

SCHOOLS WEEK

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

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FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2023 | EDITION 322

'Rather than sending vulnerable children off, we'll keep them safe with us'



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- NIOT says new qualification could help solve special school recruitment woes
- Development comes as Ofsted report reveals mainstream teachers want SEND help

AMY WALKER | @AMYRWALKER

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SCHOOLS WEEK

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Correction:

A piece by Evie Cryer from Oasis Community Learning on page 25 of last week's edition stated the trust would not normally discuss a pupil's gender identity with parents was incorrect and not their policy. The trust later amended this paragraph to instead state while they recognise the importance of supporting young people's right to self-expression, no action is taken until a compromise has been achieved with parents.

education week jobs

FEATURED JOBS

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Pupils and teachers are both being failed by stretched roles

“It’s time to decide whether schools are the front line of children’s services, or whether they are specialists in education. The status quo is failing children and education staff.”

The striking comment is from an Education Support report this week (page 15 and 16) that lays bare the toll on teachers of their additional responsibilities amid a widespread collapse in support services for schools and growing need.

As we documented in our investigation last week, it’s an important factor in why despite restoring 2010 funding levels, schools are still short-changed.

But teachers acting as “de factor social and healthcare workers” is also an important factor in the teacher pay dispute.

Schools appear to be turning to incentives such as golden hello/handcuff payments in a bid to attract and retain good teachers (page 4). But individual incentives will only go so far, and do not address the concerns about workload that are driving teachers from the profession.

As Education Support warns, clarity is

needed on what the government wants schools’ role to be.

If this cannot be provided, “we should plan for increased attrition from and recruitment into the profession. The attractiveness of working in education is declining rapidly, due to the consequences of this lack of clarity.”

The collapse of school support services, and solving that, is a deep-rooted, complicated problem that will take both time and money.

It’s why the recent churn in senior advisers to Gillian Keegan (page 11) is worrying. It also comes as key reforms – including the all-important SEND reforms – are starting to be rolled out.

Coming after five secretary of states in just four months last year, continuity is now imperative. Keegan should remain in post until the next election. And Labour should commit to continuity too. Should it form a government, the current education team must make a running start – and have time to deliver the changes needed.

Most read online this week:

- 1 [Ofsted lauds free school that posted controversial job advert](#)
- 2 [Burnout warning as school staff become ‘de facto social workers’](#)
- 3 [Exams: Some schools ‘unnecessarily’ doing too many ‘plan B’ tests](#)
- 4 [‘We cannot meet needs’: The plight of heads, in their own words](#)
- 5 [Senior policy adviser David Thomas leaves the DfE](#)

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INVESTIGATION: RECRUITMENT

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Schools offer £10k 'golden hellos' – but with a big catch

AMY WALKER
@AMYRWALKER

EXCLUSIVE

Schools are offering "golden hello" payments of up to £10,000 to attract teachers in shortage subjects – but only if they complete up to three years in the job.

The proportion of schools offering such recruitment and retention incentives fell from nearly one in 10 in 2018 to eight per cent in 2021, workforce census data shows.

But there seems to have been a recent spate of adverts for jobs advertising strings-attached golden hello payments.

And data from job search website Indeed for Schools Week shows education jobs offering sign-up bonuses increased from 0.1 per cent in April 2021 to one per cent this month.

However, the signing-on fees also have elements of "golden handcuff" payments – with staff only able to get the cash after completing up to three years in the job.

The Howard Academy Trust, which runs seven schools in Kent, has 15 live teaching roles being advertised with a £5,000 'golden hello'. They were first introduced last academic year.

However, just half of this would be paid on completion of a six-month probation, and the other half in September 2024 as a "retention incentive".

This is also "subject to the successful candidate remaining at the school for at least that next year".

Kyle Taylor, the trust's finance and operations director, said even though its schools have "very good reputations", they have had to change tactics.

"It's not that people don't want to work here ... but five years ago there was a lot more of a field to recruit from."

The payments are on offer for both national shortage subjects and those the schools have struggled to fill, including English, geography and PE.

"I think the reality for most teaching jobs, particularly in secondary school ... you're probably very lucky to get two quality applicants for a role," Taylor added.

As of Thursday, education jobs site TES was advertising 23 roles in English schools that included the phrase 'golden hello'. A further 229 roles included the phrase 'recruitment incentive'.

Examples include a £10,000 bonus across three



years for a class teacher at Osborne Primary School in Birmingham. Under the incentive, £2,000 is paid after year one, £2,000 after year two and £6,000 at the end of year three.

Others come with caveats such as asking for bonuses to be reimbursed if a teacher leaves within a certain timeframe.

The Hampstead School, in north London, launched a similar tactic last year, adding incentives to job adverts after initial rounds of recruitment had returned no candidates.

"It has had an impact in a small number of cases where we've used it," said headteacher Matthew Sadler, adding that the scheme was being kept "under review".

A job advert for a computing teacher at the school offers a five per cent "incentive" on their salary for a maximum of three years "because we recognise that great Computing and ICT teachers are in demand".

Some 36,262 state school teachers – 8.1 per cent – left the profession in 2021, a rise of 12.4 per cent on the previous year.

Among newly qualified teachers, the number who left within one year rose from 11.7 per cent in 2020, to 12.5 per cent in 2021.

Meanwhile, the government is predicted to recruit fewer than half of the required secondary school teachers this year – which would be the lowest since records began in 2010.

The government previously ran a "golden hello" scheme for priority subject teachers, however this ended in 2019.

More recently several retention payment schemes have been run to get the best new

teachers into the most deprived schools. The most recent scheme has been badged as a £3,000 "levelling up" premium.

Evidence suggests they have a positive impact on retention.

School teachers' pay and conditions allows for payments as an "incentive for the recruitment of new teachers and the retention in their service of existing teachers".

But John Howson, chairman of TeachVac, said this could force other schools to offer the same "or risk losing out".

He also added: "If most schools offer [incentives], it effectively becomes a salary increase for new staff and existing teachers might look to move school ... in order to receive a recruitment bonus."

There are also questions around affordability with teacher pay rises challenging tight budgets.

Taylor said his trust had cut a teacher recruitment service subscription to help fund the bonuses.

Sadler said the payments are affordable because they can cut out agency spend and interventions for pupils without specialist teacher who then fall behind.

Jack Worth, the National Foundation for Educational Research's (NFER) lead economist, said such bonuses are likely to attract applicants to individual schools. But he added: "I doubt such arrangements would have much of a system-wide impact, being at the small scale of a school or trust."

Jack Worth

Pilot planned for SEND teacher apprenticeship

AMY WALKER

@AMYRWALKER

EXCLUSIVE

The government's flagship teacher training provider will pilot a new SEND-specific course it hopes can help solve special school recruitment woes.

The National Institute of Teaching (NioT) will trial a primary postgraduate teacher apprenticeship (PGTA) in 14 London schools this autumn.

Trainee teachers are usually not obliged to spend any time in special schools. But the 14-month course will be completed in a special school, with a six-week placement in a mainstream setting.

If the scheme, supported by the Eden Academy Trust (EAT) which runs six special schools, is successful, it will be rolled out nationally next September.

It comes as special schools are bearing the brunt of the recruitment crisis – with nearly three times more teaching posts filled by temporary workers than in the mainstream.

The government's SEND reforms also hinge on mainstream schools becoming more inclusive.

But an Ofsted review on professional development this week found 'teaching students with SEND' was top of teachers' wish list for more training.

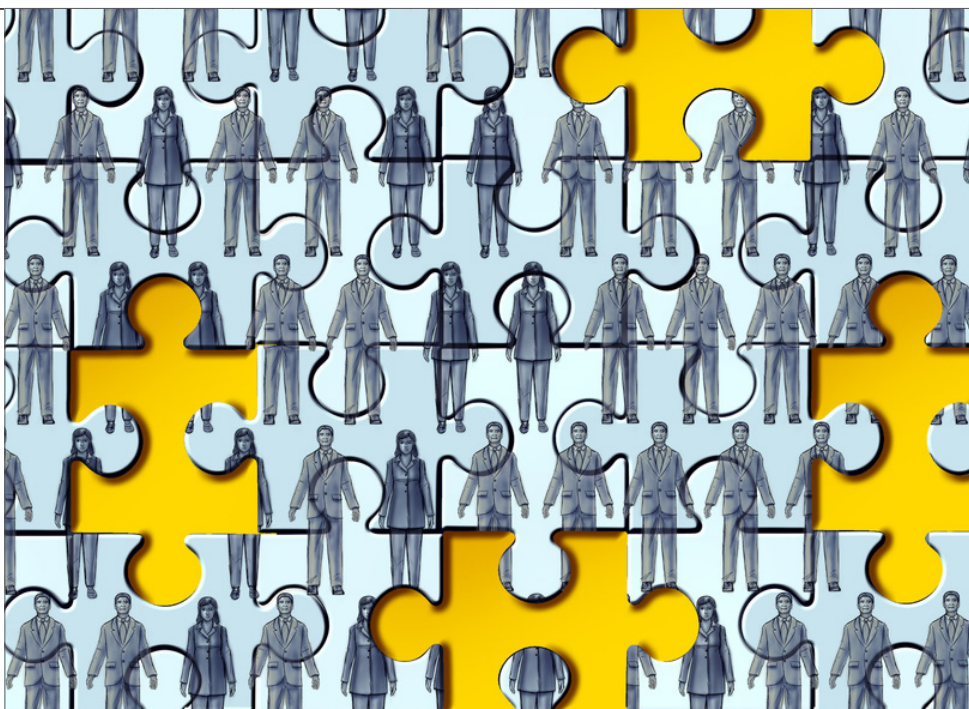
Reuben Moore, executive director of programmes for the NioT, said: "This is a small pilot programme that could make a big difference in giving trainee teachers the tools they need to support children with special educational needs and disabilities to flourish.

"The SEND sector is understaffed and there is demand for this type of training. If the pilot is successful, it could be an additional, focused, recruitment stream for special schools and can give trainees in mainstream schools a stronger foundation in SEND training."

Around 14 participants will take part in the PGTA, with additional training taking place in core skills for children with mild learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties.

This includes communication development, social and emotional learning for pre-language learners, as well as a focus on very early maths and very early literacy.

Moore said while the core content on current



initial teacher training (ITT) courses "is relevant for all of those who are becoming teachers ... there's also specialist learning that those working in special need to really understand."

"It's a really good idea," said government adviser and director of Sheffield Institute of Education, Professor Sam Twistleton.

"It's definitely fulfilling a need that's there...in terms of a pipeline of early career teachers going straight into special schools who need that proper foundation. Now, there isn't technically a route."

She warned that there were reservations in the sector that a SEND-specific route could create a "ghettoising of special schools", but that NioT's route would offer the "best of both worlds" because teachers would also be qualified to work in mainstream schools.

It is understood that while some individual trainers offer courses with placements within special schools, no such dedicated route currently exists.

Schools Week asked the DfE for the number of initial teacher training (ITT) entrants that have been recruited to courses with a SEND specialism in the past five years, but it did not hold the data.

Susan Douglas, Eden Academy Trust chief executive, added: "Ensuring all teachers enter their career with considerable SEND knowledge can only be a positive thing for mainstream and special schools alike."

NioT currently has six campuses throughout the

country, and several associate colleges. Moore said that given its national infrastructure, "we have the opportunity – if the demand is there – to have groups within each campus".

"We think there's going to be uptake for this and we have real interest from the schools and we're really glad to be working with such great experts."

A Schools Week investigation in January found that for every 1,000 teacher posts in special schools, 13 were filled by a temporary staff member (1.3 per cent) in 2021. This compares with five in 1,000 (0.5 per cent) across all state-funded schools.

Meanwhile, six in every 1,000 teacher posts within the specialist sector was vacant, compared with three in every 1,000 across state schools.

There has also been a 50 per cent rise in pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) since 2015.

Approximately 1.5 million pupils in England – 16.5 per cent – have SEND, the vast majority of whom attend mainstream schools.

However, there could be potential barriers with rolling out the course for secondary teachers where at least one subject must be identified as the specialism for the qualification. But the course may solve other problems.

Schools will be able to use apprenticeship levy cash – which they many have struggled to use up for consecutive years – to fund the training.

Primaries form academy trusts as council support dwindles

JACK DYSON

@JACKDYDS

EXCLUSIVE

Shrinking council support has prompted primary schools to band together and launch academy trusts, as experts warn local authorities are reaching a “tipping point”.

Prospective chains with as many as 13 schools have cited “diminishing” town hall help as a factor in their moves to academise, *Schools Week* analysis has found.

A consultant who works on conversions also said maintained schools had opted to shop around for support from existing trusts – rather than local authorities – leaving them feeling like academies in all but name.

Jeff Marshall added many maintained schools had been left wondering “what’s the point of being with a local authority if they don’t offer the support we need?”

“The reason up and down the country for most of the MAT applications is because support from local authorities has diminished over the years.”

Marshall is working on the launch of six-school chain The Link Education Trust in Salford, which was given the green light by the Department for Education last month.

He said the primaries decided to make the switch because they were already “finding their own school improvement support outside their authority”.

