**GREENHEART**  
LEARNING PARTNERSHIP 

**HEADTEACHER**

Edgar Stammers Primary Academy, Harden Road, Walsall. WS3 1RQ  
Leadership Pay Range

We are seeking a strong leader with demonstrative character, commitment, and determination to address the challenges the post can bring. You will have high aspirations for all children, embracing the principles of equality and inclusion for all.

**You will have/be:**

- Proven track record in school leadership
- An experienced Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher with ability to demonstrate impact in the role
- Deep understanding of pedagogy and practices
- Strong vision for education and ambitious for pupils, their families and staff
- An excellent communicator and visible leadership
- Strong belief in GLP values including collaborative, collegiate working
- Passion to make a difference in education and learning our pupils.

If you are interested in this role, please contact Chris Nock (cnock@edgarstammers.uwmat.co.uk) or 01922 471390 to arrange an informal / confidential meeting, or to visit the school on the following days:

27th February 2023 - 2.00pm  
28th February - 2.00pm

For further information and application pack, email: [arussell@greenheartlearning.org](mailto:arussell@greenheartlearning.org).

**Closing date:** 6th March 2023  
**Interviews:** 20th and 21st March 2023  
**Start Date:** September 2023



**Executive Leader for Schools**

Leadership Scale 38-43

We are seeking to recruit a highly motivated, dedicated, and inspirational Executive Leader for Schools from 1st September 2023. The Executive Leaders work as a team, each responsible for a number of schools within Stour Vale and together leading trust-wide projects and developments. This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced primary headteacher with a passion for school improvement and improving the life opportunities for children and young people to add to our collective capacity to support continuous improvement.

At this key point in Stour Vale's growth and development, the successful candidate will also play a substantial role in creating the structures and processes which will enable us to be a larger, successful family of schools. You must be committed to our ethos and values and to secure autonomy; our approach to working with member schools.

**Closing date: Monday 27th February 2023**



**Headteacher**  
Robert Fitzroy Primary Academy

We are seeking an outstanding Headteacher, or an outstanding Deputy Headteacher, who is an innovative, responsible and insightful professional, with the passion, drive, and enthusiasm to build on Robert Fitzroy's considerable strengths. We are seeking the successful individual to take up position at the start of the autumn term 2023 or sooner if possible. You will be able to lead, motivate, develop, and inspire a school team of staff who are passionately committed to giving pupils a wide range of real-life and enriching experiences, within a culture of highest expectations.

There are 60 schools within our organisation, grouped into clusters. Being part of that family, you will benefit from the expertise, support and opportunities offered by the largest, primary only, multi-academy trust in the country.

For an informal discussion please contact Mr Justin Burt, Deputy Director of Education using [justin.burt@reach2.org](mailto:justin.burt@reach2.org)

**Closing date:** Friday 13th January 2023 at Midday  
**Link to advert:** <https://www.reach2.org/vacancy/headteacher-2/>

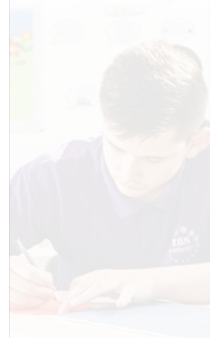


**Teacher in Charge of Maths**

EBN Academy 2 is seeking to appoint a highly motivated and committed Maths teacher to join our teaching team and lead Maths within the academy; you will oversee Maths and numeracy within the academy and you will also manage the second maths teacher within the department. The successful applicant will be committed to raising the achievement of all learners by ensuring teaching of maths is of the highest quality and is innovative, engaging and enjoyable. Key qualities of the successful candidate will include, high expectations of themselves and others with a strong determination to raise standards and accelerate progress in an Alternative Provision setting.

Each member of the Academy's teaching staff is seen as an integral part of the team, working together and sharing ideas to developing teaching practice across the school.

**Click here for more information**





**Paradigm Trust is looking to appoint the following team members for our new academy, Woodbridge Road Academy, for September 2023 (early start date is possible).**

- **Assistant Principal**
- **SEN Teachers**

As we move into our exciting, purpose built facilities, we are expanding our team significantly and therefore we are recruiting for leadership, teaching and support staff roles. As a new and growing school, we have plenty of opportunities for career development.

Whether your background is primary, secondary or SEND, we would love to hear from you. We are seeking to appoint a range of subject specialists. This is an amazing opportunity to have a real impact on the new academy and its pupils.

We will provide a highly structured and well organised environment in order to allow our pupils to develop both academically and socially. We want our pupils to be equipped to lead lives of happiness, fulfilment and independence. We will work closely with families and external agencies to help us achieve this goal for each young person.

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



**The Trust**

This is an exciting time to join Paradigm Trust. We are a not-for-profit, state-funded educational trust consisting of seven schools based in Suffolk and London, including Woodbridge Road Academy, our new school for children with complex social and interaction needs.

Our vision is to develop and sustain great schools where we can make the biggest difference to pupils. We are strongly values-led (integrity, community, excellence) and work hard to be inclusive. We deliver high quality education and play a positive role in local and national education systems.

The Trust is educationally strong - every Trust school that has been inspected has been judged to be good or better. We offer a well-developed and well-resourced, knowledge-based curriculum; have lots of experience of school-to-school support; operate effective teacher training programmes and provide strong operational support services to our schools. Paradigm also benefits from effective governance, backed by secure finances.

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

We would love to chat with you about our unique school and the opportunities available, to arrange this please contact [charlotte.miles@paradigmtrust.org](mailto:charlotte.miles@paradigmtrust.org)

As a Trust, we are committed to reducing unnecessary workload and are outcomes-driven; flexible working options can be accommodated.

