

SCHOOLS WEEK

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

**Heads takeover:
Teachers are the
silver bullet, but
we're firing blanks**



P25

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FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 2023 | EDITION 325

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SPECIAL INVESTIGATION | Page 18-21

Record-high 40k teachers quit state schools last year

- More heads than ever also resign, leaders warn 'we cannot go on like this'
- 50 per cent rise in vacancies and soaring 3.2 million days lost to sickness
- Keegan's response? She celebrates 'fantastic' record number of teachers

AMY WALKER | @AMYRWALKER

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'We cannot go on like this'

We've remarked before how education seems consumed by crisis after crisis.

But the usual Thursday data dump by the Department for Education made for particularly depressing reading this week.

Rising child poverty levels mean more than two million pupils are now eligible for free school meals, a damning statistic (page 12).

Free school meals support is obviously essential, but that we now provide it to 24 per cent of all pupils because their household income is **below £7,400** should shame us all.

The number of education, health and care plans (EHCPs) for SEND pupils continues to rise, but the system clearly isn't coping.

Almost half of children for whom these important plans are requested wait more than the legal 20 weeks to receive support, and that means schools going without the money they need to provide it (page 12).

To make matters worse, data published this week also shows 5,574 SEND tribunals – which give parents the right to appeal councils' decisions about EHCPs – were outstanding at the end of March this year, up 68 per cent on last year.

Meanwhile, the number of teachers' working days missed because of sickness is 56 per cent higher than pre-pandemic, which is contributing to a workforce crisis in schools that we document on pages 4 and 5.

The teacher quitting rate has reached a record high, with nearly 40,000 departures from the state sector last year

It's fair to point out the past ten years have coincided with a huge rise in pupil numbers. And, as the government was quick to point out, there are a record number of teachers currently in the profession.

Pupil numbers are already dropping off at primary and will soon at secondary, which will take the sting out of some of the soaring demand. But the situation is still likely to worsen for a few years before it gets better.

The government has promised change on Ofsted next week. It still has to make a decision on teacher pay, and has talked positively about driving down workload. It seems aware of the problems, but it now needs to deliver actual change.

As union leader Geoff Barton says: "We cannot go on like this."

Most read online this week:

- 1 **Teacher retention commission: 8 proposals to stem exodus**
- 2 **The key trends in 2023 GCSE and A-level entries**
- 3 **OCR to review difficulty of GCSE computer science paper**
- 4 **DfE and Ofsted staff offered one-off £1,500 in pay dispute**
- 5 **Prestigious sixth-form drops 'sir' and 'miss' over cultural misogyny**

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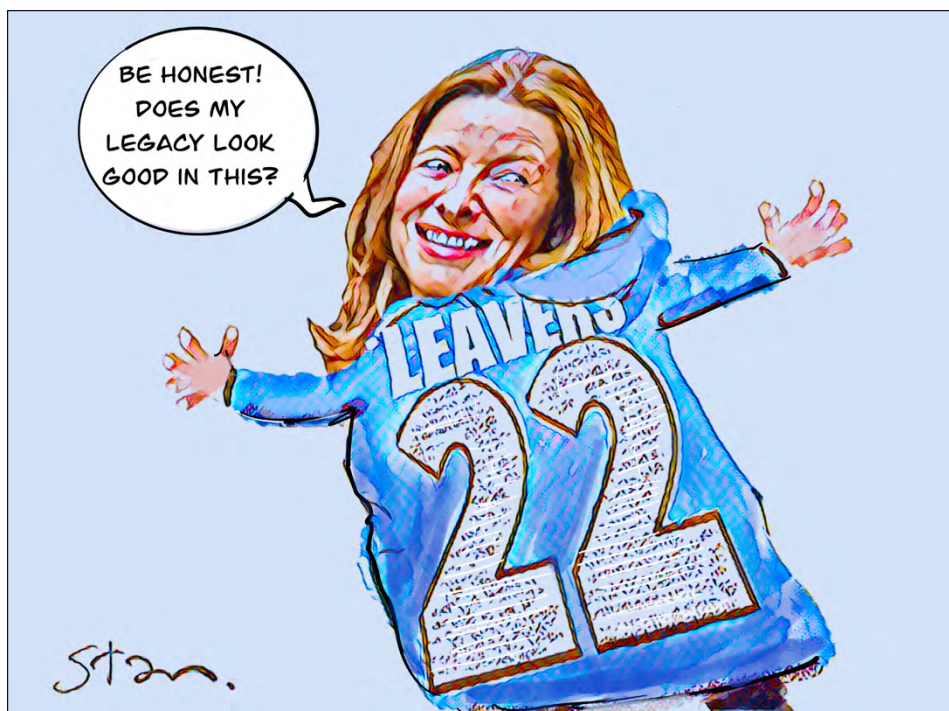


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Teacher exodus hits record rate

AMY WALKER
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Startling new figures reveal a record-high 40,000 teachers quit last year, with the number of vacancies and staff off sick soaring.

School leaders have warned they “cannot go on like this” as the sector’s recruitment and retention crisis was laid bare in workforce data published yesterday.

A total of 39,930 teachers left state schools for reasons other than retiring (8.8 per cent of the workforce) in the 2021-22 academic year, up 7,800 on the previous year (6.9 per cent).

This is the highest rate since records began following the 2010-11 census and the equivalent of 637 average-sized secondary schools losing all their teachers.

Jack Worth, a school workforce lead at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), said the figures were “hugely concerning”.

“Addressing teacher retention should be at the heart of dealing with the teacher supply challenge, with further policy action needed to reduce teacher workload and increase the competitiveness of teacher pay.”

More heads than ever quitting

A total of 2,341 heads left the state sector last year through either retirement or quitting (10.6 per cent) – the highest rate since 2016-17, which was also 10.6 per cent.

But of these, 1,694 left for reasons other than retirement (7.7 per cent) – up from 1,151 (5.2 per cent) the year before and the highest on record.

This year was only the third time since 2010 more than 1,000 heads have quit for reasons other than retirement.

More than double the number of heads quit last year compared to 2015-16.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of leaders’ union ASCL, said: “We cannot go on like this. Leaders, teachers, children and parents all deserve better from the government than complacency and neglect.”

Despite the number of leavers, the figures show a record high of 468,371 teachers last year, up 2,800 on the year before and 27,000 more than in 2010



Geoff Barton



‘We deserve better than complacency and neglect’

– a 6 per cent rise.

Gillian Keegan, the education secretary, said it was “fantastic” so many people chose a rewarding career, with “a record number of teachers now working in our schools”.

However, pupil numbers have risen sharply by 11 per cent since 2010, meaning recruitment has fallen way behind what is required.

This is backed up by the workforce data showing vacancies are at the highest level since 2010. As of November, there were 2,334 teacher and leader vacancies, a 49 per cent rise on the 1,564 of the year before.

Figures on retention also paint a bleak picture. Among newly-qualified teachers, 12.8 per cent are now leaving a year after qualifying, compared with 12.5 per cent the year before.

The percentage leaving after two years grew from 17.3 to 19.9 per cent. More than 33 per cent now leave within six years of qualifying.

Higher levels of staff absence due to sickness are also exacerbating problems, with 3.2 million working days missed because of illness in the past academic year. In pre-pandemic 2018-19, the figure was about 2 million.

‘Teachers have been neglected’

Bridget Phillipson, the shadow education secretary, said schools and the teaching workforce had been “neglected – and it is children who will pay the price”.

Analysis from the National Foundation for Educational Research suggests that the government is on course to meet just 47 per cent of its secondary trainee teacher target this year.

Keegan acknowledged there was “more to do”, and pointed to bursaries in priority subjects and boosted support for new teachers under the Early Career Framework.

The DfE data followed research by Teacher Tapp and SchoolDash, which revealed wider problems.

Fifty per cent of secondary leaders and 30 per cent of primary staff involved in recruitment over the past 12 months did not proceed to interviews because of “weak or absent” fields.

And 42 per cent of secondary staff and 34 per cent of primary said they had failed to fill positions after the interview stage.

Teachers were also less likely to want to stick around.

The proportion who reported that they expected to still be in the job in three years’ time

NEWS: RECRUITMENT

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fell to just 59 per cent, the lowest level since Teacher Tapp started asking the question in 2017. Meanwhile, the teacher recruitment commission, headed by the wellbeing charity Education Support, found 75 per cent of secondary teachers would leave the profession if they were offered a job with a better work-life balance. This polled higher than better pay (64 per cent).

Retention rates 'flashing red light'

Sinéad McBrearty, the charity's chief executive, said the attrition rate was a "flashing red light".

The report proposed considering replacing undirected hours with contractual hours that are "more reflective of the modern workplace".