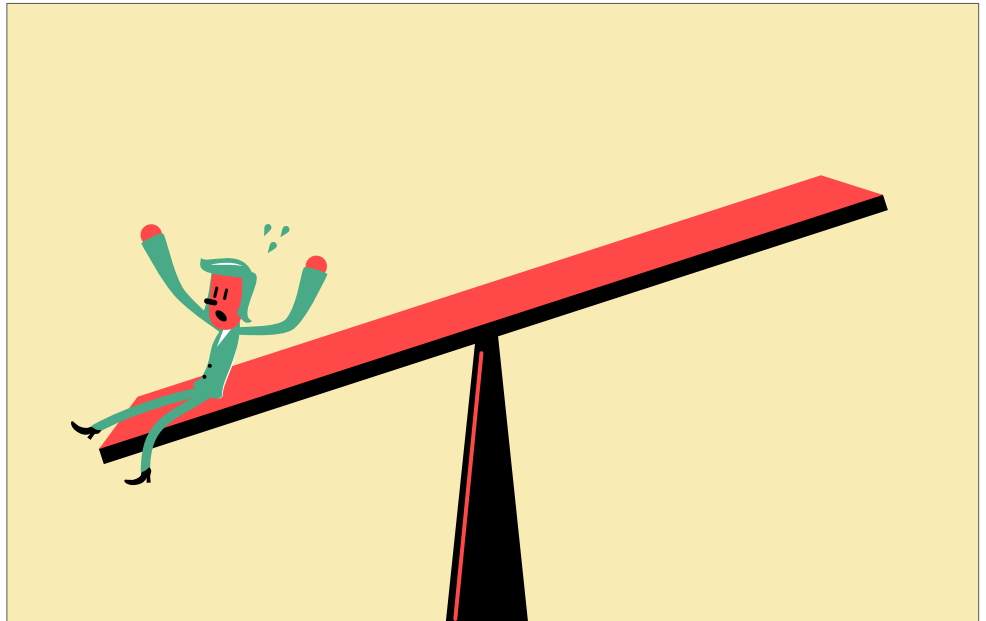
In consultation documents sent to parents, the 13 schools looking to launch the trust in South Gloucestershire noted the council “is significantly reduced in its capacity”.

Meanwhile, the Collective Learning Partnership, which consists of six primaries in Bury, told parents it felt it needed to academise partly because of the authority’s “diminishing” services and provision.

Between 22 per cent and 37.5 per cent of schools in Salford, South Gloucestershire and Bury are academies. The figure stands at 48 per cent nationwide.

Marshall said council officials had told him it was “game over” once two-fifths of a district’s schools convert. The “authority then changes its relationship with institutions to one of a client-service provider”.

Former national schools commissioner Sir David Carter believes councils across the country



have reached a “tipping point”.

“There was a sense following the government’s release of the schools white paper last March that local authorities were saying to schools ‘we just don’t have the staff capacity to support school improvement beyond our statutory responsibilities’.

“Certainly, some schools have been thinking about joining a strong trust because of this and that is a sensible and proactive way to respond to this.”

Responding to the claims made by The Leaf Trust, a South Gloucestershire Council spokesperson insisted “we have not made any significant changes to our capacity to support schools in recent years”.

“We are working closely with all schools: primary and secondary; urban and rural; large and small, to understand their preference to convert to academy or remain LA-maintained. We do not have concerns about the ability of any particular sort of school to be able to access the support required.”

The spokesperson also said the authority does “not receive any financial assistance from the DfE to create the capacity required” to fulfil its legal duty to enable conversion.

Marshall added that councils have lost large numbers of staff “through no fault of their own”, leaving maintained schools buying

support in from existing trusts.

For instance, in Stourbridge, Fairhaven Primary has been working with St Bartholomew’s CE Multi-Academy Trust “on school improvement”. It is expected to join the MAT in the summer.

It is understood six schools in the north-west forked out £80,000 between them for council HR advice. But they expect to pay half the price from an alternative provider.

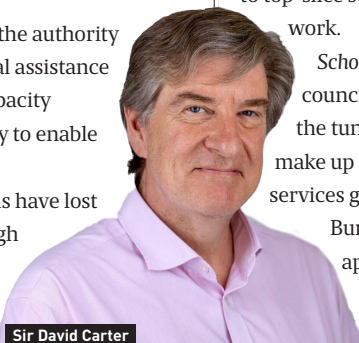
Marshall added that the cost of service-level agreements, which detail the services councils provide to schools, had “gone up while the quality has gone down”.

“I’m working with a five-school group in the Midlands, who are in the early stages of academisation. They’re saying ‘we’ve been finding our own SLAs for years because the authority just don’t have the facilities to support us’.”

The £50 million-a-year government grant for local authority school improvement activities was scrapped this year, with councils expected to top-slice school budgets instead to fund such work.

Schools Week also revealed in 2019 how councils were raiding school budgets to the tune of tens of millions of pounds to make up for the scrapping of the education services grant, which was slashed in 2017.

Bury and Salford Councils were approached for comment.



Sir David Carter

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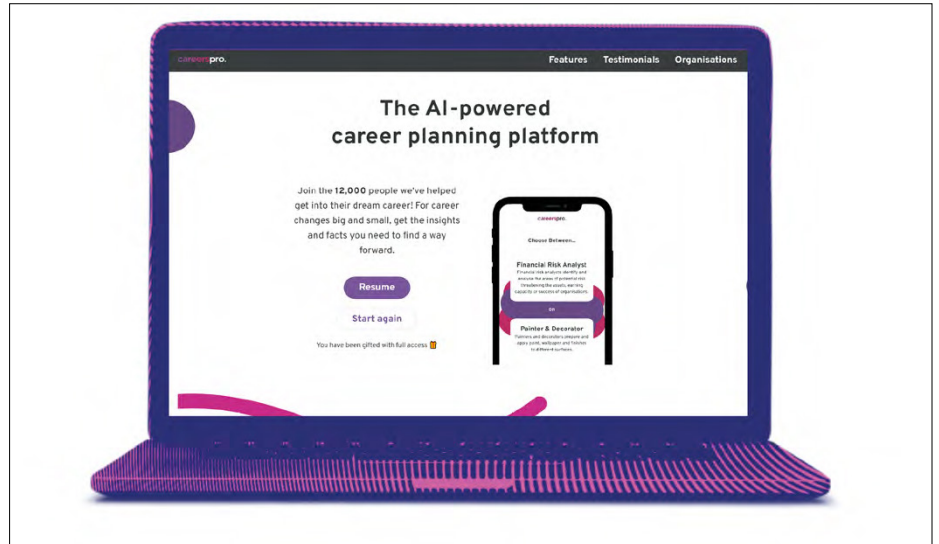
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New SEND inspections, but usual failings flagged

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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“Inconsistent” outcomes, and long waits for services for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, have been criticised in the first inspections published under Ofsted’s new framework.

The watchdog has published reports following joint area SEND inspections in Cornwall and Warrington in February this year. The new regime, carried out with the Care Quality Commission, came into effect in January.

Council areas are now given one of three ratings. Cornwall and Warrington achieved a middle rating. It means inspectors found their arrangements “lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes”.

Each will face another full inspection in around three years.

More than two thirds of councils inspected under the old framework in 2021-22 had “significant weaknesses” – the worst record since the watchdog started visits six years ago.

Reports highlight EHCP delays

In Cornwall, inspectors found the experiences of school-age children with SEND were “not consistently positive”, sometimes due to a “lack of clear information” about services.

Unlike services for younger and older pupils, those for five to 16-year-olds “do not consistently meet children and young people’s needs in a timely way”.

Some common themes emerged across both inspection reports, particularly in relation to delays in accessing services and assessments.

Although many children in Cornwall had their initial needs assessed “in a timely way”, delays in the annual review process for education, health and care plans (EHCPs) were “too frequent”.

This “results in plans not fully reflecting the changing needs of children and young people”. Leaders are “improving oversight in this area, but this needs accelerating”.

The High Court ruled last year that children with special needs should not have to wait more than three months for changes to their care plans.

Waiting times to access mental health services have been “reduced significantly”, though some children “still wait too long for speech and



language therapy”.

But progress in reducing waiting times for neuro-development assessment has “not been successful”.

This means “some children and young people are not able to access support when they most need it”.

Children waiting for a specialist placement are “not in education that best meets their needs and are not receiving the specialist help they need”.

The report also found planning for children with more complex needs was “not consistent”.

“As a result, some children and young people with complex needs do not get the right support at the right time.”

Kate Evan-Hughes, the council’s service director for education and community health, said she was “pleased that the inspectors recognised the strong partnership working” in the region.

However, she said the council “recognise that there is always more that can be done to ensure the quality of service is consistent across all areas and ages”. Improvements are underway.

‘Children wait too long for health services’

In Warrington, inspectors found some children and young people “wait too long to be assessed for health services”.

This included assessments from the speech, language and communication therapy service, mental health services and the neurodevelopmental pathway.

A *Schools Week* investigation revealed last year how thousands of children across the country are stuck on waiting lists for expert mental health help.

Warrington’s leaders have introduced “support and guidance” while children wait for services, but “some needs escalate” continue to wait for help.

The increased demand of EHCP assessments “outstrips some services, such as the educational psychology services’ capacity to complete their reports in a timely manner”.

These impacts “negatively” on the number of EHCPs completed within 20-weeks, meaning children’s needs are not met “quickly enough”.

Government research in 2019 found more than 90 per cent of local authority principal educational psychologists experienced more demand for their services than they are currently able to meet.

Inspectors also found a backlog of annual reviews, though the area “has plans in place to complete all outstanding annual reviews by the end of the academic year”.

“However, this means that these EHC plans do not recognise children’s and young people’s changing needs.”

Leaders are “aware of the future demands on their services” but they “have not secured sufficient resources, particularly workforce and educational places, to meet the current and future increase in demands across services”.

Sarah Hall, Warrington’s cabinet member for children’s services, said the report highlighted “some of the good work our local area partnership is doing to make a difference to the lives of children and young people with SEND”.

But she said they would “also fully take on board the areas of improvement highlighted in the report”.

NEWS

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Ofsted calls on GPs to help in the fight against school absence

AMY WALKER
@AMYRWALKER

Ofsted wants GPs and pharmacies to help schools combat an "overly risk-averse approach" from parents to "keeping children out of school" amid stubbornly high absence rates.

The watchdog told the Education Committee's persistent absence and support for disadvantaged pupils inquiry that schools were still facing many of the "new challenges" to attendance following the pandemic.

This included a "propensity" among parents "to keep children home for any illness", as well as keeping children off school "unnecessarily because of proximity to Covid".

"These factors ... have blurred the boundary of what level of intervention is needed for absence," Ofsted said in evidence submitted in February and published on Tuesday.

"An important conversation needs to be had, including with the medical profession (especially GPs and pharmacies), about how to help parents get the right perspective and balance, and



avoid an overly risk-averse approach to keeping children out of school."

MPs launched an inquiry to investigate absence from school and support for disadvantaged pupils back in January.

Official statistics show persistent absenteeism soared in the wake of the pandemic.

In the years before Covid, school absence hovered around 4.7 per cent. But it rose to 7.5 per cent last year, according to Department for Education (DfE) data.

Persistent absenteeism – where pupils miss 10 per cent or more classes – has more than doubled, rising from 10.9 per cent in 2018-19, to 22.5 per cent last year.

In research on tackling the issue last year, Ofsted outlined what it defined as new challenges that emerged from autumn 2021, the first full school year after lockdowns.

This included higher-than-usual numbers of pupils with non-Covid-related illnesses and parents keeping children home unnecessarily because of proximity to Covid, such as a relative testing positive.

Ofsted said in its evidence that since such issues emerged, it had seen "several successful strategies" to tackle them by schools.

These included "communicating" high expectations for attendance to families, reassuring anxious parents, and providing practical help such as arranging transport.

Rising rates of persistent absence have been blamed on a range of factors.

They include more relaxed attitudes among parents since lockdowns, worsening mental health among children, and the cost-of-living crisis, with some families unable to pay for lunches and daily bus fares.

The DfE is currently setting up new "sector-led" school attendance hubs to offer free support on absence.

It follows a pilot hub launched last year which it said saw "some participating schools achieve significant reductions in their absence and persistent absence rates".

JACK DYSON | @JACKDYDS

Parent power forces MAT takeover rethink

Parent power has pushed back plans to academise Sheffield's last local authority-maintained secondary, but sparked inequality concerns over schools without such well-educated parents.

Yorkshire and Humber regional director Alison Wilson has deferred a decision for the Brigantia Learning Trust to take over King Edward VII School (KES).

Education chiefs wanted the chain to take over KES – which calls itself one of the "most prestigious" secondaries in the city – following its 'inadequate' Ofsted in September.

But the proposal was only spotted when education professor Mark Boylan, whose daughter Sophia attends the school, stumbled upon an online copy of the regional advisory board meeting's agenda a week before it took place.

Parents who challenged the decision said this left them with just three days to make their views known. They also claimed KES was not made aware until this point.

"It's not right that parents who've got the resources of various types – among us are journalists, campaigners and lawyers – got the decision deferred," Boylan said.

"Whereas parents in other places may be none the wiser, and not even know there's an agenda or that they can make a representation. There's inequity to the decision-making process."

Wilson decided to push the decision back to June or July "to allow further analysis to be carried out, comparing a number of suitable multi-academy trusts, including Brigantia".

KES headteacher Linda Godden stated in a letter the regional director had "looked at all the communications she received from the school, parents, carers and external parties" ahead of the meeting.

Two of Brigantia's five schools are classed as "coasting", as they received two less-than-good Ofsteds in a row.

The government gave itself powers last year to move primaries and secondaries struggling to move out of 'requires improvement' into

alternative trusts – but opponents claimed KES's proposed move flew in the face of the crackdown.

"If you are voluntarily academised, parents get consulted, but as soon as it's forced academisation, they're not," Boylan added.

"Beyond this particular example, there's a general issue with the lack of transparency, lack of involvement of schools – it's just rubbish."

A Brigantia spokesperson said "clarification" of what was discussed at the advisory board meeting "will be communicated as and when we are able to share this information".

The Department for Education stressed KES "as with any school that receives an overall judgement of 'inadequate', will become an academy and be transferred to a strong trust".

A spokesperson added further analysis will "ensure the school is transferred to the most appropriate trust with a strong track record of ensuring pupils receive the highest standard of education – while retaining its historic ethos."