Relocation packages may be available for the right candidate.

**To further details and to apply for any of our vacancies, please use the following link to the Paradigm Trust website: <https://paradigmtrust.org/careers/current-vacancies/>**





# HEAD TEACHER

**Group L20 - 26 (£70,733 - £81,927)**

Robin Hood Academy is a vibrant and innovative primary school that maintained its 'Good' OFSTED judgement with a strong report in September 2022 Robin Hood Academy has a rich history of constantly seeking to innovate and improve. We are now seeking to appoint our next leader with the drive and determination to build upon the excellent work of our current HT and to plot the school on its future development path. It is the desire to constantly improve, refine our practices and further develop the learning experiences for our children that lie at the heart of the culture and ethos of the school. The Trust wishes to recruit a Headteacher with a passion and drive to create the next exciting chapter in the history of the school and help it on its journey towards providing a truly outstanding learning experience for all of our pupils.

**The successful candidate will:**

- Have a proven track record in school leadership and making a difference.
- Have a passion for pedagogy and be as focused on the foundations of learning as on innovation.
- Be an excellent communicator and have outstanding emotional intelligence.
- Have strong team ethic and moral purpose.
- Have a strong vision for education and high aspirations for pupils and staff.
- Be willing to contribute their skillset to the wider Multi Academy Trust and work with our team of Headteachers to improve outcomes for all Trust pupils.
- Have a desire to impact on the wider education system in order to make a true difference.

Robin Hood Academy is part of Robin Hood Multi Academy Trust which also consists of Birches Green Infant, Birches Green Junior, Cedars Academy, Ulverley School and Yenton Primary. The Trust is built on the principles of working collaboratively across each school to create unique learning experiences for children that they wouldn't get in any other organisation. The Trust believes that each school's vision and ethos is unique to their own setting and community. With this in mind, space is provided for leaders to lead their schools whilst also offering the support of a team of highly skilled professionals from the MAT to enable the sharing of best practice. We believe that, with the collaborative leadership across our schools, we can create something truly special. To gain an understanding of the vision for the Trust please visit [www.robinhoodMAT.co.uk](http://www.robinhoodMAT.co.uk) and watch our vision.

For more information about the post we strongly encourage prospective candidates to contact our CEO, Steve Taylor (via our MAT PA, Jo Green [pa@robinhoodmat.co.uk](mailto:pa@robinhoodmat.co.uk)), to arrange an informal and confidential chat with a view to visiting the school for a tour.

**Closing date: 10th March 2023 (No later than 12pm)**

**Interview date: Day 1: 27th March 2023**

**Day 2: 28th March 2023**

**For more information and an application pack please contact Jo Green via [pa@robinhoodmat.co.uk](mailto:pa@robinhoodmat.co.uk)**

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*Robin Hood MAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expect all staff to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to all necessary pre-employment checks, including: an enhanced DBS; Prohibition check; section 128 check, Childcare Disqualification (where applicable); qualifications (where applicable); medical fitness; identity and right to work. All applicants will be required to provide two suitable references.*



## SECONDARY EXECUTIVE HEAD

At The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT) we believe that for all of our staff to be truly fulfilled and successful, they need to be heard, developed and empowered. Therefore we are looking for someone who can demonstrate our values of shared voice, shared belief and shared success to work within our TKAT family.

**We know that people thrive more when they work in supportive teams, so we will be with you every step of the way.**

We are currently looking for a secondary Executive Headteacher to work alongside an existing Headteacher to rapidly improve provision and outcomes at Havant Academy. You won't be alone in this role, but supported by a strong network within our TKAT family, including our Director of Education, a wide range of Trust Subject Lead Practitioners, and a welcoming local network of Headteachers.

We are looking for a candidate who can demonstrate a track record of sustained school improvement whilst operating within the Trust's ethos of working inclusively, respecting and caring for others, and having ambition and aspiration for all. You will be able to demonstrate the ability to develop, motivate and empower teams, work with agility to achieve the best outcomes for students, and employ high levels of emotional intelligence to galvanise school communities to bring about sustainable change.

Experience of successful headship, particularly in challenging situations or areas of deprivation, is essential to this role.

If you would like to know more about this post or to organise an informal discussion, please contact Mike Garlick, Director of Education at [mike.garlick@tkat.org](mailto:mike.garlick@tkat.org)



## SECONDARY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Are you an experienced and successful head looking for a new venture? Are you looking for a supportive Trust who works with integrity and innovation? If so, we'd like to hear from you.

We are currently looking for a secondary Director of Education to join our extensive school development team. Based in our TKAT Coast region, your role will be to support schools to become exceptional, deploy a team of subject and teaching Lead Practitioners, and be part of setting our Secondary Strategy. You will get to work within a supportive team of Directors from across the Trust and benefit from our life-changing leadership development programme.

**We know that people thrive more when they work in supportive teams, so we will be with you every step of the way.**

We are looking for a candidate who can demonstrate a track record of sustained school improvement, is creative in their approach to school development, and enjoys achieving their successes through empowering others.

At The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT) we believe that for all of our staff to be truly fulfilled and successful, they need to be heard, developed and empowered. Therefore we are looking for someone who can demonstrate our values of shared voice, shared belief and shared success to work within our #oneTKATfamily.

If you would like to know more about this post or to organise an informal discussion, please contact Matt Batchelor, Senior Director of Education at [matt.batchelor@tkat.org](mailto:matt.batchelor@tkat.org)

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**The Shared Learning Trust**



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