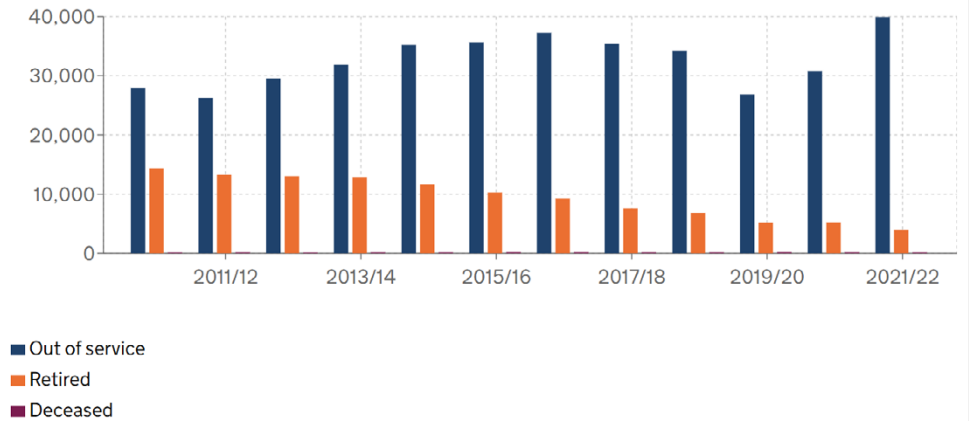
The government should be clear on "pointless" tasks, to help cut workload, with sabbaticals for headteachers every five years. A new HR advisory service should be set up to promote flexible working.

The proposals were not costed. But the report said 32,000 teachers left for reasons other than retirement in



Sinéad McBrearty

Last year there were 7,800 more leavers than the previous year



2020-21. As it costs the government £20,000 to train a teacher, this equates to £640 million of lost capacity in a single year.

At that rate, the whole workforce would be effectively replaced in just 14 years.

"If we can fix the retention crisis, we will also fix the recruitment crisis. We're not just trying to rebuild the lives of teachers; we're trying to rebuild the reputation of the profession," McBrearty said.

"The longer we wait to take action, the greater the damage we'll do to the profession and to the life chances of children and young people."

A DfE spokesperson said it was "listening to teachers and leaders and working with them to address workload and wellbeing issues. These include development of the workload reduction toolkit, funding wellbeing support for leaders and launching the education staff wellbeing charter."

AMY WALKER | @AMYWALKER

University exam marking boycott threatens ITT

The Department for Education is assessing how a university exam marking boycott might disrupt teacher trainee courses.

University and College Union (UCU) members are taking action short of a strike in a dispute over pay that will include a marking and assessment boycott. More than 40 institutions are affected.

Delays to exam results or coursework would mean some students unable to receive their degree before the end of the academic year.

Recruits can only start postgraduate initial teacher training (ITT) - the route most teachers take into the profession - if they have a degree.

In an email to ITT providers on Tuesday, seen by Schools Week, the DfE said it was working to "monitor the possible disruption this action could have".

"We want to reassure you that we are working to ensure that all students that want to start their ITT courses in September will

be able to do so.

"We are working to assess the scale and likelihood of the disruption and will provide further guidance in due course."

It is not known how many recruits have been impacted by the boycott.

Speaking to the Daily Telegraph on Monday, Ben Hutchison, a final-year modern languages student at Durham, said he had a place on Teach First to start later this year.

"They sent me an email saying we need to know your degree, and I've had to tell them that I don't know if I'll know for a few months," he told the paper.

Teach First said its recruitment team was aware of the situation, but would not comment further.

Teach First trainees starting in September take part in an initial summer institute, beginning this month, to "equip" them "with the core skills" needed for the course.

UCET and NASBTT, the organisations that respectively represent higher education and

schools-based ITT providers, said they were "monitoring" potential disruption.

Emma Hollis, the executive director of NASBTT, said it looked like there was "relatively little disruption" among school-based training, but it was supporting the government with potential mitigations "if it does start to become a bigger issue".

James Noble-Rogers, the executive director of UCET, said members were concerned, but it would only be an issue "if we weren't on the ball".

"There will be ways, even if a degree hasn't been awarded ... we could seek evidence that a degree would be awarded."

But a decision to seek provisional evidence of degrees and their classifications would need to be taken by the DfE.

During the pandemic, ITT providers were able to extend courses for an extra term following school closures, with both providers and trainees offered additional funding.

DfE sets up call centre as RAAC survey snub 'baffles' minister

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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EXCLUSIVE

Government officials are running a "call centre" to chase schools who have not responded to a survey on potentially dangerous concrete building materials, with the lack of response "baffling" ministers.

Baroness Barran told *Schools Week* the Department for Education was "here to help" with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). The Office for Government Property (OGP) fears the "crumbly" material, used widely in flat-roofed school buildings, is "liable to collapse".

According to a Local Government Association report, seen by *Schools Week*, more than 150 schools "have been identified as potentially having RAAC".

Last March, the Department for Education asked responsible bodies – trusts and councils – to complete a survey about RAAC on their school sites. Barran described this as a "superhuman task", and although a "vast majority" had responded, "a handful" had not.

"I find that really baffling, because we are here to help them. We've lined up a lot of capacity in terms of structural surveys and so forth. But if they don't reply to us..."

"We're running a call centre now in the department where we're ringing people repeatedly, which is probably not the best use of time."

Most capital funding is allocated through wider schemes such as the condition improvement fund and school rebuilding programme. But where schools identify an "urgent capital issue", the department will work with them to address it, Barran pledged. "We don't leave schools without the funding."

The collapse of a primary school's flat roof in 2018 – at a weekend and with no casualties – is believed to have brought the potential danger of RAAC's fragility into sharp focus.

In September, the OGP issued a safety briefing notice to all property leaders warning RAAC was "life-expired and liable to collapse".

But Barran said RAAC was "not necessarily in and of itself a huge risk, if it's been properly maintained".



Baroness Barran

While some schools had identified it in a store cupboard, which could be taken out of use and was a "non-issue", others "had a number of classrooms closed, where we've had to do propping before children can go back in. So we've had a really wide range."

The rebuilding of five hospitals with "significant" amounts of RAAC is to be prioritised "given the risks they pose to patients and staff".

Two affected hospitals have been named, with the reprioritisation delaying completion of "up to" eight other projects until after 2030.

Sources in schools expecting rebuilds reported slow progress, but said that wasn't unusual for big government projects.

Barran was non-committal on whether remediation work would delay other capital projects, such as through the government's flagship 10-year school rebuilding programme.

"Until we have completed and know what the full scope of the issue is, I can't give you an accurate answer to how many schools we're talking about, and also what the appropriate response is," she said.

The programme, launched in 2021, aims to fully or partially rebuild 500 schools over a decade.

Officials used the DfE's most recent school

condition data collection alone to select the first schools, but ministers changed tack last year and allowed responsible bodies to nominate the schools they felt were in direst need of repair.

Barran said this had avoided spending money on small fixes at schools that would soon be rebuilt.

A "catalyst" was a school she visited that had spent millions to replace all its windows just two years before it got a rebuild.

"We were putting on a scrap heap the £3 million worth of windows that we put in five minutes earlier."

The government has also launched a new estate management competency framework, designed to "set the standard skills and knowledge required by those conducting estate management functions, roles and responsibilities at different levels".

Barran said the guidance was requested by trusts and councils. "Any one of us who's done work, even on your own house, getting it a bit wrong is a very expensive mistake ... even at a domestic level, let alone a school level.

"Giving schools and responsible bodies the confidence about what they should be doing, and to be able to work most effectively, was the kind of requests that we're responding to."

London councils say their hands are tied on falling rolls

JACK DYSON
@JACKYDYS

A lack of power over academy admissions is leaving councils ill-equipped to meet their statutory duties and manage the fall-out from London's plunging pupil numbers, the government has been warned.

Falling birth rates and a post-Covid exodus of families from the capital have squeezed budgets in primaries as they struggle to fill reception classrooms.

With grim forecasts predicting the number of four-year-olds in some areas of London will drop up to 15 per cent by 2027, borough chiefs have slashed admission totals and even decided to close schools.

But while they can determine reductions in local authority-maintained schools, their powers do not extend to academies.

Sam Freedman, a former adviser to the Department for Education, said the split between local authorities and trusts "creates an incentive to academise".

"If no one has the power to close a school in the area and it's left with trusts, you're unlikely to get anyone to willingly close and you'll get falling rolls across all schools."

The axed schools bill proposed giving councils more power to intervene in academies, which are their own admission authorities.

Freedman added: "If you're a maintained school, you'll think getting into a trust will make you safe. This will only accelerate the problem."

London's birth rate dropped 17 per cent between 2012 and 2021, equivalent to 23,225 fewer children. Almost 15 per cent of school places in the city are now unfilled.

In Hackney – with 634 vacant reception places last year – senior councillors voted a fortnight ago to carry out two mergers and close two other primaries from next September.

Anntoinette Bramble, the borough's deputy mayor, said she had "repeatedly asked the government for greater powers to manage places in free schools and academies in order to pool resources".

She claimed that the launch of four free schools since 2013, "without reference to the council's evidence-based



needs", had contributed to the "reduction in demand for places".

Halley House – part of Bellevue Place Education Trust – agreed to halve its published admission number (PAN) "in response to falling reception rolls" in 2019. Fellow academy Mossbourne Parkside also pledged to reduce entry numbers from this September.

Mark Greatrex, the chief executive of Bellevue Place, said he was "keen to work in partnership with the council".