The spokesperson did not respond when asked why analysis was not done prior to the meeting.

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Third key DfE policy adviser jumps ships

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Gillian Keegan will lose a third key policy adviser this summer after long-serving government aide Dr Tim Leunig announced plans to join a think tank.

The former Department for Education chief scientific adviser, who has been back at the department part-time since January, announced this week he will join Public First.

It comes after *Schools Week* revealed that David Thomas, a senior adviser on schools policy, left the department last week to run a fledgling maths charity founded by a finance billionaire.

Patrick Spencer, who advised Keegan on social care, left the DfE at the end of April and is now director of The Jobs Foundation. It means three of four senior policy advisers to the education secretary have either left or announced plans to leave.

Nigel Thomas, who covers further education and skills policy and splits his time between the department and the Gatsby Foundation, remains in post.

This all comes as the DfE is moving forward with key reforms, including its academies regulatory and commissioning review, its SEND improvement plan, and its response to the MacAlister review of children's social care.

Earlier this year, *Schools Week* reported that Indra Morris, a senior civil servant overseeing the SEND review, is leaving just as



Dr Tim Leunig

implementation of the long-awaited reforms begin. Andrew McCully, the DfE's director-general for schools, retired in March.

Leunig joined the DfE as a policy adviser in 2012, becoming its chief scientific adviser and analyst in 2014. He left in 2017 to advise the environment department, before returning to the DfE as an expert adviser between 2018 and 2019.

After three years at the Treasury he joined the Department of Health and Social Care last July. Since January, he has split his time between health, education, environment, and the levelling-up department.

Leunig said "working in the centre of government is a huge privilege, but it is time to move on".

"I am grateful to all my civil service colleagues, and the ministers that we have worked for over the last 12 years."

It is understood that both Leunig and Thomas had to have their appointments signed off by the government's Advisory Committee on Business

Appointments (Acoba), which considers whether jobs for former ministers and senior civil servants meet appointment rules.

Thomas, a co-founder of the Oak National Academy, left the department to become chief executive of Mathematics Education for Social Mobility and Excellence (MESME).

The charity aims to help double the number of PhD students in the mathematical sciences at a UK university by 2035. It was founded by Alex Gerko, a Russian-born financial trader who was named as the UK's largest taxpayer this year – contributing an estimated near £500 million.

A job advert for Thomas's replacement at the DfE offered an £80,000 salary and the opportunity to "work on the development and delivery of the government's flagship policies".

"This role has a particular focus on schools and including the school system, school improvement, multi-academy trusts, funding and accountability, literacy and numeracy, attendance and edtech."

Leunig's appointment at Public First adds to the think tank's slate of former government education advisers. Founder Rachel Wolf and head of education Jonathan Simons both worked in Downing Street, while co-founder James Frayne was head of communications at the DfE.

A DfE spokesperson said Keegan was "grateful for the dedication and expertise her senior policy advisors continue to bring to the department and wishes those leaving the Civil Service the very best in their future endeavours".

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOTH

Government admits students may take too many 'plan B' tests

Some schools are "unnecessarily" getting students to take too many tests as part of "plan B" exams preparation, the government has admitted.

The Department for Education and Ofqual have issued draft guidance on how schools should collect teacher assessed grades (TAGs) evidence as part of "long-term resilience arrangements" for exams from 2024 onwards.

While cancellation of GCSE and A-level exams nationwide is "unlikely", they said it "remains good public policy to have contingency arrangements".

Schools are currently collecting students' performance evidence for the third year in a row, just in case exams cannot be taken this year, after heavy disruption during the

pandemic.

In the guidance, the government said it has seen "some examples of schools introducing additional assessments for the purpose of gathering evidence of student performance, which we consider to be unnecessary and counter to supporting students as they prepare for their exams".

They added a "small number" of schools and colleges "created a large number of new and additional mock exams and assessments" this year.

The new guidance states that one full set of mock exams sat in exam conditions is "likely to provide sufficient evidence" for TAGs. There is "no need" to complete multiple mock sets for evidence, they said.

This year they stopped short of repeating advice on the frequency of testing after previously saying a "sensible approach" would be to test once a term.

The rest of the proposals are similar to the guidance in place for this summer.

For example, teachers should plan so that the gathered evidence assessed pupils "on a wide range of content". Students should also be told if tests they are taking will form evidence for TAGs.

Half of schools consulted last year said the plans would increase workload. While some students found the plans "beneficial", others felt "greater anxiety", Ofqual added.

A consultation on the guidance runs until August 2.

Be clearer about 'fully-funded' pay claim, watchdog tells DfE

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The government's claim its teacher pay deal is "fully-funded" on a national level is backed up by evidence, but ministers must be more transparent about affordability for individual schools, the statistics watchdog has ruled.

The Department for Education has agreed to publish more information on high needs funding in future school costs analysis after intervention from the Office for Statistics Regulation. The national figures used by ministers mask greater financial difficulty in special schools.

Officials referred themselves to the watchdog over their claim that the pay offer of £1,000 this year and 4.3 per cent rises for most teachers next year is fully-funded. The National Education Union also complained about the claim.

The OSR ruled on Wednesday that although it was "not within our remit to judge the affordability of any pay offer", the DfE "has evidenced its claim that the offer is fully funded in line with its definition".

But director-general Ed Humpherson acknowledged "some users may interpret fully funded to refer to the individual school level".

Government was criticised that its evidence on affordability looked only at an average across the school system, masking problems for individual schools.

"In the light of this difference of interpretation, it is important that the Department for Education continues to support understanding by being clear about its use of the term fully funded," Humpherson said.

He urged the government to "consider including more information on high needs funding. Users made us aware that they would benefit from more detailed information on the estimates of the size of high needs funding and we welcome the DfE's commitment to publish this in future."

To "enhance transparency", he also urged the DfE to "consider including its definition of fully funded" in future analysis.

'Schools are not funded on a national average'

The NEU's complaint to the OSR warned education secretary Gillian Keegan had "given an assurance that is not reasonably supported" by the evidence in a school costs technical note and a blog post for headteachers on March 28.



It pointed to a broadcast interview in which the education secretary claimed the pay rise would not cut into school services.

The complaint also warned of a lack of estimates for high needs funding, the use of unpublished internal modelling on teacher number projections and a lack of per-pupil price inflation figures.

The OSR said in response that the DfE had committed to sharing high needs funding details in future, that published teacher number projections had since been updated and it was not yet "possible" to calculate per-pupil price inflation for 2023-24.

NEU claimed the government "has had to accept that it failed to provide the adequate information" in evidence presented to school leaders.

Joint general secretary Kevin Courtney said Keegan "should learn from this adjudication, that she should not be using national-level costing to tell individual schools what they can or cannot afford".

"Schools are not funded on a national average. The majority of schools will not be able to afford even a 4.5 per cent pay rise without making cuts to provision."

But a DfE spokesperson said it had "made a pay offer to unions that was fair, reasonable, and recognised teachers' hard work".

"As per our published calculations, the pay offer would also have been fully funded, and we welcome the OSR's recognition that we have communicated this transparently."

DfE analysis 'clearly sourced'

The OSR said it was "not within our remit to judge the affordability of any pay offer", but had "considered the clarity of the

publicly available information on this topic".

Humpherson said the DfE had published a "considerable amount of information on the pay offer".

The technical note, which was published before the revised offer was made to unions, set out "analysis of cost increases that mainstream schools are expected to face and how this has been considered in determining the pay offer".

It concluded that a 3.5 per cent average rise originally proposed by the DfE before negotiations would be "affordable" for schools from their current budgets given extra funding announced at the autumn statement.

Humpherson said the analysis was "clearly sourced throughout in the footnotes and in the annex. In addition, there is a dedicated section on 'data quality, limitations of analysis and key assumptions'".

After the note was published, the DfE revised its offer, and pledged £620 million of extra funding which it said – along with lower-than-expected energy cost rises – would make the new offer affordable.

Humpherson also pointed out the DfE had acknowledged in its evidence to the School

Teachers' Review Body that "as schools have different budgetary pressures, not all schools will experience the additional expenditure represented in the national average estimates".

This is "reiterated" in the technical note, where the data quality information states "the cost increases presented are

averages across all schools in England and should not be read as pertaining to individual schools".



Ed Humpherson

NEWS

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Sick children win right to get their grades

SAMANTHA BOOTH
@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Critically ill teenagers who can't sit exams can now receive GCSE and A-level grades, following a year-long campaign against "deeply unfair" policies.

Schools Week helped expose last year how children with life-threatening illnesses or devastating injuries from accidents had to struggle through exams to get a grade.

More families caught in the same position this year launched a 6,000-strong petition calling for students to get teachers' grades, which were used during the pandemic when national tests were cancelled.

Exam boards told parents last year that children undergoing cancer treatment had to sit at least one exam to qualify for special consideration.

But this week, updated guidance has clarified that in "rare and exceptional circumstances" a grade "may" be available.

Where a school cannot identify additional reasonable adjustments – such as extra time or sitting tests in hospital – an exam board could determine each case on an individual basis.

The Joint Council for Qualifications guidance adds that a board "may be able to determine grades using suitable alternative assessment evidence".

But the candidate must be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, and the school "must" have medical evidence to confirm this.

Campaigners and MPs welcomed the change, but urged ministers to communicate it more widely.

Caroline Ansell, the Eastbourne MP who pushed the government for answers, said the "system is moving in the right direction" after the "deeply unfair" situation.

But Cath Kitchen, chief executive of the National Association for Hospital Education, said while the guidance is "really helpful", she "feels that it falls short of reassuring" families that they will definitely get a grade if they are too unwell to sit exams.

It also emerged that while



Caroline Ansell

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INVESTIGATION

Why are our sick children forced to sit exams?

Parents say critically ill pupils should be eligible for teacher assessed grades. Instead they are told they must sit exams, often days after extended stays in hospital. Samantha Booth reports

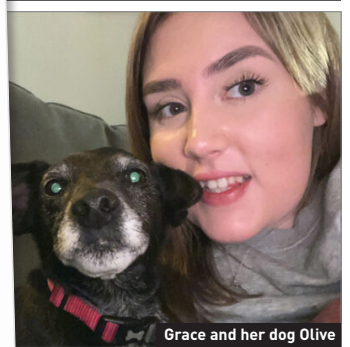
SAMANTHA BOOTH
@SAMANTHAJBOTH

Parents of critically ill teenagers who had to sit GCSEs days after major surgery or chemotherapy are demanding schools are allowed to give "tried and tested" teacher assessed grades (TAGs) instead. Schools Week has spoken to three families whose year 11 children since March have developed life-threatening illnesses or been involved in devastating accidents. All had to struggle through some exams - despite finishing their courses - as exam board guidance says pupils must complete some assessments to get a grade. Reforms introduced by Michael Gove mean fewer subjects include coursework so are solely reliant on summer exams. More than 170,000 people are now backing a petition calling for "fair" TAGs to be awarded to prevent sick teenagers being 'penalised'. Parents say schools have the evidence they need as they have spent hours internally assessing pupils' abilities in case the pandemic forced exams to be cancelled. Advisers to the exams regulator Ofqual also



"In hospital she should be concentrating on getting better, not sitting an exam"

been 'fully prepared' and covered the whole course. The pandemic also allows awarding... is year to go... if eligib... was unwell, but JCQ guidance said this had



Grace and her dog Olive

GCSE papers despite being diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia months earlier.

Her mum Emma said on results day Grace "broke down" in the school car park seeing "everyone cheering and celebrating" at Northallerton High School.

But the exam boards, including AQA, decided to give her a full suite of grades – including an 8 in English literature and four grade 7s.

It's not clear when this decision was made, but Emma said her daughter's "GCSE results meant so much to her".

Grace died just two months later.

The row resurfaced again this year when 16-year-old Lara Kyprianou-Hickman from Eastbourne, who was undergoing chemotherapy after being diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma cancer, was told she had to sit exams or would only get a "certificate of recognition", it was reported.

Ansell told MPs Lara will now be awarded GCSE grades based on coursework, mocks and teacher assessment.

Gibb said families who "find themselves in difficult situations" before exams should contact exam boards directly.

A JCQ spokesperson said: "Our primary focus is to put arrangements in place to help disabled students take assessments. We also consider reasonable adjustments that schools and colleges suggest to us for individual students that are new or not highlighted in our documents.

"We keep our approach to students with disabilities under regular review to look for ways to support them and review each individual application on a case-by-case basis."

"hundreds" of sick children got grades from the exam boards in 2022, there are concerns for those that may have missed out.

Ansell told MPs how, during the campaign, Ofqual claimed existing equalities legislation allows for the awarding of grades if schools provide "suitable evidence".

The exams regulator told her "several hundred students" were awarded grades that way last year.

But Ansell told a Westminster Hall debate she fears thousands may have "been overlooked and disenfranchised because their school did not recognise the signposting in the guidance last year".

Responding in the debate, schools minister Nick Gibb said he is "pleased" boards have now put in place a "clear process that allows students with a disability that prevents them taking their scheduled exams" after "all the hard work they put in during their studies".

He said senior examiners will use robust evidence – which is being collected this year by schools under new contingency arrangements – to determine grades.

JCQ has shared the guidance with schools and government will look at promoting the document, he added.

Last year, Schools Week reported how 16-year-old Grace Sanderson, from North Yorkshire, managed to sit two

NEWS: RESEARCH

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More school 'cold spots' predicted as pupil rolls fall

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Tens of thousands of pupils live at least 10 kilometres from their nearest mainstream secondary school, and more are likely to end up in these "cold spots" as falling rolls drive closures.

Analysis by SchoolDash found 20,198 pupils in 143 neighbourhoods of England had no non-selective state secondary school within 10 kilometres of their home. The average catchment area of a secondary school is around four kilometres, the organisation said.

Researchers looked at distances from school in around 34,000 so-called "lower layer super output areas" – each equating to a small village or group of streets in a town. Grammar and private schools were excluded from the calculation, because they are not accessible to all pupils.

If faith schools are also excluded the problem gets worse – affecting around 32,000 pupils in 228 areas. If schools rated less than 'good' are also excluded, the number of pupils living in areas without a secondary school within 10 kilometres rises to 75,000.

In a blog post, SchoolDash founder Timo



Hannay warned that the "situation seems, if anything, likely to get worse in the coming years because school enrolments are falling, driven mainly by declining birth rates".

Pupil numbers in England's schools are predicted to shrink by 12 per cent over the next 10 years, after the government revised down its predictions in the face of "notably lower birth projections".

This "ultimately results in schools downsizing or even closing", Hannay said.

"The ever-smaller cohorts have been working their way through primary schools and are now moving into secondary schools too. There is no sign so far of these long-term demographic trends abating.

"Importantly, they do not affect all schools equally. For example, enrolments at smaller schools and those with lower Ofsted ratings have tended to fall faster than elsewhere. Furthermore, there has been considerable regional variation in changes to overall school capacity."

Hannay said trends "may well reflect differences in local demand, but it's also possible that they don't".

He pointed to the free schools programme – the only mechanism for opening mainstream schools – which he said had "tended to favour places like London, where people who have the wherewithal to set up new schools are disproportionately located even though existing provision is generally good".

Cold spots identified by SchoolDash include areas of the Isle of Wight, Salisbury in Wiltshire, Ilfracombe in north Devon, Cranbrook in Kent, Ludlow in Shropshire, Southwold in Suffolk, Market Rasen in Lincolnshire, Kents Bank in Cumbria, and Haltwhistle in Northumberland.

JACK DYSON | @JACKDYDYS

Maths to 18? Maybe resolve primary issues first

Primary school children are still struggling to catch up on maths in the wake of Covid, a study has found.

Education Policy Institute bosses said their latest research with Renaissance Learning into education recovery should act as a "wake-up call" to the government, as they warned more needs to be done to tackle pandemic learning loss.

The latest report found the gap in reading outcomes between the most and least disadvantaged primaries is about six per cent wider than when the virus broke out.

And in maths youngsters aged between four and 11 are said to be about five weeks behind expectations prior to the outbreak of the disease more than three years ago.

EPI head of analysis Jon Andrews said "it is clear the effects of Covid are still being felt" in the classroom.

"There is a risk that government focus on education recovery is waning, and this analysis is a wake-up call that there is still much work to be done.

"The prime minister has set out a bold ambition for all young people to study maths up to age 18. There are many obstacles to meeting that, and this analysis highlights that among them is the fact younger children have fallen behind in their maths because of the pandemic."

The study did, though, find "outcomes in reading appear to have recovered for most year groups". EPI said this was consistent with national curriculum assessments at the end of

key stage 2 last spring.

But the gap in reading outcomes between primary schools "with high and low levels of disadvantage is equivalent to about 12.3 months of learning". The figure stood at 11.7 months before the first lockdown.

The authors of the document said it will be "the first in a series of reports that will be produced over the coming year as we ensure policy makers have access to robust data" on pupil performance.

This comes after a government-backed project run by Renaissance and the EPI in October 2021 found there was "notable catch-up" for primary-aged pupils in reading.

The Department for Education was approached for comment.

School staff becoming an 'unofficial branch of social services'

AMY WALKER
@AMYRWALKER

Most school staff are working at least four extra hours a week to provide additional support to pupils, amid warnings they are now the “de facto and unofficial branch of social and healthcare services”.

A report from wellbeing service Education Support shows a quarter of leaders, teachers and support staff said additional responsibilities were adding, on average, between four to six hours onto their working week.

Another 15 per cent of staff said they were spending an extra seven to 10 hours a week providing services, including emotional and wellbeing support for children.

A Schools Week investigation last week revealed the widespread scale of the collapse in support services feeding into schools.

It found health services are creaking as demand for mental health intervention among children and teenagers spikes, while soaring numbers of pupils requiring additional support has left the SEND system unable to cope.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of leaders' union ASCL, said staff had become the “de facto and unofficial branch of social and healthcare services”.

But “without the training, capacity or resources to discharge such responsibilities” it places staff under “intolerable workload and stress, and this situation is not nearly good enough for children and young people who need dedicated and specialist support”.

Teachers prepare meals and clean clothes for kids

The most common additional responsibilities cited by school staff included offering pupils and colleagues emotional support (62 and 50 per cent respectively) and dealing with difficult pupil behaviour (62 per cent).

Figures were taken from a poll of 3,082 people by Education Support and YouGov in June and July last year.

In a separate survey of more than 1,000 secondary teachers undertaken by the charity in October, nearly three-quarters (74 per cent) said they were regularly helping pupils with non-academic matters.

Duties have also increased, with 72 per cent saying they were helping pupils with non-



academic matters more than they did five years ago. A third of teachers had helped pupils resolve a family conflict.

Alongside emotional support, teachers also reported helping their pupils with more practical issues.

More than a quarter (26 per cent) said they had prepared food for pupils when they didn't have any, and 41 per cent said they had bought supplies such as pens, paper and bags for pupils.

Another 13 per cent had cleaned clothes when needed for pupil, and 10 per cent said they had bought pupils parts of their school uniform.

Extra duties impact staff wellbeing

Nearly three-quarters of staff who responded to the YouGov survey said their extra duties have had a negative impact on their mental health.

The figure was higher for senior leaders, at 81 per cent.

Education Support's chief executive Sinead McBrearty warned if this continued “we will burnout a generation of talented and dedicated staff” and compound the current recruitment and retention crisis.

“The job that teachers are currently trained for does not match the daily reality of providing emotional and mental health support, resolving family conflict and providing food and clothes.”

Nearly two-fifths (39 per cent) of respondents said they did not feel prepared for supporting vulnerable pupils and their families, while 32 per cent did not feel prepared to deal with difficult behaviour.

Education Support recommended that initial teacher education and early career frameworks be updated to “reflect the new reality of life in schools”.

Recruitment strategies must reflect 'new reality'

In the same YouGov survey, two-thirds of school staff said public bodies such as CAHMS, social services and the NHS had been able to offer pupils either no or little support.

The report requested policymakers “decide whether schools are the front line of children's services” or not, adding: “The status quo is failing children and education staff.”

Either way, the charity argued that the government needed to ensure there was sufficient support in the system over the next five years for improvements.

This could include “supporting educators through ring-fenced funding for reflective practice or professional supervision for those in roles most at risk of emotional exhaustion”, such as SENCos and safeguarding leads.

It added that by “systemically addressing the drivers of poor wellbeing, a range of changes can be mapped and implemented to improve the attractiveness of the profession”.

Paul Whiteman, general secretary at leaders' union NAHT, said: “We cannot continue to expect school staff to continue to step in and fill the gaps created by the chronic underfunding of these vital services.”

A Department for Education spokesperson said they “recognise how hard teachers work to transform children's lives up and down the country and are listening to teachers about the issues that affect them most.”

Mental health support teams were now supporting thousands of schools and a £760,000 scheme provides counselling for school leaders, they added.



Geoff Barton

Opinion: Education support

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SINÉAD MC BREARTY

Chief executive,
Education Support

Time to decide if schools are education specialists or the front line of children’s services

Kids are inclined to think that a job in education seems like a stressful way to make a living when you grow up

Through my work at Education Support, I’ve had the privilege to speak to hundreds of people working in schools across the UK. I am also a parent to children in Year 7 and Year 5. In my personal life I am very clear: I want my kids to be taught by people who want to be teachers. I want those teachers to enjoy their jobs and step into my kids’ classrooms with energy, interest, and a belief that good teaching can change lives. I’m sure many of you, and those who run our country and education system, feel the same way.

Increasingly however, everybody’s kids are more likely to be taught by exhausted school and college staff. They’re more likely to find that there are gaps in subject specialisms as another Miss or Sir leaves their job. Kids are inclined to think that a job in education seems like a stressful way to make a living when you grow up.

One recently retired teacher who spoke to us for our latest report, said: “Teachers who are short and sharp don’t make classes fun...”

the fun has gone. I can’t begin to imagine the drudgery of education that kids experience now.”

I remember being slightly horrified in 2019 when a wise headteacher in Yorkshire told me that her son, a soldier, compared teaching to doing a military tour. It seemed to him that one could only

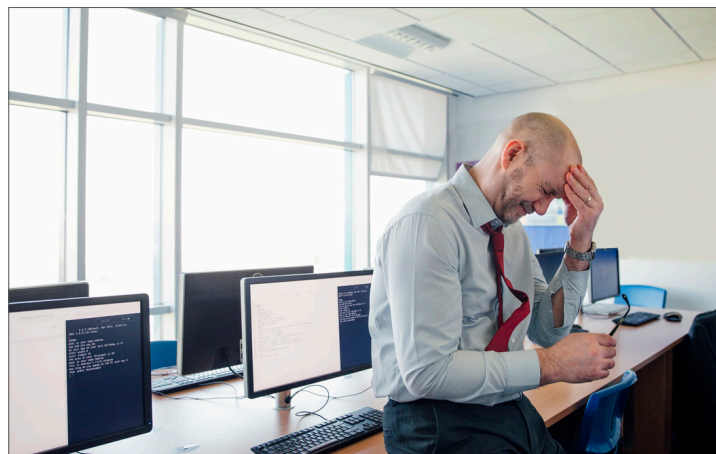
“ Kids are being taught by exhausted school and college staff

expect to do a teaching tour for five years and after that would need to find a new, civilian career.

Given the craft involved in teaching and the fact that our teachers are beginning to hit their stride after seven years in role, this is a painful and costly flaw in the system.

This is the context in which this generation of children and young people are being educated. A school system in which teachers are rung dry and the love of learning is lost as school staff struggle to meet the level of need in the system, and paper over the cracks of squeezed children’s services.

There has always been more to the job than ‘just’ teaching and learning – teachers and support



staff have long worked to be there for the ‘whole child’ – but our research signals that this has now crossed a line.

Post-pandemic, with everyday difficulties intensified by the cost-of-living crisis, children and young people need more from any available adult. The fact that

education staff are accessible ought not to make them the default front door for public services.

We ignore this at our peril.

As we point out in our report, it is time to decide whether schools are the front line of children’s services, or whether they are specialists in education.

The status quo is failing children and education staff. If we cannot provide this level of clarity, we should plan for increased attrition from and recruitment into the profession. The attractiveness of working in education is declining rapidly, due to the consequences of this lack of clarity

I’ve observed many focus groups with teachers and leaders this year. Time after time we heard

two simple refrains – “I love the teaching” and “there is so much else in the job that gets in the way of teaching.” We hear again and again that teachers just want to teach.

If we quietly change the role so that it becomes de-facto social work or counselling support, we will continue to watch talented professionals completing their tour and moving to alternative careers. If teachers wanted to become mental health professionals or social workers, I imagine they would have chosen those career paths.

I’m left thinking of another comment made by a teacher based outside the UK, during a recent research project. She said, “In our country, the only people who will teach are those who can’t find jobs anywhere else.”

Let’s not sleepwalk our way to such a dystopian outcome. We can make a different choice. This generation of children and young people has carried more than its fair share of challenge and loss.

They deserve a well-resourced school system that supports their healthy development, academic and vocational achievement, and nurtures the talent and ambition that our future requires.

SPEED READ: CPD

Ofsted finds mounting workloads blocking training reforms

Mounting teacher workloads are “getting in the way” of flagship government training and development reforms, interim findings of an Ofsted review into professional development found. Here’s what you need to know ...

1 REFORMS HIT WORKLOAD BARRIER

Ofsted surveyed 1,953 teachers and leaders in November and December 2021 via YouGov.

HMIs also carried out research visits to 44 primary and secondary schools in the 2022 spring and summer terms.

Most classroom teachers (87 per cent) reported workload pressures as a barrier to participating and engaging in training and development.

This was followed by the availability of staff to cover lessons (73 per cent), the cost to the school (68 per cent), and timetable conflicts (67 per cent).

In some cases, teachers said they were using a “significant amount of their own time” on professional development.

Meanwhile, smaller primary schools were found to see workloads as “especially overwhelming”, with middle leaders often also juggling teaching multiple subjects and managing responsibilities to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

2 TRAINING OFTEN POOR QUALITY

The report follows the introduction of the early career framework (ECF) in 2019 and new national professional qualifications (NPQs) in 2021.

Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman said: “Schools know that professional development is vital, so it’s disheartening to see poor quality training and workloads getting in the way.”

“The ECF and national professional qualifications (NPQs) are a positive development, but as we would expect with a new programme, there remains some work to do on its implementation.”

The report backs up findings from earlier studies, highlighting a particular worry around the workload of teachers to act as mentors to early career teachers (ECTs).

“As a consequence, some school leaders feared that these mentors might not carry out this role with future cohorts of ECTs due to the heavy additional workload it entails,” the report states.

3 REPETITIVE, LACKING RELEVANCE

More than half of respondents disagreed that they had been provided with relevant (53 per cent) or high-quality (54 per cent) training since April 2021.

Early career teachers (ECTs) highlighted the lack of flexibility in the programme, a “perception that course materials are irrelevant”, and the unavailability of mentors.

Teachers undertaking NPQs also mentioned that occasionally course content was “repetitive or lacked relevance”.

But the report insisted that such “teething problems” were “not uncommon when major new programmes are being rolled out”.

Teachers also told Ofsted that online courses during Covid were “increasingly boring and demotivating”.

4 LIMITED AWARENESS OF REFORMS

Classroom teachers also appeared to have limited awareness of the government’s reforms, with only 28 per cent saying they were “very aware”.