But London Councils, a cross-party organisation representing the capital's boroughs, said the lack of statutory levers could make it difficult for authorities to influence academies' decisions on falling rolls.

"[The government needs to] give local authorities the power to manage an academy's reduction of PAN or closure, where there is clear evidence of a significant drop in demand and a need to act to ensure a school remains viable," the body said in a report earlier this year.

However, Freedman argued that councils could only "get the powers if all primaries and secondaries are academies because they'll otherwise try to defend their own".

The alternative was for regional directors to take the lead. "We need legislation to tidy up the academy process."

Research from London Councils shows pupil numbers are likely to decrease from 2022-23 to 2026-27.

Lambeth, the worst-hit, is set to see a dip of more than 15 per cent. The borough admitted in October it had "limited control over secondary decisions" as 13 of its 20

11-plus schools were academies, which

gave it "limited option" on year 7 place provision.

While the demand for these spaces is expected to decline at a slower rate than for primaries, two Lambeth secondary academies are due to close.

The second closure was "outside our control", said Ben Kind, the council's member for children. "We believe these important decisions should be taken locally, not nationally."

Further tensions emerged when the oversubscribed Kingsdale Foundation in nearby Southwark unveiled plans to boost its PAN by more than 42 per cent from next September.

Lambeth opposed the proposal at the beginning of the year, urging the academy to "work as part of the community rather than to act in isolation".

Meanwhile, Richmond upon Thames education chiefs noted in March that "if further academisation were to happen to the point where few, if any, stay council-maintained, then that might make it more difficult for us to fulfil our statutory duty".

Since 2015, average headcounts for primary academies have grown by almost a tenth, overtaking those of their authority-maintained counterparts, *Schools Week* analysis shows.

Florence Eshalomi, the Labour MP for Vauxhall, told colleagues during a Westminster Hall debate on Wednesday that this created "a survival-of-the-biggest culture".

"We've already seen this locally where larger academies expand at the expense of neighbouring schools. This threatens the mix of small and big schools that defines London's school ecosystem."

A *Guardian* investigation uncovered that more than 90 primaries across England are either set to close or at risk of shutting as they sit more than two-thirds empty.



Sam Freedman



Florence Eshalomi

Schools left to pick up the tab for free meals scheme

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools in some parts of London will have to meet any funding shortfall for the mayor's extension of free meals to primary pupils, but councils in other areas will front up the difference.

Several boroughs told *Schools Week* the £2.65 per meal allocated by Sadiq Khan's office for the scheme falls short of what's needed, with little time and no extra money available to upgrade facilities and increase staffing for the September rollout.

Although the funding on offer is more than the £2.41 currently paid by central government for infant meals, our analysis suggests the funding plans will still leave a shortfall of £33 million across London.

While some boroughs have welcomed the investment and even pledged to top up funding to cover the meals, others have warned they will not be able to do so if it falls short. It suggests the investment will have an uneven impact across the capital.

Andy Jolley, a school food campaigner, said Khan had "completely underestimated the difficulties of implementation", and that schools would be "left to pick up the pieces".

The mayor was "up against the reality of providing school meals, it simply can't be done on the cheap".

Lewisham council said the funding shortfall could cost schools in the borough as much as £600,000. However, it has approved capital spending of £620,000 from its own budgets to upgrade kitchens.

Bexley council said it shared "the concerns of our schools on the practicalities and financial challenges that they will face in delivering these extra meals from September".

These included the logistics around the physical delivery of the extra meals and the extra costs.

"The council does not have the funds to meet any additional costs associated with this initiative and this will need to be met by our schools."

Kingston and Richmond councils,



Sadiq Khan

which share some services, said the "logistics of mobilising the expansion in such a short period of time is causing concern, at a time when schools are already under significant pressure in terms of children's needs and school finances".

A spokesperson said schools were assessing the changes to kitchens, dining halls, staffing and school timetables that might be needed to implement the new scheme.

Sutton said it had 27 schools in a contract with a set cost, which was less than £2.65 per meal. Others made their own arrangements, but if they faced a shortfall, "schools would be responsible" for meeting it.

"As the funding is only for one year, commencing with a short timescale and the take-up is unknown, schools will need to manage with the equipment and sites they have and manage the situation accordingly.

"If this were to continue then some capital funding may be required."

Some boroughs already provide universal primary free meals. Westminster will use the extra funding from the mayor to extend the scheme to secondary pupils. It will top up the cash to £3 per meal.

Newham also has universal primary free meals. Joshua Garfield, the council's cabinet member for education, said funding from the mayor "brings us

closer to the actual cost when compared to the national government's standing rate of £2.41 for infant schools – a figure that seems to be frozen in time".

However, the money fell short of the £3 needed to provide meals in the borough. Newham is awaiting details on whether boroughs with existing schemes would face different grant conditions.

Other councils said the funding from City Hall would cover the cost of meals.

Waltham Forest said its cost per meal was not above £2.65, and "we do not anticipate any shortfall". However, "final costs will be dependent on take-up and staffing required".

Merton said most of its primary schools were on a contract costing £2.40, and even planned inflationary increases would not take it above £2.65 next year.

However, it said there was "some concern" about capital funding "as we do have some small kitchens and may be need to use some neighbouring larger kitchen to help out in a small number of cases".

A spokesperson said the mayor's team "are continuing to work closely with schools, councils and partners on the implementation of this unprecedented policy", and pointed out the funding was "almost 10 per cent more" than provided by government.

Andy Jolley

Trust hopes parent code of conduct will end abuse

JACK DYSON

@JACKYDYS

EXCLUSIVE

One of England's biggest academy trusts has pledged to ban social media trolls from school grounds under a new "code of conduct" for parents.

Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust wants to outlaw threatening messages to staff and "defamatory" posts about its schools.

Under the rules – which will come into force across the north east trust's 47 sites next week – parents will also be told not to wear "sexually provocative" clothing or pyjamas at pick-up and drop-off.

Nick Hurn, the trust's chief executive, claimed tirades on social media led to an inspection at one of his schools and three SEND tribunal cases, which cost the trust £30,000 in legal fees.

He has also instructed solicitors to write letters to parents demanding they take down posts branding one of his teachers a paedophile.

A report from the charity Education Support this week revealed senior leaders had noticed a shift in public attitudes since Covid, with one noting: "It's like people have got angrier."

Teacher Tapp surveys show 10 per cent of school staff were threatened or abused on social media last year, up from 6 per cent in 2019.

Hurn said three members of SEND staff left one of his schools in the past 18 months "because they are just getting abuse and pressure from parents if they don't get what they want".

"These people seem to be able to say what they like online. If the school makes a decision a parent doesn't like, they immediately get on social media and before you know it you have 300 people piling into a member of staff.

"They go straight to the ESFA, Ofsted, you name it. Parents should be allowed to complain, but not when they're vexatious and there's no substance to them."

The code of conduct says "defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments" about any of the trust's schools, pupils, parents or employees "must not be aired on social media".



Meanwhile, threatening or abusive emails, texts, voicemails, phone calls and other forms of written communication "will not be tolerated".

Hurn said staff will begin compiling evidence – including screenshots – once they become aware of incidents.

Any parents caught breaking the rules will initially be warned in face-to-face meetings with headteachers.

But "persistent breaches may result in banning the offending adult from entering school grounds" and could "lead to prosecution".

The code said any concerns "must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, headteacher or chair of governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned".

Under the rules, parents will be told not to swear, "display temper" or "carry out actual bodily harm" at schools. The trust will also instruct them to "avoid [wearing] clothing that may be viewed as offensive, revealing or sexually provocative" on school grounds.

Pyjamas or clothes with "contentious slogans" will also not be allowed.

"Some of the primary heads have seen [people in] very revealing items that left little to the imagination," Hurn said. "I just don't think it's professional."

However, bans will be reserved for parents who are "abusive and aggressive" in person or online.

The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust estimated that the volume of complaints from parents was "two or three times" 2019 levels.

"It's got quite personal... previously a parent would go up to a teacher to complain.

"Now they skip that stage and go direct to thermo-nuclear war, an email to Ofsted, copy in the MP, for things that wouldn't have met the threshold before," said Hugh Greenway, the chief executive of the 32-school trust.

The Education Support report detailed how a focus group of senior leaders had noticed a change in parental behaviour over the past three years. This had coincided with schools having to deal more with children's complex needs, while juggling parents' expectations and often being "blamed" for problems in the community.

Julie McCulloch of school leaders' union ASCL is calling for social media companies to "put their houses in order" by removing "abusive content from their forums", instead of expecting "victims to report offensive material" themselves.

Hurn said the government should introduce a "nationally backed parent and carer code of conduct".

"Parents should be required to sign and adhere to [it] from their child's first day at school. Public servants need to be protected from that kind of onslaught.

"The abuse has put a lot of people off being a headteacher because they think it's not worth the hassle. We're trying to make sure heads know they're not isolated."

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

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Revealed: 21 experts to oversee SEND reform roll-out

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The government has named the 21 members of its SEND and alternative provision implementation board that will oversee the roll-out of key reforms.

Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, Dame Rachel de Souza, the children's commissioner, and Chris Russell, Ofsted's national director, are among the members.

Claire Coutinho, the children's minister, and Maria Caulfield, the mental health minister, are joint chairs. The board met for the first time on Tuesday.

Major reforms include new national SEND standards and funding tariffs, digital education, health and care plans (EHCPs) and "tailored lists" of schools for parents of SEND children to choose from.

But the policies will be piloted for two to three years under a £70 million "change" programme, with nine regional expert partnerships in up to four council areas taking part.

Last year's SEND green paper said the board would "hold partners to account for the timely development and improvement of the system". Plans were confirmed in the government's improvement plan earlier this year.

The government said this week board members would provide "challenge and advice" and provide feedback from their sectors, but also "help to champion the changes".

Coutinho said it was "fantastic" to chair the first meeting and "get the board members' views on how to best make sure each local area can deliver for parents and families through our new local inclusion plans".

"The board members bring a range of expertise from parents and family groups, education, health and local government that will be invaluable in making sure that the new system we are creating delivers the early intervention and better support that children need."

Its terms of reference,



also published on Tuesday, say it will take "full account of the views and needs of children and young people with SEND and in AP, and their parents and carers".

The board will operate in a way that "fosters co-production" with children and young people, and will use "expertise and knowledge to advise on the delivery and implementation of the SEND and AP Improvement Plan and how this impacts end users".

It will draw on the "latest data, evidence and evaluation to provide insight into the current performance of the SEND and AP system" and ensure the improvement plan "stays current and adapts to broader social changes and new challenges".

The DfE said members had been chosen to cover a "broad range of interests and expertise relevant to SEND and AP, and links across to other related key programmes across education, health and social care".

"Where possible, members will set aside any organisational or personal interests in order to drive transformational change at the national system level."

The SEND reform board

- Claire Coutinho**, children's minister, (chair)
- Maria Caulfield**, women's and health minister, (chair)
- Leora Cruddas**, chief executive, Confederation of Schools Trusts
- Dame Rachel de Souza**, children's commissioner
- Susan Douglas**, chief executive, Eden Academy Trust
- Tina Emery and Sarah Clarke**, co-chairs, National Network of Parent Carer Forums
- Michael Freeston**, director, Early Years Alliance
- Richard Gill**, chair, Teaching School Hubs Council and MAT chief executive
- David Holloway**, senior policy manager, Association of Colleges
- Alison Ismail**, SEND and AP director, DfE
- Christine Lenehan**, director, Council for Disabled Children
- Nigel Minns**, strategic director, Warwickshire local authority
- Sue North**, head of children and young people, NHS England
- Professor Sarah O'Brien**, chief nurse, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- John Pearce**, president, Association of Directors of Children's Services,
- Christopher Russell**, national director of education, Ofsted
- James Sanderson**, joint SRO for SEND, NHS England
- Alison Stewart**, head of SEND, South West London Integrated Care Board
- Mark Vickers**, chair, AP/SEND CEO Network
- Fiona Walshe**, director, Department of Health and Social Care
- Simon Wellman**, director of education, Telford and Wrekin Council



Dame Rachel de Souza



Claire Coutinho

2m pupils now eligible for free school meals

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

More than two million children are now eligible for means-tested free school meals.

Statistics of schools, pupils and their characteristics, published by the Department for Education, show 2,019,509 pupils, 23.8 per cent of the entire school population, are now eligible for free lunches because of their family income.

This is up 6 per cent on last January, and 40 per cent higher than in January 2020.

Only the children of those on certain benefits whose household income is below £7,400 are eligible to claim the meals.

The DfE said the increasing numbers could be explained in-part by transitional arrangements the government put in place when moving from the old benefits system to universal credit.

But child poverty levels are also rising. According to the Child Poverty Action Group, 350,000 more children were pulled into relative poverty in 2021-22 after housing costs were taken

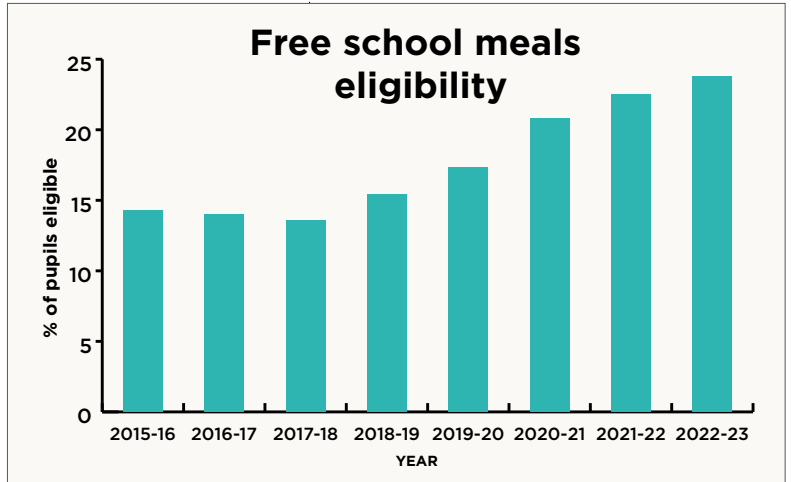
into account. Free school meals eligibility continues to be much higher among children in alternative provision (57.8 per cent) and special schools (46 per cent).

This week's data shows the total number of children in schools in England increased by 0.8 per cent to just over nine million this January.

This was driven by an increase of 1.8 per cent in the secondary school population, while the number of primary age pupils fell by 0.2 per cent.

Secondary pupil numbers are projected to continue to rise until 2024 before dropping.

The number of pupils in special schools



increased by 5 per cent to 149,100, "continuing the trend of increases seen in recent years", the DfE said.

And while the number of pupils in state-funded AP schools increased by 13 per cent to 13,200, officials said this followed a decrease of 9 per cent in the year before and was still lower than pre pandemic levels.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Half of EHCPs issued beyond legal deadline

Almost half of children needing support for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) last year waited beyond the legal deadline for an education, health and care plan.

Government data shows the number of children waiting more than 20 weeks increased by 35 per cent in just one year.

Councils are legally required to issue EHCPs within 20 weeks of a request, except in certain situations where an exemption is in place.

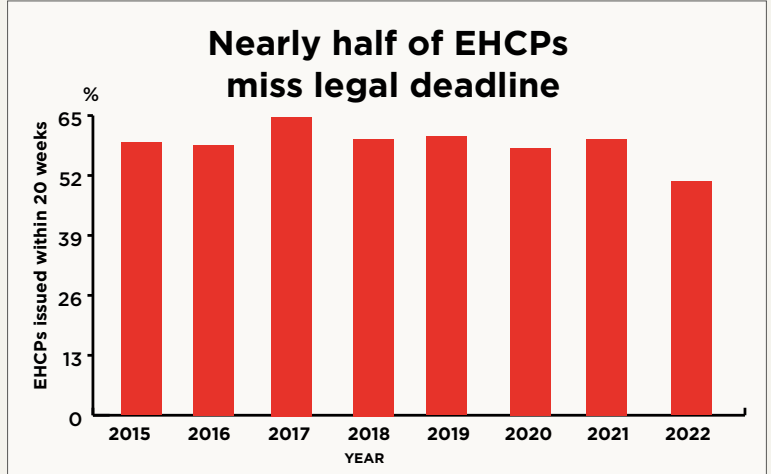
Of 62,686 EHCPs issued in the 2022 calendar year without any exemption, just 50.7 per cent were issued by the legal deadline. This is down from 59.9 per cent in 2021, and the lowest since current records began in 2015.

It means 30,932 children waited beyond the legal limit for their plans last year, up from 22,947 in 2021, a rise of 35 per cent. While these children are also left waiting longer for support, it means their schools are also without the funding attached to such plans.

This week's data shows the total number of EHCPs in place nationally increased to 517,000 as of this January, up 9 per cent on the same period in 2022.

The number of new plans increased by 7 per cent over the same period. There were 114,500 initial requests for plans in 2022, up 23 per cent on 2021.

Data on special educational needs and disability tribunals



(SENDIST), which give parents the right to appeal councils' decisions about EHCPs, has also been published this week.

It shows there were 5,574 tribunals outstanding at the end of March this year, up 68 per cent on the 3,324 that were outstanding at the same point last year.

This echoes figures reported by *Schools Week* in February when it investigated how parents of vulnerable children are forced to wait nearly a year to challenge councils' refusals to offer SEND support.

NEWS

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Ofsted beefs-up parent website security after 'suspicious' activity

AMY WALKER
@AMYRWALKER

EXCLUSIVE



Ofsted has strengthened security measures on its Parent View portal after "suspicious" foreign accounts left overwhelmingly negative feedback for a school under inspection.

The schools watchdog had to suspend the page for George Spencer Academy in Nottingham in March and "removed the erroneous data" after identifying "an unusual pattern of behaviour".

It has now added "additional security" to the site, but would not provide further details.

Accounts removed from the feedback were based in the US, Canada, Brazil, France, Japan, Germany, Singapore, Italy, Romania and Hungary.