Just 43 per cent said they were “very aware” of the new early career framework. The comparative figures for leaders were better – at 54 per cent and 78 per cent respectively.

5 ‘PREPARING FOR INSPECTION’ COURSES CRITICISED

Respondents to the YouGov survey had typically received more training and development on knowledge of the curriculum (36 per cent) than any other topic.

“Given that the curriculum represents the substance of education, this is a welcome finding,” the report said.

But it added that in around half of schools visited by HMIs, “it was clear that the staff’s understanding of planning and designing a curriculum remained limited”.

In several cases, teachers had done courses “on preparing for inspection, such as practising deep dives or preparing curriculum intent statements, neither of which are about the substance of education”.

6 IMPACT OF WELLBEING FOCUS ‘UNCLEAR’

School visits also found teachers and leaders were using development time to focus on pupils’ mental health and other pastoral activities.

“This was so that they could better support pupils to re-engage in their learning following the pandemic,” the report said.

More than half of the schools visited said this was the most important aspect of teacher training for the 2021–22 academic year.

But the report stated: “It remains unclear, however, whether this is yet having an impact and how effectively schools are able to work with other bodies to address pupils’ wider personal, behavioural and social needs.”

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

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Profile
JESSICA HILL | @JESSJANEHILL

‘That’s the beauty of education. It opens the mind and leaves you thinking’

Wesley Davies was on the frontline as the MAT system emerged. He tells Jessica Hill how opening three schools from scratch taught him the importance of creating a compelling culture that caters for every one of his pupils

Most MAT chiefs are lucky if they get to open one free school in their lifetime. Wesley Davies has opened three, all of which are now rated ‘outstanding’.

Davies spent the first 20 years of his career at Dixons Academies Trust, where he got first-hand experience of the emergence of the modern MAT system. As well as being instrumental in the setting up of the three academies – Dixons Trinity, Dixons McMillan and Dixons Sixth Form – he was executive principal of the latter two, as well as Dixons Marchbank Primary.

It taught him how to build a school culture from scratch, and he is now using that

knowledge to expand and unite the Two Counties Trust, the nine-secondary MAT he leads in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

First day setback

Davies recalls “feeling nervous” on his first day at Two Counties, having spent 20 years with the same trust. And things did not go according to plan.

While meeting his executive team for the first time and excitedly unveiling his grand vision for the trust’s future, he got the call to say that all schools would be closing for another lockdown.

As a type two diabetic with a thyroid condition,

Davies was “extremely vulnerable” and had to work from home for a few months. Trying to build relations with his heads over Teams was “not ideal”.

“I had only just met everybody and they were all looking at me, to say ‘what do we do?’ It is just not the same as being in the room and getting a genuine feel for the schools.

“I couldn’t talk to the children – they’re my motivator. That was really difficult. But, as trust leader, you have to follow every guidance going.”

Religious inspiration

Davies believes that everything happens for a

Profile: Wesley Davies

reason, which helps him through those tougher moments. He grew up in a working-class Catholic family in Brighouse, West Yorkshire, and recalls a “defining moment” at 14 which inspired his career path.

His RE teacher told a tale of a farmer whose sheep could escape from their field because of a damaged fence: “Should the farmer repair the fence to keep them safe, or allow them to roam free?”

Davies spent hours contemplating the dilemma, later realising that “I wanted to make someone think like I thought. That’s the beauty of education. It opens the mind and leaves you thinking.”

Today, he is passionate about RE, which he believes “helps people be nicer to each other”. He is proud of how, after being promoted from a fledgling RE and history teacher to head of RE in his first year at Dixons City Academy in Bradford, it became one of the school’s most popular A-level courses, with half of sixth formers studying it.

He is concerned that the removal of GCSE short course RE from performance tables in 2014, and the fact that RE is not recognised in the accountability framework, means the subject has been “knocked off the agenda” by a “cramped” curriculum.

Part of the problem is that RE is “not seen as a cool subject”, with a stigma from some parents because they had a “bad deal” studying it themselves.

“We need to challenge those generational ideas – but it’s easier said than done. You have to work hard to get to get people involved in RE.”

But that is no excuse for schools rebranding RE as “ethics” on their websites. “They want to make it cool. But you’re not being honest – kids are still doing RE GCSE.”

Corporate culture

Davies went on to become assistant head of Dixons City, which was one of the country’s first 15 city technical colleges, sponsored by Dixons Group.



‘You have to work hard to get people involved in RE’

CTCs were the first state-funded schools independent of council control, a template later replicated for academies. While Dixons Group “took a step back” after the school opened, it had already made a mark on its culture.

Davies “always felt a very strong feeling of corporateness about education, from that first day”. He believes corporate culture “instils very high professional standards” as it is “very much about leadership development, which sometimes the education sector can fail to look at”.

Dixons City academised in 2005 and, by taking on the failing Rhodesway School (now Dixons Allerton) in 2009, it was “almost the start of the MAT system emerging”.

By 2012, Dixon’s City was “one of the most over-subscribed schools in the country”, with 1,500 applications for 180 places a year. So the trust decided to open its first free school, Dixons Trinity, with Davies as vice principal.

They based the model on charter school principles, with longer school days – lessons are from 8.30am until 3.45pm – and a focus on the sort of electives and enrichment normally

provided in grammar schools to “help our disadvantaged children the most”.

The school was located in “quite a deprived” inner city area but was open to all, with the authority “picking out of a hat” on the school’s behalf who would attend.

Social integration was the idea behind the open catchment. “We were bringing the city together, so it was about engineering to make sure we got that diversity – but also cohesion at the same time.”

The recipe worked. In 2014 the school became the country’s first ‘outstanding’ secondary free school.

Davies was then tasked with opening Dixons McMillan Academy, just 500 metres away and replicating the success. The school was declared ‘outstanding’ in all areas in 2017.

He puts the success down to being “really explicit” with children on expectations. An essential element of the model was “family dining”, in which pupils and teachers eat together in form groups.

Davies dipped into school budgets to ensure

Profile: Wesley Davies

children whose families could not afford school meals were provided for. "It allowed more children to feel comfortable about free school meals because no one knew who was on the scheme – the meals just got brought to the table."

The model is now deployed by London City Academy and Michaela Community School in the capital, but Davies claims it was unusual in secondaries back then.

Free school lessons learnt

Opening free schools meant working directly with the DfE and ESFA on bids, then selling the concept to parents who had to take a "leap of faith" in Davies' abilities, without school results to back him up.

He recalls realising: "We've got no building and staff yet, but I need you [parents] to sign up so I can appoint some staff, and so I know I'll start getting some money.

"Then I had to think about where plug sockets and children's lockers were going."

The experience was a "real privilege", but "lots of responsibility" as "you can't point your finger to the past [when things go wrong] because you made every decision".

One key learning was the need to appoint more leaders early in the process – "leadership development is really key". He also moved electives from "year groups to verticals so children got to mix with other years" much sooner, enabling the "whole school community to engage with each other".

Opening three schools gave Davies an "obsession with the frontline" and a focus on "how the first receptionist or Senco was feeling". He took that focus with him to Two Counties by establishing "changemaker boards" in each school, featuring staff from receptionists to department heads. Any change at trust and school level is run by those boards first.

Developing in house AP

Davies is basing his trust's development on ideas in a book by Patrick Lencioni, *Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business*, which



Davies outside Dixons McMillan Academy

'Rather than sending vulnerable children off, we'll keep them with us, safe and secure'

advocates the value of developing a "compelling culture". One way to do that is by creating in-house alternative provision in "smaller nurturing groups", including SEND diagnoses where there is "unmet need".

Davies believes that, nationally, alternative provision "could be improved, to put it politely" and that "we need to cater for our children ourselves".

The trust is investing in new "reset placements" of six-week therapeutic behaviour interventions which, unlike standard AP placements, will include academic enrichment.

"Alternative providers do a lot of therapy, but children sometimes miss their English, maths and science, which then stops life chances at 16," he says. "Sometimes mainstream schools just focus on the academic and their needs are not met.

"We're going to try to do both. Rather than sending vulnerable children off, we'll keep them with us, safe and secure."

With high staff-pupil ratios, Davies acknowledges it is a "really expensive model", which puts many schools off. But "timesavers" can be built in through "shared school staffing and curriculum models".

'Peanut buttering' on attendance

He also believes that attendance is an issue that all MAT CEOs should worry about – with stubbornly high absence rates meaning staff are like "peanut butter all the time [spread too thinly] and do less on each individual case".

Two Counties has just appointed a central attendance team of three people trained in "how we speak to parents and children" to do home visits. Davies is also reconnecting with parents disengaged from the school since Covid. A survey was sent out asking what contact they would like and face-to-face parents' evenings have returned.

"There's a barrier for children coming to school, and the only way we can get children to school more is by connecting with families."

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Ministerial announcements on reducing teacher workload are nothing new, writes Ed Reza Schwitzer, but Keegan's bet that AI can deliver is well placed

Gillian Keegan chose an audience of international education ministers to announce her clearest position on the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in education to date. She received a broadly positive reception.

Had she done so in a room full of teachers or school leaders, perhaps the reaction would have been slightly more sceptical. Because, while she rightly claimed that AI could "radically reduce the amount of time teachers spend marking" and "take much of the heavy lifting out of compiling lesson plans", I suspect a number of Schools Week readers would have been asking, "Haven't we heard this all before?"

Teacher workload has become one of those issues that every secretary of state for education tries to tackle early on in their tenure. That is because they know it is having a devastating impact on recruitment and retention, and because they are regularly presented with analysis and evidence from DfE civil servants on the drivers of the problem.

Whichever party wins the next election, it is not an issue that is going to go away any time soon.

It is not that they don't "get it" or that they don't have a good enough grasp of the issue. Rather it is that the solutions to date have not been meaty enough to match the scale of the challenge.

New toolkits and tweaks to the accountability system, for example, while well-intentioned, have not been enough to make a difference. And so many of you have probably been left thinking, "Here we go again, this is just more of the same." But I disagree.

While there are risks emerging from



ED REZA SCHWITZER

Head of external affairs, AQA

Keegan is right to back AI to reduce teacher workload

AI, particularly on the ethics of how it is implemented, there are dramatic opportunities too. In particular, Keegan is absolutely right to focus on marking.

As highlighted by the EEF in their 2016 report, marking was "the single biggest contributor to unsustainable workload in the Department for

The solution? AI could be used to automate simple marking processes and provide better or quicker feedback and information. That does not mean AI reading lengthy essays and providing complex feedback all on its own; we know that this is best done by humans and that many flaws in current AI systems could risk

“Of course, many of these benefits are still hypothetical

Education's 2014 workload challenge – a consultation which gathered more than 44,000 responses from teachers, support staff and others.”

inconsistency or even prejudice.

But where we have "closed" questions (for example, defining scientific terms, factual questions



about an historical event or simple arithmetic) AI absolutely has the potential to speed this marking process up.

On feedback, this does not mean replacing the judgment of a teacher or pushing a small selection of standard comments back to the student for every piece of work they do. Rather, it means helping teachers with shorter pieces of feedback, and supporting them to analyse and distribute information quickly to senior leaders and parents.

AI should be seen as an aid for teachers rather than replacing what they do. So, rather than marking a lengthy essay response, it could highlight relevant information related to the mark scheme.

And, where used properly for summative exams, AI could actually reduce bias and increase fairness, by providing an additional layer of checks on individual markers and moderators.

As well as marking assessments, AI can also be used to formulate them. For example, a bespoke on-screen quiz on a topic could be created, and AI could then mark any responses and provide a feedback commentary on these.

Not only would this help to ease teacher workload but we believe it could also actually enhance the student learning experience and environment.

Of course, many of these benefits are still hypothetical, and some scepticism will quite rightly remain until teachers and leaders see some hard evidence. At AQA, we are determined to do just that – and to work with the sector to crack the teacher workload problem once and for all.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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MARIE HAMER

Executive director of strategy and impact, Ambition Institute



“ Teachers want more time for CPD, not less

The ECF’s workload problem isn’t what you might think

New YouGov polling reveals what teachers really mean when they say workload is an issue for the early career framework, writes Marie Hamer

Fellow policy geeks will remember many a cautionary tale from the American TV series *West Wing*. As I have read the evaluations of the government’s professional development reforms over the past year, I have been reminded of one in particular.

A pollster tells the Democratic president that he could sew up re-election if he leads the charge for an amendment against flag burning. Republicans aren’t the only ones who don’t like flag burning – everyone wants to see it banned.

His advisors are spooked: such an amendment goes against what they believe in, but the data seems compelling.

Eventually they are saved from making a very bad policy call by the fabulous pollster, Joey Lucas, who had asked her sample some better questions: not only whether they thought flag burning was wrong, but how strongly they felt about it and how much this issue would influence their vote. Their answer was an overwhelming “no”.

Over the past two years, teachers have been asked lots of questions

about the Early Career Framework (ECF), and one of the most consistent headlines has been about the problem of workload.

The conclusion many will have drawn is that mentors and early-career teachers (ECTs) alike are frustrated by the time demands of the ECF programme. And an obvious policy response might be to reduce the time requirements of the ECF, stripping back training content for early career teachers or mentors.

But have we asked the right questions? Do we really understand the issue and what changes do our teachers actually need?

Ambition Institute recently commissioned some YouGov polling to dig into the issue. One finding jumped right off the page, as it seemed so directly contrary to all that we had been reading in the press.

We asked teachers about the factors that most contributed to workload pressures and what they would spend less time on. Interestingly, the ECF was very last on the list.

Participating in the ECF or other professional development activities (including as a mentor to ECTs) and managing relationships with colleagues were the least frequently chosen options. Just 10 per cent of respondents included them in their top five. These were closely

followed by looking after pupils’ mental health (12 per cent) and pastoral care and safeguarding (12 per cent).

Conversely – and this might not be a big surprise – the majority of teachers would choose to spend less time on meetings and administrative tasks (74 per cent), preparing for Ofsted inspections (60 per cent) and marking (55 per cent).

Additionally, 85 per cent of teachers believe that it is important for ECTs to take time each week for their professional development through activities such as self-study, training sessions and mentoring.

Nine in ten teachers (91 per cent) think being mentored by more experienced teachers is critical to the professional development of ECTs. And the same proportion believe mentors should be trained in how best to support, coach and constructively challenge ECTs. Only 1 per cent disagree.

This is consistent with this week’s Ofsted review of teacher professional development across England. It found that teachers and leaders actually want more time dedicated to professional

development, but workload pressures and lesson cover get in the way – even when time is set aside by school leaders.

Despite this, Ofsted found that the ECF and reformed NPQs were “a significant step forward”. Participants on these programmes are consistently more positive about their professional development.

It is great that the DfE has launched a review to further improve the implementation of the ECF. We should continue to improve the design and delivery of the framework. But the Ofsted review suggests that more pressing issues lie elsewhere.

Professional development is not making workloads unmanageable; workloads are getting in the way of professional development.

Teachers actually want more time for professional development, not less.

The question we should be asking is how we can provide all teachers with access to professional development that is high-quality, evidence-based and rigorous? Our teachers and children deserve no less.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Campaigners should be pressing ministers to remove barriers for those who are missing out on free school meals they are already eligible for, writes Andy Jolley

With free school meals policy back in the headlines, it is worth highlighting the single most effective action that the government could take to reduce child poverty and combat food insecurity: automating the registration of children for FSM.

At the moment, families in need of financial support apply for universal credit (UC). If they meet the criteria for FSM eligibility (currently an income of no more than £7,400), they then apply to the school who check the validity of the claim before they can provide the food and receive pupil premium funding.

The £7,400 figure was reverse-engineered to ensure the numbers of eligible children did not increase with the switchover to UC. More than that, it was designed to allow the government to gradually reduce claimant numbers by keeping the income threshold static as inflation ate away at eligibility. In my opinion, it is far too low.

What is more, the extra step of applying to the school for funding acts as a barrier for around 11 per cent of all eligible children. In England alone, that is over 200,000 pupils who do not receive the food support they are entitled to.

I am not alone in raising concerns. I first wrote about this in 2015, and I know the former Labour MP Frank Field regularly raised the matter in parliament. It is a year since the National Governance Association raised the issue, and it was highlighted in last month's London Assembly economy committee report on solutions to food insecurity.

The solution seems fairly obvious: when anyone with school-aged children applies for UC, the children



ANDY JOLLEY

School food campaigner

School food policy requires a shift from ministers and campaigners

should be flagged up to the school and they should receive their food. In reality, as someone who spent his working life in IT, I appreciate there are some complexities involved, but nothing unsurmountable.

Not least among the challenges of delivering this simple fix is the dreaded General Data Protection

some kind of permission and acknowledgment to be included in the UC application process.

My assumption is that we will need to see a big file from DWP that gets cross-matched against DfE pupil data. But, while this sounds relatively easy in technical terms, it means a significant shift in how the DfE

“ 200,000+ pupils do not receive the support they are entitled to

Regulation (GDPR). The UC claimant data at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is distinct and separate from school-level FSM data, and government departments tend to get a bit twitchy around sharing this kind of information.

I suspect the solution will require

processes its information. It goes from bottom-up to top-down - from schools asking the DfE to validate FSM claims, to checking everyone and passing the data down to schools. It is absolutely do-able, but there are some sizable system changes involved.

There is no doubt the DfE is aware of what is needed, but we have not had anyone with the political will to drive the change. Back in December 2014, David Laws told the education select committee: “We’re working on a medium-term solution which would remove the bureaucracy...”

“Actually it is sensible to have a data-sharing arrangement in government so we can automatically identify these people.” Nine years on, nothing has happened.

Not least, this is because of the significant financial implications. Moving 200,000 children onto free school meals will immediately land the DfE with an extra bill of £500,000 a day.

What is more, on top of this annual £100 million cost, all these children will also be entitled to pupil premium – another £250 million per year. And, because of the Ever 6 aspect of pupil premium and the current transitional arrangements, the £1,750 per-pupil annual cost could be ongoing for six years, adding up to a price tag of up to a £1.5 billion.

Having said that, ministerial prevarication since 2014 has saved the DfE over £3 billion that should have been spent supporting our most vulnerable children. And, in reality, no new money is needed to fund it; it is just a question of ensuring that children receive the support they are entitled to.

Which should mean it is an easy win for campaigners at a time when food poverty is reaching record highs. But it means a change for them too – away from the distraction of expensive and unevicenced universal FSM and towards prioritising automatic registration and support for those in greatest need.



Opinion

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LES WALTON

Chair, Association of Education Advisers

Accountability must focus less on approving, more on improving

The thinking that brought about our current accountability system can't get us out of the problems it has caused, writes Les Walton

The present debate about the future of our external inspection service is a defining one for our school system. The danger is that it diverts us from focusing on how we enable schools to develop talent and capacity so that they have the means to sustain their own improvement. Procedural changes and ditching the "one-word" grade summary of school performance are not enough.

What we need is an entirely new paradigm of school improvement and accountability. The traditional orthodoxy surrounding school improvement and inspection is simply no longer fit for purpose. We need to strike a better balance between enabling and empowering school leaders and accountability and compliance.

In England, the thinking around the turn of the century regarding how schools were supported was reasonably consistent across most political persuasions. Central government would be the main player, not local government. It would set the standards and the approach, and these would change with every new government.

The emphasis was on a rapid,

quick-fix approach to school and college improvement. By design, intervention was provided in "inverse proportion to success" with the "most successful" receiving no support at all.

"Naming and shaming" was a declared policy, the assumption being that some school leaders would only change in response to fear and coercive tactics. Behind these mantras was a free-market view that competition between schools and colleges would lead to improvement.

The result has been an increasing focus on structural change: change the governance, the leaders and even the name of the school and this will naturally lead to improvement. Judgments that are primarily based on previous test and examination results and external inspection reports are designed to identify schools in difficulty, and these are provided with an imposed road map to lead them out of their problems.

The forced academisation order on the basis of a single grade is the perfect example of the simplistic nature of this approach to school improvement. But it is only the latest manifestation of the same dogma: those who are identified to provide support are selected not on the basis of their professional expertise but whether their institution itself has a good external inspection report (whether or not



“ This entire paradigm has lost credibility

the report is the result of their own professional input).

The mantra that "good leaders make good advisers" is rarely challenged, even though the skillset and knowledge required for both roles are very different.

This entire paradigm has lost credibility, and the growing clamour for rethinking Ofsted marks a fundamental shift in our thinking about how we support and enable our schools to develop and improve. The problems with leaving supposedly 'outstanding' schools to their own devices lay bare this system's shortcomings.

The focus should be on self-sustained improvement for all schools, with enabling and capacity building at the core of our accountability system. We need to support the skills and knowledge of every school leader to develop all aspects of school provision.

Whether Ofsted's existence has helped to create the culture we have now or not, the fact is that today's school leaders welcome and invite challenge. They would like to be recognised as professionals who want to learn and improve, rather than treated as empty vessels that

need to be filled with quick-fix solutions. They don't need fear; they need improvement associates they can trust.

This is the core reason why key educational organisations have given their support to the establishment of the Association of Educational Advisers' independent quality standard for those who support and advise schools and colleges.

There is growing recognition that those who support and advise schools should develop a transactional agreement with schools and colleges, in which they agree on what they both wish to achieve. Likewise, the notion of basing intervention on performance data or inspection findings is being dismissed in favour of a deep analysis of the causal factors of success and failure.

These are not signs of a profession shirking accountability, but one fully embracing it in the name of progress for their schools and our education system. And that seems to me like the sort of evidence of improvement which policy makers should be embracing, not dismissing

Solutions

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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NICOLE RODDEN

Former RSHE teacher and co-founder, Life Lessons



“ Expect the unexpected, and be ready to adapt

Solutions: Building an RSHE curriculum for SEND students

Nicole Rodden shares advice on developing crucial RSHE provision for pupils with SEND who are particularly vulnerable when navigating relationships

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is instrumental to young peoples' health and wellbeing, setting them up to develop healthy relationships throughout their lives. But it is tricky to teach at the best of times and can feel especially challenging in a SEND context.

Students with SEND are at least three times more likely to experience sexual or emotional abuse. RSHE is crucial to help them voice their needs and navigate relationships – but minimal guidance about how to teach this subject to these students makes it difficult to design an effective curriculum that caters to each student's unique needs.

I work with hundreds of schools across England, including special needs and alternative provision (AP) schools, to develop an outstanding RSHE provision and support teachers to deliver it. Here are some key considerations.

Ensure SEND voices are represented

RSHE provisions should include a diverse range of voices on topics such as sex, consent and relationships. This is especially

true when it comes to SEND and AP settings, where students' experiences can differ enormously.

For example, many students with autism have a different understanding of communication, so content should include people with autism discussing how they navigate relationships and issues like consent.

At South Quay College, an AP school in east London with a high number of students with SEND, the RSHE curriculum includes lessons on topics like "How autism affects my life". This ensures all students feel adequately represented, and in a mixed setting diversity enhances learning for all students, exposing them to different experiences and developing their empathy.

Communicate in clear language

It is tempting to talk around tricky topics, using metaphors about cups of tea to navigate issues like consent indirectly. However, an RSHE curriculum should always teach the correct terminology, ensure it is clearly understood and get students to practise these exchanges.

Using direct language is vital as it narrows the window for misunderstanding, especially for neurodiverse students or those with speech and hearing difficulties, while also giving students the vocabulary to understand their emotions and the oratory skills to discuss them.

When designing a curriculum,

it is helpful to include fact-based explainer videos, allowing professionals to unpack complex topics like consent laws and sexually transmitted diseases in a clear and objective manner.

Focus on skills

Many young people with additional needs can lack pragmatics when it comes to relationships and difficult conversations. It is important for young people to develop an understanding of the appropriate proximity to that person, how to take turns in a conversation and the ability to "let things go", all skills which have an impact on how they communicate with others.

RSHE should give students with SEND opportunities to practice, focusing on building the skills that will enable them to navigate the complexities of everyday life. This should extend beyond romantic relationships to include relationships with peers, teachers, family members and carers.

Haringey Learning Partnership has seen a remarkable difference in its students since its refocus on emotional literacy. Assistant headteacher Kalpana Jegendirabose acknowledges that young people can be squeamish about these conversations, but says that seeing them modelled on screen gives

them the confidence to have those same conversations in class. "As a result," she adds, "students are more engaged, and get more out of their PSHE sessions."

Teacher CPD and ongoing support

The recruitment crisis has made it very difficult for schools to get specialist RSHE teachers. This is particularly true for SEND and AP schools, where it is predominantly non-specialist teachers who deliver the subject. I have spoken to many who are worried about getting it wrong.

Equipping teachers with training and support is crucial, especially where recruitment is challenging. Resources, advice and reassurance are available to support staff to confidently and effectively teach RSHE.

Above all, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Expect the unexpected and be ready to modify and adapt the curriculum according to feedback.

There is no denying that this is easier for knowledgeable and skilled facilitators, but take comfort in knowing that even they don't have all the answers. It is always OK to address something the next day once we have done our own homework.



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THE REVIEW

WOULD YOU SEND YOUR CHILD HERE? WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON IN OUR SCHOOLS...

Author: The Secret Supply Teacher

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Reviewer: Gwen Nelson, secondary English teacher, Leicestershire

Having dabbled in a few spells of supply teaching myself and having never read The Secret Supply Teacher's column, I was grateful for the opportunity to read and review this book. The appeal is at least in part due to my awareness that its author and I sit on different sides of the "edu-fence"; I am traditional leaning, whereas the SST is definitely more progressive.

The book is a compact 251 pages, divided into two sections. Part one, the bulk of the text, contains the author's introduction which narrates his reasons for becoming a roving supply teacher, his published columns for the educational press, and others that have not previously been published. The latter will be a draw to those who are familiar with his material and on the look-out for more.

The second part of the book, a "reimagining" of the English education system, is based on the SST's longevity, scope of experience and their optimistic imagination. Here, they focus their attention on our system's constituent parts: leadership, policies, systems and school rules, buildings, teachers and students.

A word of warning to the easily offended: the SST's columns are prone to the use of expletives. If the thought of teachers swearing offends you, this book is not for you. Step away! For my part, I particularly enjoyed their writing style, which is succinct, pithy, and informative. What is more, there is plenty of verifiable data to support what they observe and experience throughout these witty and well-narrated experiences of day-to-day supply.

The secondary research is often referenced

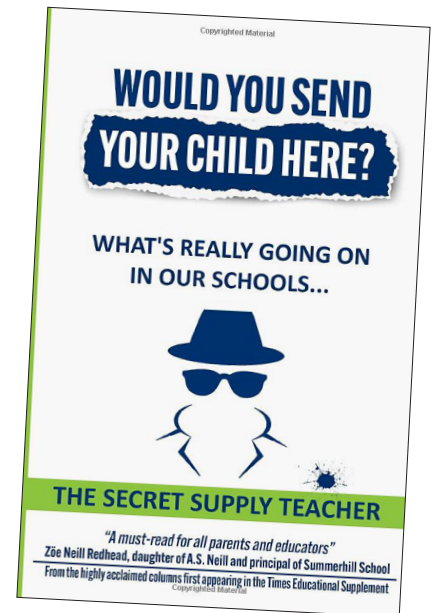
in footnotes, although an old-school list of references at the back would have helped those of us with ageing eyesight. Even with my varifocals on, I peered at the footnotes like Mrs Overall from Acorn Antiques, unable to decipher all of them. Nevertheless, many are used for commentary on the body text and had a Pratchett-like quality to them, provoking a wry smile from me.