Screenshots of the school's page from March 23 before it was taken down, seen by Schools Week, show 501 responses this academic year.

Thirty-six per cent of parents strongly disagreed that their child did well at the school and 38 per cent strongly disagreed that its pupils were well behaved.

Forty-two per cent strongly disagreed that their child was happy and 38 per cent said the same in terms of their child feeling safe.

The academy, the flagship school of the George Spencer Academies Trust, was rated 'good' after an inspection on March 21 and 22.

As of Wednesday, following Ofsted's investigation, 367 responses were left on the academy's Parent View portal.

Forty-one per cent of parents now agreed their child did well at the school, with the same percentage saying their child was happy there. Forty-five per cent said their child felt safe.

Ofsted said it noticed the issue when a "large batch of responses were submitted in a short space of time from suspicious accounts".

Though it said the portal had not been hacked, it added that it previously suspended Parent View during a separate investigation and had systems in place to "spot suspicious activity".

Mark Orchison, the managing director at cyber security company 9ine consulting, said such measures usually involved "geofencing" the site to only accept UK IP addresses or recoding it to only accept one comment at a time.

The school did not respond to questions about the incident. But Orchison said the most likely scenario was that a single contributor who "didn't like the school" had used a VPN to change their location "relatively easily" and send multiple negative comments.

"A single account could do that...[you] get an IP address which would register from a different location and do it in an incognito browser," he said.

"It's probably someone within the school or associated with the school."

AMY WALKER | @AMYRWALKER

Online safety focus in updated safeguarding guidance

The Department for Education has emphasised that all school staff must undergo training on the filtering and monitoring of online devices after a coroner questioned its current guidelines.

The beefed-up advice forms part of updated keeping children safe in education guidance that comes into force on September 1.

In December, online safety campaigner Judy Thomas wrote in *Schools Week* that the current safeguarding guidance was "insufficient".

Her daughter Frankie took her own life in September 2018. On the same day, while unsupervised on a school iPad, she had accessed material about violent rape, self-harm and stories that ended in suicide.

An assistant coroner questioned why the department's guidance did not advise screen readers such as NetSupport DNA.

Thomas also argued that alerts in schools should flag attempts to access blocked sites, with these then "acted on and records kept".

In the updated guidance, governing bodies and proprietors are told they should ensure

all staff undergo the updated safeguarding and child protection training "which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring".

Appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and networks should be reflected in the school's child protection policy, it says.

The document also sets out advice from the DfE's filtering and monitoring standards, including that schools should review provision yearly and block harmful content without "unreasonably impacting teaching and learning".

Meanwhile, governing bodies and proprietors should review the standards and discuss with IT staff and service providers what more needed to be done to support schools in meeting them.

The department published new guidelines for schools on meeting the standard for filtering and monitoring systems in March.

It says a member of the senior leadership

team and a governor should be responsible for ensuring the standards are met.

Senior leadership teams were responsible for procuring filtering and monitoring systems, documenting decisions on what was blocked or allowed and why, reviewing the effectiveness of their provision and overseeing reports.

Designated safeguarding leads should take lead responsibility for filtering and monitoring reports, safeguarding concerns and checks to systems.

IT service providers should have technical responsibility for maintaining systems, providing reports and completing actions following concerns or checks to systems.

Schools should also tell shortlisted candidates for jobs that "online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks".

Earlier this year, *Schools Week* reported the DfE was being urged to clarify how schools should check the online behaviour of prospective staff after some asked job applicants for all their social media usernames.

Labour's £1.6bn pot from private school fees VAT 'optimistic'

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Removing the charitable status from private schools will likely raise £600 million less than Labour hopes, a think tank has warned.

Many of the party's plans for education reform hinge on lifting the tax exemptions on private schools, meaning they would charge VAT on fees.

It has repeatedly estimated this would raise £1.6 billion.

But that figure has been contested in a report published on Wednesday by the EDSK think tank, run by former government adviser Tom Richmond, which found that "claims about how much new revenue could be unlocked by this policy seem very optimistic".

The report traced the claim back to a 2011 Fabian Society report, and called the calculations "badly flawed".

For example, EDSK said the original analysis included more than 50,000 pupils educated in the state sector, as well as nursery-aged children in private schools. VAT is not charged on childcare.

The calculation also added 20 per cent to the fees charged by expensive private schools, even though a proportion were for boarding, which again was VAT-exempt, the think tank said.

And the report did not acknowledge that "some pupils could be forced to quit private school if VAT was suddenly added to their fees", which EDSK said would "result in lower VAT revenues for the government as well as higher government spending on new state school places".

Income closer to £1 billion

Richmond took two estimates of pupil "drop-off" resulting from such a policy. Based on Labour's own assumption of 5 per cent, the report estimated the income would drop to £991 million.

If 25 per cent dropped out, as a report commissioned by the Independent Schools Council estimated in 2018, income would fall to just £19 million.

"Claims of £1.6 billion a year being raised from adding VAT to private school fees look far too optimistic,



Sir Keir Starmer

particularly if any more than a small number of pupils end up leaving private schools and moving to the state sector," Richmond said.

"What's more, changing VAT rules with the sole aim of targeting private schools could lead to many unintended consequences that result in a government raising much less money than intended."

Analysis based on 'flawed assumptions', Labour says

However, a Labour source said it did not "recognise the numbers cited in this report, which rest on flawed assumptions and leaves more questions than it answers".

"We do not accept that the numbers of students leaving the sector would be anywhere near those cited this report."

They also pointed out that the report assumed money not spent on private schools would not be spent on other goods and services that were taxable. "That shows that this is simply not a serious piece of research."

Labour's policy is not new. A similar pledge was also made in the 2019 and 2017 manifestos, and it was also party policy as far back as 1983.

But it has been used recently as a dividing line by the Conservatives, who have accused Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer of attacking "aspiration".

The Independent Schools Council

has also lobbied hard against the policy, and cited the report as further evidence "Labour's policy will not raise the money it claims".

Economist casts doubt on report's findings

But Luke Sibieta, research fellow at the Institute for Fiscal Studies, said the "evidence on private school attendance suggests that demand is driven by high incomes and wealth, culture, values and a desire for different sort of education, with relatively weak effects of fees".

He said Labour's policy was "likely to have only a small impact on demand and private schools will likely absorb some of any increase".

He said while adding VAT to private school fees would "probably raise more than assumed" in the EDSK report, "exactly how much is an open question though, with lots of uncertainty".

Richmond's report also said private schools forced to charge VAT on fees might become eligible to reclaim any VAT incurred on recent large building projects.

It also warned parents fearing a change of government could pay several years' worth of fees upfront, therefore reducing the VAT take.

But Francis Green, a co-founder of the Private Education Policy Forum and professor of work and education economics at UCL, said there were "questionmarks" over this assumption, when paying upfront fees was "in fact only possible for the very richest".



Tom Richmond



Luke Sibieta

6 weeks lost to bad behaviour each year, DfE survey shows

JACK DYSON

@JACKDYDS

More than six weeks of lesson time may have been lost to misbehaviour over the past year, the government's first national behaviour survey has found.

The research, which DfE behaviour tsar Tom Bennett called a "huge wake-up" for the sector, also revealed the health and wellbeing of 60 per cent of teachers had been impacted.

It found about 25 per cent of youngsters only felt safe at school on "some days" or at no point in the week before they were quizzed.

Bennett, who helped write the report, said the results showed efforts needed to be refocused on making sure schools "are safe for all".

"There is a lot of learning time lost to misbehaviour. Even if the recorded data is an exaggeration, the suggestion that almost 20 per cent of time is lost in a school day is a huge wake-up.

"If we could claw most of that back, then we could add a whole year of learning on to a child's school life. Most children could really use that extra year, especially the most disadvantaged."

Sixty-two per cent of school leaders and teachers said poor behaviour had interrupted teaching in lessons in the week before they were quizzed last June.

On average, poor behaviour ate up about six minutes for every half an hour in class. This represented a lost 50 minutes over the course of a normal school day – or about six-and-a-half weeks of classes over the academic year.

"In June 2022, 61 per cent of school leaders and teachers reported that pupil misbehaviour had a negative impact on their health and wellbeing to any extent in the past week," the report said.

"Of these, 7 per cent reported it to 'a great extent', 23 per cent to 'some extent' and 31 per cent to 'a small extent'."

When asked if they felt they could access training for behaviour management, 27 per cent of teachers and 20 per cent of leaders



answered they could not find any relevant to their experience and needs.

Ninety-two per cent of leaders also reported their school had been calm and orderly "every day" or "most days" in the past week. This compared with 70 per cent of teachers and 55 per cent of pupils.

Forty per cent of youngsters responding to the survey said they felt safe at school every day over the previous week. Twenty-four per cent answered "some days" or "never".

The study also found more than one in five children had been bullied in the past 12 months, with the majority saying it was because of the way they looked.

The DfE said the survey was designed to

provide it with a tool to monitor pupil behaviour in mainstream primary and secondary schools.

"Understanding concerns related to pupil behaviour and engagement is a priority for us. The regular survey data will provide evidence to build on our programme of work to support school leaders and teachers in managing pupil behaviour and to create a positive culture."