The columns cover much to interest teachers of all ages and levels of experience: the SST's foray into primary schools as a secondary teacher (the horror!); a column about the real reasons why children ask to go to the toilet during a lesson (which set edu-Twitter ablaze for a good while); and that period of time which is indelibly inked into all our memories – Covid lockdowns and the miseries of remote teaching.

I was less enamoured with the second part of the book but, to be fair to the author, this is mainly due to our differing views of teaching and education. This section largely fulfils its aim, which is to imagine a "perfect world" of education, at least from our author's point of view.

It is here that most readers will have their most vehement agreements and disagreements with the content. For example, in the Reimagining School Systems and School Rules section, the author states that, "in my 20 years of teaching I have never once enforced a uniform rule of any kind". The SST then goes on to propose scrapping uniform rules alongside detentions. Their reasoning is not entirely ludicrous, but it confirms that much of this section is idealism

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rather than pragmatism.

Many who work in education will get something from this book. ITT trainees and NQTs will benefit from the narration of the SST's experience in a range of schools, not least because it will give them perspective on where they are currently training or working.


More experienced teachers will enjoy the familiarity of numerous anecdotes. Most of all, anyone responsible for finding and employing supply teachers really ought to read this to learn how to treat – and not treat – a supply teacher in your school.

Overall, this was an enjoyable and informative book. I did not agree with all that I read, but I appreciated the difference in edu-opinions. It provoked me to reconsider some of my own experiences and beliefs, which can only be a good thing, and it is good to have the voice of a supply teacher out there – albeit an anonymous one.



Rating

THE CONVERSATION
LISTENING IN ON THE DIGITAL STAFFROOM




Robert Gasson
CEO, Wave Multi-Academy Trust

FROST/NIXON

This week's conversation continued to be dominated by the fallout from Phil Beadle's critique of Teach Like A Champion classroom strategy, SLANT.

The row, which started with a blog by Beadle (see last week's The Conversation) culminated in Beadle terminating a podcast interview with Teacher Talk Radio podcast host Tom Rogers, but fizzled on for days, including posts by Doug Lemov himself. His three-part blog, Phil and Me, has since disappeared from his website, but his latest thoughts on SLANT remain.

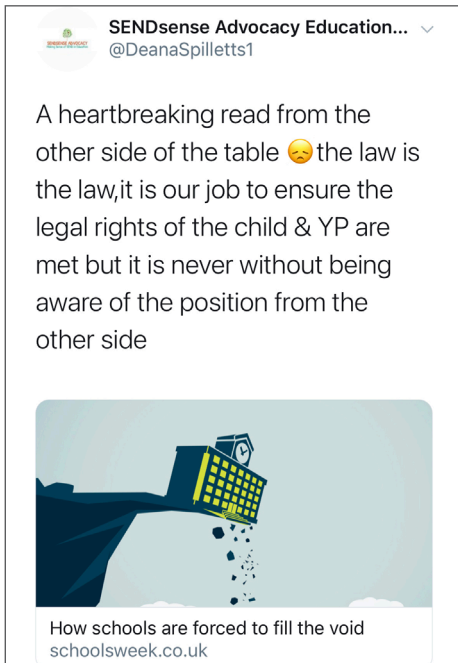
Twitter user James Theo has a way of finding the joke in these Twitter spats, and he struck again this week, lampooning the importance given to the whole situation.



James Theo @JamesTheo

TITANIC

All the furore over pedagogy felt a little like worrying about the state of the deckchairs on a sinking ship as Schools Week revealed the full extent to which schools are having to fill the gaps left by significant cuts to public services.



SENDsense Advocacy Education... @DeanaSpilletts1

A heartbreaking read from the other side of the table 😞 the law is the law, it is our job to ensure the legal rights of the child & YP are met but it is never without being aware of the position from the other side

How schools are forced to fill the void schoolsweek.co.uk

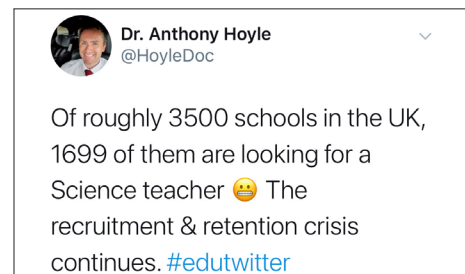
None of this will come as a surprise to anyone working in education. However, we should not lose our sense of shock and concern that all this is taking place in the sixth-largest national economy in the world measured by nominal gross domestic product.

NHS data shows that there is now one school nurse for every 11 schools, down from one for every seven schools in 2010. A Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy report published last month showed vacancy rates for speech and language therapists had reached an average of 25 per cent. And a children's social work workforce report published in February showed vacancies had gone up by 21 per cent from 2021 and stand at 7,900.

So much for the completely fictional "headroom" that this government keeps stating is in place in school budgets to allow for unfunded pay rises. What little headroom there is is being swept up by schools having to undertake ever more complex tasks around safeguarding and meeting pupils' mental health and special educational needs that should be undertaken by other specialist or statutory services.

Meanwhile, among reams of statistics showing how badly the recruitment of teachers has been for the past ten years, one tweet in particular caught my eye. Echoing

the vacancy crisis in children's social work, it indicates a pattern in the DfE's handling of recruitment and retention and accurately depicts an issue that is keeping leaders in schools up and down the country awake at night.



Dr. Anthony Hoyle @HoyleDoc

Of roughly 3500 schools in the UK, 1699 of them are looking for a Science teacher 😞 The recruitment & retention crisis continues. #edutwitter

According to a 2020 OECD report, the UK already stood fifth from bottom of the table for teacher-to-pupil ratios, ahead only of the Netherlands, Chile, Brazil and Mexico. Two years on, we have to wonder how bad things have to get before the government starts to be honest about the quality of education schools can be expected to deliver.


A NEW HOPE

But continue we must, and it would be wrong to dismiss pedagogical approaches out of hand as part of the solution. Ignoring Twitter's sideshow of acrimonious dispute, I found this two-part blog on school improvement by Education for the 21st Century's chief executive Simon Garrill really informative and thought-provoking.

Hosted by the Confederation of School Trusts, Garrill's blog outlines his trust's journey against the backdrop of a financial notice to improve. The trust's success, he explains, has been predicated on an approach that is "centred on judging lesson quality rather than supporting teachers to improve".

In the first part, Garrill describes developing a culture of openness to feedback and commitment to ongoing development as "a key challenge". In the second, he goes on to outline the specific steps the trust took to overcome these challenges and transform its culture "from proving to improving".

I will certainly be considering this approach for my own organisation as I wrestle, alongside every other school and trust leader, with an increasingly complex pupil population, reduced funding and a paucity of support caused by the generalised underfunding of public services.

Click the links to access the blogs and podcasts 

The Knowledge

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



What can the Covid exam crisis teach us about policy making?

Jo-Anne Baird, director, Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment and Margaret Arnott, professor of public policy, University of the West of Scotland

Examinations are a defining element of education policy in England. Their data is the basis of selection for prestigious university places and employment, and is used to evaluate school performance and teacher effectiveness.

When the pandemic struck, governments around the globe faced the same dilemmas: how to assess without fuelling the public health crisis. Only in the British Isles was the policy decision made to standardise teacher judgments statistically, through what became known as “the algorithm”.

In China, for example, examinations went ahead, but were delayed. As one of our Masters students from China predicted at the time: “One thing is for sure, the Gaokao exams will still take place.”

Policy decisions made in the crisis of the pandemic were shaped by the competing political frameworks constructed by political leaders. The government U-turn to withdraw the standardised grades and replace them with teacher estimates in England in 2020 was made in response to the public reaction to inequalities in the process.

These inequalities were especially visible in schools with small numbers of pupils, as the algorithm did not adjust these scores. As a result, private school pupils (where classes are usually smaller than in state schools) retained teacher estimates, which were usually higher than adjusted scores. Roger Taylor, the chair of Ofqual, later said that he could not understand how they thought that the algorithm would work.

As educational assessment, policy and politics researchers, we set out to investigate the kind of knowledge and expertise that contributed to the key decisions in 2020: cancelling the examinations, opting for an algorithmic allocation of grades, and the policy U-turn. Our findings



have recently been published in the Oxford Review of Education.

We investigated policy documents including SAGE committee minutes, Ofqual board minutes and Hansard. Additionally, we interviewed 16 key policy insiders from the regulator, the Department for Education, exam boards and head teachers.

At each of these moments, we found that decisions were taken in different parts of the system with distinctive sources of knowledge and expertise. The prime minister announced the examination cancellation with little consultation with educationalists. The SAGE minutes barely mention education. The choice of the algorithm by Ofqual was informed by a committee of educational and assessment experts.

Facing hostile reaction from the public, Gavin Williamson, the secretary of state, initially blamed Ofqual, saying that he had not been informed how it would operate. But the minister had asked for the algorithm when he instructed Ofqual to make sure that the results were similar to those in previous years.

This government priority reduced the sources of knowledge and expertise available to a technical, data-driven approach. Reverting to teacher estimates was a purely political decision, shaped by political calculations and pressures involving the public, the media, Conservative

backbenchers, political advisors and inter-department civil service politics.

Of course, decisions made in crises are time-sensitive and often dependent on a close inner circle. But opportunities for learning from other systems or from a wider range of experts were not taken.

The headteachers we interviewed said that they could have held socially distanced examinations in their almost empty schools or in other local, empty offices and buildings. But our research showed an absence of consultation with local authorities or the teaching profession.

Making policy processes transparent involves examining what kinds of evidence are in play and how that evidence interacts with politics. Research has typically focused on individual policies and has often been silent on the role of politics in framing education policy agendas.

Our research programme seeks to contrast the way that knowledge and expertise are mobilised in policy across the four nations of the UK. Not only are the politics different, but the way in which policy is informed by different kinds of people, institutions and disciplinary knowledge also differs.

In England, our research points to a fractured decision-making process, with problems that must be overcome, not least because further crises cannot be ruled out.

Week in

Westminster

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



FRIDAY

Among the many additional responsibilities being picked up by teachers, checking children are using paper that doesn't contain sensitive details of NHS patients is not one we expected.

The Health Service Journal reported how the Bedfordshire Hospitals Foundation Trust is investigating after a pupil took printed records containing details of 150 patients to school to use as drawing paper.

Luckily, a school staff member spotted it and handed them back to the hospital trust, which then destroyed them.

MONDAY

It's gone all quiet from education secretary Gillian Keegan during the gridlock in union talks – apart from when the opportunity arises to big up the potential of artificial intelligence.

But quite the admission from Keegan this time.

"We have all found ourselves in situations when our skills didn't go far enough," she told attendees to the Education World Forum. "I once found myself on a plane travelling to Japan for a major negotiation with nothing but a book on etiquette. What saved me was a huge appetite to learn from my hosts and my new-found karaoke skills."

Whether Keegan actually did improve her negotiation skills is somewhat up in the air if you believe some of the chat from unions about her performance on thrashing out a pay deal behind closed doors.

So, can AI help? We asked everyone's new friend, ChatGPT, how Keegan can resolve the education union dispute.

Resolving such disputes usually involves "negotiations, compromise and collaboration", it advises. "Both parties may need to come to the table with a willingness to listen to each other's

concerns and to find a solution that benefits all parties involved, including teachers, students and parents."

Sounds like Keegan still has a bit of work to do ...

While Keegan was speaking to global education leaders, Labour's shadow schools minister Stephen Morgan was cleaning up trash. He took part in the Big Help Out for the Coronation by tidying the streets of Portsmouth with the local scouts group.

While you might be thinking it, we would never make the crass link that perhaps he's preparing to take out the trash if Labour get elected.



#EduTwitter can get bit hairy at the best of times. But forget SLANT – it's all about 90s boyband TakeThat.

When one head tweeted "do we need a referendum to sort out little Mark Owen's hair? #CoronationConcert", former regional schools commissioner turned trust CEO Lisa Mannall replied: "If you can't say something nice, keep quiet."

TUESDAY

We got an insight today into just how well prepared the government's plan to send seeds to schools to celebrate Charlie's Coronation was.

The £304,000 (!!) contract to provide wildflower seeds for the King's Coronation was dished out without competition because of the "extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable for the contracting authority".

Given the "urgent requirement" to deliver the seeds, The Eden Project was chosen because it had capacity to do "in the required tight time-frame and ability to produce personalised packaging".

Yes-and-ho.

WEDNESDAY

As we know, PM Rishi Sunak is big on maths until 18. But one of his own ministers didn't quite get their numbers right in a Lords debate.

Baroness Barran had said that 7,000 schools and colleges (roughly a third) had accessed the free Skills Booster materials. They cover topics such as "post-pandemic socialisation" and "health and wellbeing" and are provided by the National Citizen Service.

However, in a clarification letter this month, Barran said it was actually *700* institutions that had accessed them. Still apparently a "clear improvement" from the 2021-22 figure – around 300. Top skills!

Quite the invitation for schools today – government has invited sector feedback on its cost-cutter (sorry, 'resource management') "self-assessment checklist". What a treat.

Academy trustees are asked about whether the tool helps check on appropriate financial management and governance arrangements, and if they need more support from government to improve their financial health.

Go forth, leaders! We look forward to the results of that survey.



**Changing Lives
Learning Trust**

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Exciting Appointments of Aspiring and Existing Headteachers

Salary: Competitive and negotiable dependant on school group size, type and experience.

Permanent Posts

Relocation package available

Start date – September 2023, January 2024 or April 2024

Changing Lives Learning Trust is excited to be in a period of significant growth with secondary and primary schools joining our thriving body of five schools with 1746 students and 285 staff. This particular phase of growth will extend to Spring 2024 with opportunities for school leadership across our existing and newly joined schools.