Tom Bennett

DFE'S FIRST BEHAVIOUR SURVEY: 4 KEY FINDINGS

6 minutes LOST TO POOR BEHAVIOUR FOR EVERY HALF AN HOUR IN CLASS

22% OF CHILDREN HAVE BEEN BULLIED IN PAST 12 MONTHS

3/5 STAFF SAY THEIR HEALTH IMPACTED BY UNRULY PUPILS

24% OF CHILDREN ONLY FELT SAFE AT SCHOOL 'SOME DAYS' OR 'NEVER'

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London school drops 'deeply unequal' 'Sir' and 'Miss'

AMY WALKER
@AMYRWALKER

A top-performing London sixth form has told pupils to stop referring to teachers as "Sir" and "Miss" in a bid to challenge "cultural misogyny". In an assembly on Monday, James Handscombe, the executive principal of Harris Westminster told pupils that the terms were "deeply unequal".

While "Sir" invoked gallant knights such as Sir Lancelot or Sir Galahad, "Miss" was "how you refer to a small girl, or an Edwardian shop assistant".

Pupils will instead be asked to refer to teachers by their honorific and last name, such as Mr Handscombe. "Teacher" is allowed if staff agree.

Handscombe told pupils that the terms fed into "a view of the world that diminishes women".

"Men get to be fearless leaders and alpha types, get credited for hustling while behind the backs of women it's asked whether they deserve it, whether their career comes from good ideas or good looks, power moves or diversity lists."

'Madam has a stropmy connotation' The policy will not be adopted across the Harris Federation or Harris Clapham Sixth Form, where Handscombe is also executive head.

He said Clapham had a "different culture" and was at a "different stage of their evolution".

Harris Westminster, where 49 pupils received Oxbridge offers last year, was set up in 2014 as a selective free school that gives priority



James Handscombe

to disadvantaged pupils with high academic potential.

At the time, Handscombe proffered the idea of adopting a similar policy around monikers, but staff had "too many other things to think about".

But after a female staff member raised the idea again earlier this year, the school decided this June was a "good time" to implement the approach as year 13s were leaving for exams.

Different terms for female teachers were discussed, but staff decided "Madam has a stropmy connotation, and Ma'am sounds like you're a royal or from the 1920s", Handscombe told Schools Week.

The "fanciful" sensei – the Japanese term for teacher – and the "very Hogwarts" professor were also discussed but discarded.

Staff and pupils were "very on board" with the new approach, Handscombe said..

"It's going to be difficult for us all, but this is your opportunity to change how we do things here, to achieve something those pioneers couldn't manage, to leave a legacy that will be remembered for the thousand years of school history that we're planning," he told pupils.

Rather than enforcing the policy, or sanctioning pupils who lapse into old habits, Handscombe said it would be "something where we shift the culture by reminding each other".

Teachers would "ignore" pupils who used the banned terms, but would "recognise" not all pupils would know their names so would give them "amnesty to say 'I'm sorry, I've forgotten your name' – or, more likely, 'I'm afraid I've forgotten what title you use'", he said.

But if pupils referred to a teacher as Sir or Miss "in order to be disrespectful...then [we] would quite rightly sanction them appropriately".

He admitted that while he thought "cultural misogyny" was a "global problem that I would like all schools to think about", he did not anticipate a mass rollout of the policy.

"A lot of schools have got particular things to think about and other priorities." The Harris Federation was contacted for comment.

The LGBT+ charity Educate and Celebrate recommended last year the terms "Sir" and "Miss" be replaced with "Teacher", but that was based instead on the idea of moving towards a "gender-free" model of education.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Keegan promises Ofsted changes next week

The education secretary will "take action to offer further support" to school leaders following the death of Ruth Perry, with changes on Ofsted inspections expected next week.

The headteacher's family say she took her own life in January before the publication of an inspection report that downgraded Caversham Primary School in Reading from 'outstanding' to 'inadequate'. They blame pressure from the Ofsted process for her death.

Gillian Keegan met with Perry's family for the second time on Wednesday. In a statement she said it was "important that we have

meaningful conversations about the wellbeing of school leaders, and we will take action to offer further support".

No further details have yet been provided on what that action might be.

Keegan said she was working to "improve the accountability system", including inspection, so it "continues to raise standards while commanding the confidence of school leaders".

Ministers had already announced in April that Ofsted was "reviewing" its approach to inspecting safeguarding and would look at how to give schools more advance warning about

inspections.

Keegan said some of the changes would be immediate, "some will take longer". School accountability, including inspection, had a vital role to play.

"For the sake of children, teachers, school leaders and parents, it's essential we get these changes right."

Professor Julia Waters, Perry's sister, said she was pleased that the education secretary had been willing to listen to "the clear concerns of many people" about the wellbeing of school leaders, and to consider urgent action to reform inspections.



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Investigation

JESSICA HILL | @JESSJANEHILL

DEREGULATION BY THE BACK DOOR



Teacher supply agencies are making millions of pounds while sending schools unqualified and inexperienced staff, a special *Schools Week* investigation has found. Jessica Hill reports ...

The recruitment crisis and soaring sickness have led to big profits for teacher supply companies, with an analysis of annual accounts showing the country's seven largest agencies recording £68.4 million in gross profit.

But the recruitment squeeze has led to a scramble for staff, with hundreds of agency adverts for unqualified teachers to run classrooms, and a spike in demand for cover supervisors, who have less experience.

While some supply staff report earning as little as £50 a day, one company claims an agency recruiter could earn more than £100,000 a year with paid-for holidays abroad. Previous all-staff trips included to Ibiza and Mallorca.

Schools Week reveals how the recruitment crisis-driven rise in supply cover has led to a "deregulation" of the profession's graduate status by the back door ...

Share of supply staff spirals

The government has failed to hit its secondary teacher target for nine of the past ten years, with estimates suggesting just half of the required teachers will be recruited for September.

Meanwhile, 3.2 million teaching days were missed because of sickness last year, up 56 per

cent on the around 2 million pre-Covid and more teachers are quitting the profession – leaving schools struggling to staff their classrooms.

A TeacherTapp and SchoolDash report this week found half of primary teachers reported at least one class in their school was being taught by a temporary agency or non-qualified teacher. In secondaries, 22 percent of teachers said their department lacked suitably qualified teachers, up from 20 per cent in 2019.

DfE workforce data this week shows the number of temporarily-filled posts increased to 3,308 as of November (five per cent of all roles), compared to 2,247 the year before (three per cent).

But with fewer teacher recruits, where are all the supply staff coming from?

A search on Jobs site Indeed for supply teachers in England last month brought up 9,447 ads. Worryingly, more than 1,000 specifically mentioned "unqualified school teacher".

While academies are allowed to employ unqualified teachers, maintained schools are not.

But many are, often taking them on as "cover supervisors", but then expecting them to teach.

Cover supervisors often have no teaching qualifications apart from a one-day agency training course, or teaching assistant credentials.

SchoolDash analysis of job advert boards from 5,238 secondary schools and sixth-form colleges in 2021-22 showed a 102 per cent increase in cover supervisor mentions since 2018-19.

One head of a maintained school, who employed an unqualified teacher on a cover supervisor rate for months to teach design and technology, said deregulation was happening "by the back door out of necessity".

Marios Georgiou, who founded the agency Step Teachers in 2000, believes demand for cover supervisors initially came from schools in a bid to save money.

Their pay is typically between half and a third of a supply teacher, he said. But "more and more, it's because there aren't the teachers to send".

"It's scary. I don't think parents are aware how many of their children's lessons are covered by someone who just sits there."

Agencies hunt for unqualified teachers

Three-quarters of supply teachers worked through agencies in 2021, rising to 89 per cent last year, survey data from the NASUWT union shows.

Despite marketing themselves to schools as providers of trained teachers, Schools Week found some supply agencies are actively seeking out

Investigation: Teacher supply

unqualified teachers.

A LinkedIn advert from Prospero Teaching specified it was looking for an “unqualified supply teacher” for secondary schools in Camden, north London. “No previous experience” was required.

The agency, which has been working in education for more than 20 years, markets itself as having “an extensive network of registered and qualified candidates” and “the ability to provide any number of qualified staff”.

Agency TeacherActive states online “all teachers must have QTS” [qualified teacher status]. But a recent advert for a primary teacher in Birmingham says that while that was “desirable”, it would “consider unqualified teachers”. It did not respond to a request for comment.

Protocol Education has also advertised for “enthusiastic unqualified teachers” for schools in Kent.

Protocol told Schools Week the staff it provides are based on the requirements of schools it works with.

Meanwhile Prospero said it had “identified which consultant was responsible for this advert and they have apologised for constructing a misleading advert, which wasn’t their intention”.

However, the advert remained live after our enquiry.

The government set up a national pool of “trusted” supply teacher agencies in 2018, to ensure schools have “protections in place ... including guarantees [the agencies] will have adequate qualifications and have undergone the right level of background checks”.