Further, we are One Cumbria Teaching School Hub covering 270+ ECTs and 370+ NPQ participants in 200 schools across our region and we are the only accredited provider based in Cumbria. Our Trust continues to play an active role across the region and nationally through for example our CEO who is a regional delivery partner for Trust and School Improvement Offer covering Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Lancashire.

We also await the outcome of our Alternative Provision Free School application and we have the first of its kind Primary Technical College. You can see we are not a Trust that stands still because Changing Lives takes energy and action!

We are taking a bold and distinctive step of advertising our opportunities collectively to suit aspiring and existing school leaders who may be looking for that next step for this September, January or Easter of next year. The first wave of those opportunities are teaching Headteacher posts, located within our primary schools at Arlecdon and Thornhill in West Cumbria.

We are seeking experienced, ambitious and highly driven leaders. Depending on experience post holders will be accountable for one allocated school and will have opportunities to work as part of the Trust team across and beyond the Trust to shape and deliver exceptional 2-18 inclusive provision for pupils in our growing Trust.

Highly driven and talented individuals who have a successful background in leadership will be ideal for these positions; whether it's your first headship or you have a wealth of

headship experience, we have a range of schools for your next step. We will support that next step with a comprehensive package of support.

You must demonstrate leadership with uncompromising honesty, integrity and ambition for our vision; that we will have legitimate grounds to claim those we undertake to teach and train will have a preparation for life that is excelled by no other.

If you are successful, you will join a team of committed and talented professionals and a home where your development is a priority in enabling you to play a key role in the future of our Trust, the children we serve and the people who work with them.

We welcome your application and a register of your interest for both the current and future opportunities. We ask that you state whether there is a particular post and start date you are keen on or if you are open to all of them over the duration of this phase.

For further information about the opportunities and our Trust please visit our website: changinglives.education. Visits to our academies and discussions with Trust leaders are encouraged.

Please contact Gill Tyler, PA to the CEO at: tylerg@changinglives.education to arrange visits or to discuss the opportunities further.

SUPPORT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

- A dedicated Headteacher buddy/mentor
- Depending upon your experience, opportunities for additional Trust wide responsibilities
- A School Improvement Partner to work alongside you
- A dedicated and supportive Trust Executive Team

HAYS Working for
your tomorrow

FORWARD
EDUCATION TRUST 

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST

FET is an established and developing MAT of 7 special schools across all age ranges, covering the widest spectrum of Special Educational Needs students. With close to 800 students and over 400 staff, FET is a strong force in special education in Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull. We have plans for future growth within our catchment areas and will remain a specialist SEND Trust. We are committed to developing local school identity and ethos, adopting strategies for school improvement that build on and enhance local reputation, raise standards and respond to the needs and aspirations of those we serve. We care about our staff, their learning, development and well-being and we are responding to feedback from our first Trust-wide employee survey on a wide range of matters relating to communication, workload, personal & professional development and wider support to our staff. The Trust's ambitions remain undiminished – to ensure the children in its schools receive the best possible education, care and life chances.

VACANCIES

Deputy Headteacher

Brays School

Teacher with TLR Key Stage 4 Phase Lead

Hallmoor School

KS2/3 Teacher

Lea Hall Academy

Class Teacher

Leycroft Academy

KS2 Teacher

The Heights

Contact - For further information on any of these vacancies or to request an application pack please contact Jodie Massie at M: 07761446571 E: FET@hays.com

Click here for more information 

HAYS Working for
your tomorrow



Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) is an education charity and not-for-profit sponsor of primary, junior and secondary academies.

We are a dynamic organisation, recognised nationally as one of the highest performing family of schools in the North of England, and we currently sponsor over 40 schools.

We feel strongly that academies should enhance the education provision of the community they serve, in addition to driving up standards and playing a central role in regeneration. This is because we believe that improving the life chances of young people is essential to developing a strong local and national economy.

Outwood Academy Ripon – Ripon, North Yorkshire Head of Art

Salary: MPS/UPS + TLR 2.1 (£3,017)

Start date: September 2023

Closing Date: 4pm on the 21st of May

Outwood Academy Hemsworth – Wakefield, West Yorkshire Teacher of Psychology and Social Science

Salary: MPS/UPS

Start date: September 2023

Closing date: 12pm on the 17th May

Outwood Academy Ormesby – Middlesbrough, Teesside Progress Leader in Science

Salary: MPS/UPS + TLR 2a (£3,017)

Start date: September 2023

Closing date: 9am on the 16th May

Outwood Academy City – Sheffield, South Yorkshire Head of Maths

Salary: Leadership 7 – 11

Start date: September 2023

Closing date: 12pm on the 19th May

[Click here for more information](#) ►



Chief Transformation Officer

Chief Transformation Officer - United Learning Highly competitive salary and benefits package

United Learning was founded over 130 years ago as a group of independent schools. By September, we will be a group of over 100 schools – predominantly state funded academies. As we have grown we have kept developing to stay true to our values and to keep succeeding.

The point of this new role, reporting to the Chief Executive is to prepare us for the future. You will oversee curriculum, data, research, software development and digital strategy and help us to use our information better to provide insight and improvement. You will identify the key changes that will take us to more success in the future and prepare us to grow our impact as we grow our scale.

You will be a credible leader of educational change and of system change, able to identify key issues, design solutions and lead implementation with a mixed team of professionals. You will build teams and work collaboratively with colleagues from schools and the centre, both within your direct line management and outside it.

We would particularly welcome applications from black and minority ethnic candidates, who are currently under-represented at the most senior levels in the Group. We always appoint on merit. We are open to discussing flexible working options and there is flexibility in relation to where the postholder will be based.

For more information:

The closing date for applications is 12.00 noon on Friday 19th May 2023.

For more information about United Learning please visit <https://unitedlearning.org.uk/>



Principal

**Ercall Wood Academy: Required September 2023
Group 6 L30-L35**

We are seeking to appoint an inspirational and dynamic Principal to lead Ercall Wood Academy from September 2023. Our new Principal will succeed Mr. Richard Gummery, who moves to a new role within the Trust Education Team.

The academy (part of the Learning Community Trust) needs an ambitious leader who can drive the school forwards from its current solid foundations. The recent Ofsted report grading for our academy was Good in all areas with the exception of Quality of Education, an area of intensive work since the inspection. The ethos and vision of the academy is strong and the school has made considerable gains under its current leadership, demonstrating capacity to improve quickly in all key areas.

**Closing Date for applications: 9am 15th May
Interviews will take place on 16th – 17th May.**



**Truro and Penwith
Academy Trust**

Chief Finance and Operating Officer

The Truro and Penwith Academy Trust is a multi academy trust currently operating across Cornwall with ambitions to continue to grow. We are proud to serve circa 8,700 pupils who all attend one of our five secondary schools, 28 primary schools and 1 infants school.

With a turnover in excess of £50m and employing over 1200 colleagues this is a significant role which requires a highly talented leader who will lead trust-wide professional services including finance, IT, payroll, property and estate, health and safety, communications and buildings development.

You will play a leading role in the development of organisational strategies which ultimately lead to improving standards in all areas across the Trust. Externally you will positively represent the Trust in a range of forums and will be a key player in ensuring the continued sustainability and growth of our Trust.

tpacademytrust.org



Haberdashers' Academies Trust South



Director of Sport and Wellbeing

We are looking for a Director of Sport and Wellbeing who will lead the Trusts Wellbeing Strategy through Sport and PE.

Working with the Youth Sports Trusts Well Trust framework, this will be an opportunity for someone who is passionate about this area, to make a significant difference. The post is in recognition of the role sport and physical activity plays in supporting well-being.

This role will form part of our school improvement team, working with leaders to bring our strategy to life. The role combines the opportunity to demonstrate impact both within and across schools in the Trust. Being a new role, there is scope for the post holder to shape it as they wish. The role description is deliberately broad at this stage.

The post is flexible, and we will consider full time, part time and flexible working. It may also suit a secondment opportunity, alongside another role. It will require travel to each of our school sites, alongside opportunities to work from home. We are a Trust of nine schools, all based in South-

East London. Whilst each of our schools maintains its individuality, we share a common mission: to ensure that every single child and young person in our care is successful at school so that they can flourish and be successful in their lives.

We are a Trust with great potential, and school improvement is at the heart of everything we do. This role will be integral to our success. Our scale of expertise and leadership gives us the capacity to achieve great things. It is this capacity which will allow us to take on new challenges and allow our staff to become the best version of themselves.

We want the best people to join our Haberdashers' community and we are committed to a diverse and inclusive student and staff body. If you are passionate about making a difference and feel that you have the right experience and expertise, we encourage you to apply to join us on our journey.

If you are interested in learning more about the position, please do get in touch with Yas Affum (EA to the CEO) via email to y.affum@habstrustsouth.org.uk



Babington Academy | 11-16 | Ofsted Outstanding | Leicester

It is a very exciting time to join us at Babington; we are a popular, vibrant and diverse 11-16 school where our students are our best resource. Babington is an exceptional place where students, staff and leaders really do flourish. We provide an environment where the best teachers can make a huge difference to the outcomes of our students. No student is left behind, they are courteous and respectful with high standards of behaviour, conduct and learning.

We are delighted to offer the opportunity for inspirational and knowledgeable colleagues to join our team on a permanent basis from September 2023.

Current Vacancies:

- Subject Leader of Food Technology - MPS/UPS + TLR2b
- Head of History – MPS/UPS + TLR2b
- Head of PE – MPS/UPS + TLR2b
- Teacher of Maths – ECT/MPS/UPS (TLR available for the right candidate)
- Teacher of Geography/Humanities – ECT/MPS/UPS (TLR available for the right candidate)
- Teacher of Art and Design Technology – ECT/MPS/UPS

Please contact Mike Sherwin at Hays via the Apply Now tab for a full application pack, to arrange a visit or if you have any questions about the role. Visits to the school are encouraged.

T: 07525 889925

E: babingtonacademy@hays.com

Closing date for applications: ASAP and by Monday 15th May 2023



Haberdashers' Academies Trust South



Director of HR

We are looking for an experienced HR professional to join our Central Trust team as a member of our Executive. You will work closely with the CEO and Principals in bringing to life our ambitious People Strategy.

As Director of HR, you will oversee HR across the Trust, providing expertise and advice, and leading the HR team. This is a team currently going through an important transformation, as we increase the degree of centralisation for this function. This presents an opportunity for the new Director to embed the structure.

The successful implementation of our People Strategy (which includes our EDI and well-being strategies) will guide our success and integrate closely with our school improvement and business sustainability strategies. We know that to be successful, we need great people. Therefore, it is integral to our core business. Our scale of expertise and leadership gives us the capacity to achieve great things. It is this capacity which will allow us to take on new challenges and allow our staff to become the best version of themselves.

We are a Trust of nine schools, all based in South-East London. Whilst each of our schools maintains its individuality, we share a common mission: to ensure that every single child and young person in our care is successful at school so that they can flourish and be successful in their lives. We are excited by the steps we have taken together and the future ambitions we have set.

We want the best people to join our Haberdashers' community and we are committed to a diverse and inclusive student and staff body. If you are passionate about making a difference and feel that you have the right experience and expertise, we encourage you to apply to join us on our journey.

If you are interested in learning more about the position, please do get in touch with Minerva who are supporting us with the appointment of this role

habstrustsouth@minervasearch.com .

This post will require travel to each of our sites alongside opportunities to work from home and flexibly



Virtual School Assistant Headteacher Secondary/Post 16 Virtual School for Children Looked after

Salary: RG8 (SCP 39-45) £45,495- £51,627

Full-time, Permanent post

Hybrid/Agile working available

Closing date: 16 May 2023
Interview date: 23 May 2023

This is an exciting opportunity to join Reading's Virtual School for Children Looked After and Care Leavers. The Virtual School is committed to promoting the educational achievement of Children Looked After and supports young people to achieve their educational potential, to enable them through attaining good qualifications and a positive school experience to have more fulfilling careers, higher incomes, greater self-confidence and ultimately a better quality of life. There is absolute commitment from the Virtual School to aim to deliver an outstanding service through strong advocacy and collaborative engagement for Reading's children looked after wherever they are placed.

We are seeking to appoint a highly committed and inspirational Virtual School Assistant Headteacher Secondary/Post 16 with a proven track

record of improving educational outcomes for Children Looked After in the Secondary/Post 16 phase. You will be passionate about tackling inequality and narrowing the achievement gap between children looked after and their peers, ensuring that children have the support and opportunity to grow, flourish and realise their full potential.

As Assistant Headteacher Secondary/Post 16 you will have QTS or equivalent a breadth of experience and expertise in Secondary and Post 16 education. You will also be highly skilled in providing challenge, advice and support to schools, social care teams and carers, working in partnership to ensure that all children have a timely and high quality electronic Personal Education Plan.

We offer a supportive environment to grow and develop your career with the opportunity to put your ideas across. Innovation and ambition are strongly encouraged, and you'll get a great feel for that working in our friendly and collaborative environment.



DEPUTY HEADTEACHER £52,917-£58,105 PER ANNUM

We are seeking to appoint a highly motivated and committed deputy headteacher to join the senior leadership team at Newtown Primary School, following the deployment of current postholder to support in other Stour Vale member schools. The current postholder is a member of the Central Team. Because the school has rapidly improved, the time is now right to appoint a substantive deputy to complete the journey to good.



The new deputy headteacher would take a lead role in supporting the headteacher to raise standards of academic achievement, whilst developing a cohesive school community where children and staff flourish. This is an exciting opportunity for an ambitious and effective school leader.

For an informal conversation to discuss the role, please contact:
Simone Chesney-Ly, Head Teacher, 0121 557 8504

Closing date: 15 May 2023 @ 9.00 am
Interviews: W/C 22 May 2023

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