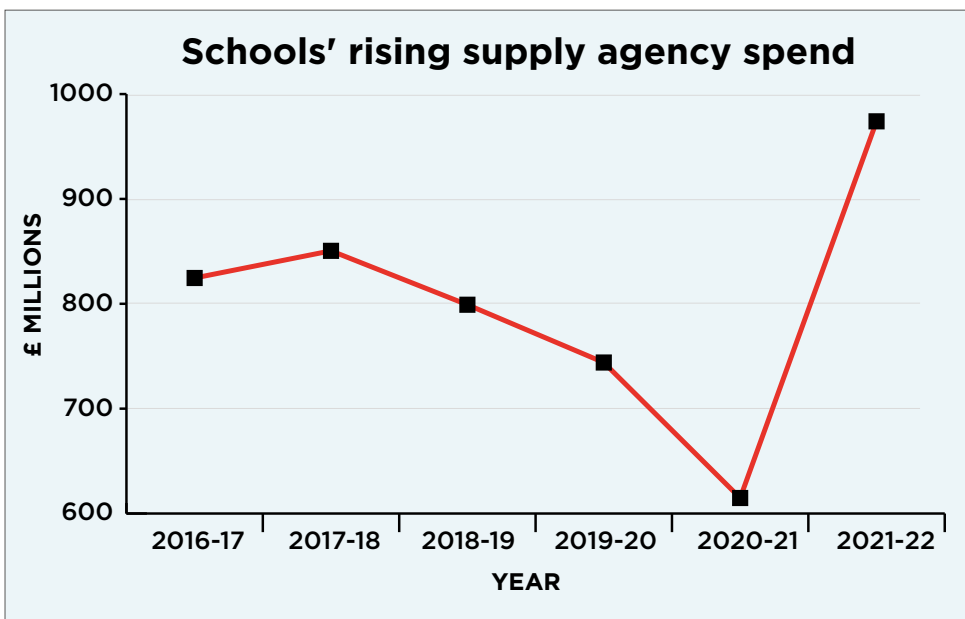
But we found at least 15 of the 113 “approved” agencies on the list are actively recruiting unqualified teachers.

‘I sent away two 18-year-olds’

Jamie Barry, the head of Yew Tree Primary School in Walsall, said supply teachers from agencies now “don’t have strength in their teaching ability or planning you’d expect teachers to have.



Tanya Ovenden-Hope



‘They’re just very young chaperones with a DBS’

“We’ve taken them because sometimes you just have to take who’s available.”

Glyn Potts, the head of Newman RC College in Oldham, said he “sent away” two 18-year-olds an agency recently sent to his school.

“They’re just chaperones with a DBS who are normally very young.”

But one trust chief executive told Schools Week they would “take anyone at the moment because we just need adults in the classroom”.

Teacher vacancy rates nearly doubled in the academic year up to February compared with pre-Covid, NFER research found.

Tanya Ovenden-Hope, an education professor at Plymouth Marjon University, describes the rise of untrained teachers as “one of the [sector’s] biggest problems... [that] denigrates the status of teaching”.

“If you bother to get your QTS and you’re working alongside people that haven’t, but you’re getting paid the same amount of money, where’s your motivation?”

However, Neil Carberry, chief executive of the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC), says agencies

“would say that the drive for unqualified teachers is



Jamie Barry

coming from schools”.

“Schools are asking for people to fill slots, and we know there aren’t enough teachers out there. So they’re saying, look, what can we do with for instance a TA with some experience?”

‘Schools looking for teachers without experience’

Schools Week tested out agencies’ willingness to take on unqualified candidates by purporting to be such a jobseeker.

A recruiter from Hays Specialist Recruitment said a “lot of secondary schools are actually just looking for teachers who have not got teaching experience, so you would not necessarily have to have a teaching qualification. As long as they’ve got teaching experience, they’re happy to employ them.”

When asked whether this was for a cover supervisor or teacher, we were told “as a teacher”.

A job advert from agency GSL Education said it was “looking for an unqualified music teacher” for an academy in Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

After calling the company, we were told there were “more schools [in that area] that could also have some [positions]

Investigation: Teacher supply

available” as an unqualified teacher.

GSL did not respond to a request for comment.

A Hays spokesperson said a “speculative conversation about possible opportunities does not determine registration with Hays ... which follows strict protocol with an education consultant”.

Prospective candidates would be required to attend an interview where their “depth of experience, background, skills, and qualification would all be discussed, and appropriate references sought”.

Profits soar after Covid lull

New analysis of government data suggests schools spent £974 million on supply teachers from agencies in 2021-22, up 18 per cent on the £825 million in 2016-17.

According to the NEU Supply Teachers Network, 365 supply agencies are operating in the sector this year.

Of the top 10, based on the NEU member survey, seven operated solely in education. Those seven alone increased their yearly turnover by an average of 28 per cent and posted £68.4 million in gross profit, our analysis of their most recent annual accounts covering year ends in 2021 or 2022 shows.

Supply Desk, which posted £3.7 million profit for the year up to December 2021, said “demand for short-term sickness cover and...catch-up learning supported the post-closure recovery of trading volumes”.

Tradewind Recruitment, which posted £11.3 million profit in the year ending August 2021, said it was also “expecting to report strong growth next year”.

Teaching Personnel, part of the Hood Topco Group, posted the biggest gross profit of education-specific agencies that year (£21.9 million), with its turnover up 26 per cent on the previous year to £108.8 million.

Prospero Group, which also recruits for health and social care, posted a £18.8 million profit in the year to 2022, up 207 per cent on the previous year.

Gross profits at TeacherActive rose 62 per cent from £6.8 million in 2020 to £11 million in 2021. A

‘Sometimes you just have to take who’s available’

loss of £2.6 million at Protocol Education for the year ending November 2020 rose to a £6 million profit in the year ending November 2021.

Commission and paid-for holidays

The profit boom means recruiters can be paid handsomely.

Smile Education is offering a new regional recruitment consultant “uncapped commission”, with “top billers earning £100k+”.

Employees also have a paid-for holiday abroad together once a year, the advert stated.

Private agencies have taken over market share from local authority supply pools. The NEU’s supply teachers survey found only 2 per cent secured work from council pools in 2021, down from 11 per cent in 2010.

“We could put [supply] back into local authorities’ hands,” says Carberry, “but the local authority wasn’t getting up at 6.30am to find someone to fill your vacancy for a teacher who’s been up all night vomiting. The agency [worker] absolutely is.”

His members are reporting more “good, experienced teachers coming out of schools to work for agencies” because “employment relations in schools have got worse ... not through the fault of heads. But because we’ve underfunded our schools.”

Daniel Dawkins, a director of Aspire People agency, says teachers are “leaving in droves to come to agencies” because of “there is a lot of pressure on them in schools”.

An ad by Engage Education for a primary cover teacher in Bradford says the teacher can make a “positive impact” while “avoiding the responsibilities of being a full-time class teacher”.

“If it gets tough, they can move on,” Dawkins says.

Almost all agencies also offer “refer a friend” bonuses of between £75 and £500 for

smile-education.co.uk

Opportunity to work remotely

- A lunch break EVERYBODY takes, not a benefit, but an expectation!
- Attractive and uncapped commission structure with no threshold from day one. (Top billers earning £100k+)
- Full training with support from a business which boasts over 200 years recruitment experience
- Invite to complete an industry recognised Recruitment Diploma
- 24-35 days annual leave (Dependent on experience) plus all Bank Holidays
- Additional day off on your birthday!
- Annual summer holiday for EVERYONE in the business (previous locations have included Barcelona, Ibiza and Mallorca)
- 3.30pm finish in school holidays and 4pm finish EVERY Friday
- Chance to join our committees

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Reference - SMILER

Please send your cv to adam@smile-education.co.uk and call me on 0121 392 6598

We use cookies on our website to give you the most relevant experience by remembering your preferences and repeat

introductions to teachers.

But Carberry says no one changes jobs because of a refer a friend fee – “the teacher who made that decision was already thinking about it”.

Poor schools lose out in supply ‘dating game’

Daniella Kemp, an experienced supply agency teacher in London, compares agencies to a “dating agent” matching candidates with the right schools.

But, as in the dating game, that leaves some schools more attractive than others.

A TeacherTapp survey found 79 per cent of teachers knew of problems their school had getting supply staff since September. But this rose to 89 per cent in schools with lower Ofsted ratings.

And while 78 per cent of teachers in the most affluent schools reported problems, it was 85 per cent for those in the most deprived areas.

“Every candidate has a list of schools they won’t go to,” says Dawkins, with placements in deprived areas “more difficult” to fill.

Investigation: Teacher supply

Potts, whose school is in Greater Manchester's most deprived borough, estimates that 90 per cent of his emergency teaching cover is unqualified teachers.

Pay rates as little as £50 a day

But as agencies rake in millions, how much are they paying their supply staff?

Supply teachers employed directly by a maintained school or by a council's supply pool must be paid 1/195th of the annual pay rate they would receive if directly employed.

However, there is no mandated rate for temporary agency supply, meaning their rates are normally lower and vary wildly.

While the government's 2022 school workforce report found the average teacher salary was £42,358 – equivalent to £217 a day – a NASUWT supply teachers survey found 1 per cent were paid less than £50 a day.

The survey from last year found about 25 per cent of respondents were paid between £51-£119 a day and 50 per cent between £120-£149 a day.

Schools pay between £40 and £60 on top to agencies, according to Oliver Parsons, who runs the digital supply booking platform Teacher Booker.

Schools Week was unable to obtain rate cards for agencies. But the Mowbray Education Trust says the average rate it is charged by agencies for a teacher in primaries is £215, and between £220 and £260 (both plus VAT) in secondaries, although it is charged £299.98 for one teacher it uses regularly.

One secondary recently paid an agency £305

for an experienced RE teacher, which the head describes as "outrageous – but what choice do we have".

Parsons says rates are "at the agency's discretion and have little to no bearing on a teacher's actual experience".

"There is clearly something wrong with the current agency model that is keeping teacher wages low in order to maintain margins and competitive pricing."

Stuart Irving, chief negotiator for the National Supply Teachers Network, claims it has been a "race to the bottom on standards" since council supply pools have all but disappeared.

"Because the market is not regulated, everybody is just chasing price. A lot of schools are no longer checking the quality of the teachers they are getting."

However, Dawkins says agencies pay "the same and sometimes better" than teachers get working directly for schools "because it's a competitive market".

According to Agency Worker Regulations 2010, after 12 weeks agencies have to start paying candidates the same as they would get if employed directly for the school.

But Niall Bradley, the NEU Supply Teachers Network's chair, claims some try hard to get out of it, sometimes wrongly telling candidates they

Unqualified Supply Teacher

SAVE

Prospero Teaching
London

Apply on reed.co.uk Apply on Fish4jobs Apply on WANE Jobs Apply on KHON2 Jobs

16 days ago £90-£130 a day Full-time

Unqualified Supply Teacher Job
SECONDARY SCHOOL - Camden
Full time/Part time - ASAP

Prospero Teaching are seeking an Unqualified Supply teacher on a full time or part time basis for various secondary schools in Camden. No previous experience required for this role. Unqualified supply teachers must be able to take some responsibility of the full-time class teacher whilst the teacher is absent.

academic year. Every claim put in has been paid out.

Some agencies also charge schools a fee when they take candidates on permanently, usually set as a percentage of their salary.

The NASUWT says this can be in excess of £10,000, which "denies supply teachers access to permanent work" and can be "extortionate and inappropriate".

Shifting market

But technology is providing schools with new ways to avoid high fees.

Gross profits at Zen Educate, which provides an app for schools and teachers to connect with "no teaching agencies necessary", rose from £1.3 million to £3.3 million last year. The company also raised £11.2 million from investors.

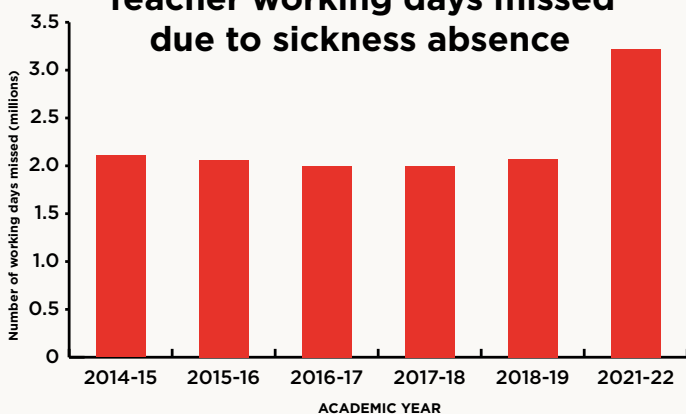
My New Term, an applicant tracking system and advertising service that schools can subscribe to without finders' fees, is now used by 130 trusts, compared with 15 three years ago.

The Academies Enterprise Trust expects its agency spend will be £180,000 this year, down from £1 million in 2021-22. The trust set its 57 schools the task of eliminating any agency spend, which one school has all but done by combining classes.

Meanwhile, Potts is trying to curb his reliance on agency cover by appointing and training up two graduates with "aspirations of becoming teachers, who alarmingly couldn't get on a local ITT course".

"We can't get teachers by recruitment, we can't get cover teachers of any worth. So we're trying to find better avenues. That's something a lot of schools are now doing."

Teacher working days missed due to sickness absence



are ineligible because they "don't have a form tutor group or don't do planning" or moving them on to other schools.

In the last four years, the NEU has claimed £250,000 in backpay for its members over the issue – £94,000 of which has been since the start of this

Opinion

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YVONNE WILLIAMS

Chair of the post-16 committee,
National Association for the
Teaching of English

Three ways the government is failing teachers over pay

The government's vague reference to economic theory to justify its strategy on pay ignores important truths about motivation, writes Yvonne Williams

Leaked reports of an recommendation from the School Teachers Review Body (STRB) for a 6.5 per cent pay increase put the education secretary Gillian Keegan embarrassingly on the back foot. The government has yet to publish the report but, if true, it's proof that it has so mishandled pay negotiations as to be out of step even with its own normally supportive independent STRB.

The figures speak for themselves, but the problem goes deeper. The government's vague justification that "economic theory would suggest that potential recruits place extra weight on short-term salary offers rather than long-term progression" seriously underestimates the impact of the past 13 years.

The influential motivational theorist, Victor Vroom, suggests that employees perform better if three conditions are met:

- expectancy (increasing effort will get the job done – with the right resources, skills and support/information);
- instrumentality (rewards for

outcomes, trust that those administering rewards will deliver, and transparency of process);

- valence (the right reward for the outcome).

Each condition has been contravened in the government's conduct and implementation of pay settlements. The profession's goodwill has been squandered.

Expectancy continues to deteriorate. Budget squeezes have reduced resources. More buildings are in a dangerous state of disrepair. Continuing professional development remains variable.

Lack of attention to valence is arguably more damaging. Teachers' sense of vocation makes them more likely to care about the impact that a pay settlement from over-stretched school budgets will have on their pupils. But teachers do not live by vocation alone. Pay is recognition of their role in society, compensation for their long hours and economically necessary to pay their bills.

Valence is vital, but the most damaging aspect of the pay strategy, such as it is, is that even when settlements are reached there's no guarantee that teachers will get them. This constant contravention of instrumentality means that the psychological contract between teachers and government is almost irretrievably



“ The profession's goodwill has been squandered

broken.

The government claims that in 2022-23, teachers who progressed up the pay scale could get pay rises of up to 16 per cent from the combination of pay award and promotion. But this is only a remote possibility. Squeezed budgets could entail not paying the full increase, reducing promotion chances and redistributing the work to classroom teachers – all detrimental to retention as the career ladder crumbles and workload increases.

The STRB itself officially questioned the efficacy of performance-related pay progression (PRPP) as a good tool for distributing limited rewards. It identified potential inequality in inconsistent approaches and found evidence that some groups benefit less from PRPP.

Imposing PRPP on the profession since 2013 has never been the right strategy. It's impossible to isolate the elements of performance that are individual to teachers. Pupil progress is a synthesis of years of education from various sources. Outcomes are affected by factors outside pupils' and teachers'

control. And forcing teachers to compete for rewards from a shrinking pool is a major cause of the present exodus.

Meanwhile, teachers have traditionally accepted relatively low settlements in comparison with the private sector in the expectation that they will benefit from more generous pensions. But currently, one-third will have left the profession in the first five years.

The pension itself is constantly being changed, most recently in 2015 when higher earners paid more into the fund without necessarily getting more out. In 2022, the final salary scheme closed.

Facile reference to economic motivational theory cuts no ice. Far from being convinced, teachers and leaders have united in balloting for further industrial action, and now the STRB seems to have shifted its support towards the profession.

Gillian Keegan will have to consider not just how much she is willing to concede but how she will restore teachers' motivation and their trust in the government's willingness to properly compensate them.

Opinion

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It's time policymakers caught up with the new reality of headship, says Sam Strickland

The pandemic has not only tested our schools but tested many school leaders. I have the same fire in my belly for headship as when I started, but it is no longer the same job. Exhaustion, fatigue, resentment and anger are rife among many leaders and the recent anti-Ofsted outpouring is evidence of a deep desire for a positive and healthy accountability that recognises our new reality.

Disastrous recruitment

ITT entry figures for this September show that a huge recruitment issue is not just brewing; it is here. The pandemic has altered how people see work – their work-life balance, their sense of what they are worth and how much work they are prepared to do.

Historically, people have flocked to education during times of economic crisis. No longer. And all the while, experienced and seasoned teachers and leaders are leaving, creating an experience vacuum that can't be filled quickly enough.

Some argue that it is for heads to sell the profession, but there comes a point when infectious enthusiasm comes across as delusional. An increased starting salary of £30,000 will not resolve this problem.

And yet league tables are back in full effect, in spite of maths departments staffed with non-specialists, no qualified physics teacher or no EBacc because a linguist can't be found.

Behavioural drift

Then there's the problem of selling a profession that is garnering increasing negative coverage. Behavioural drift has become a significant issue with pupils becoming more challenging and refusing to adhere to rules, sanctions or



SAM STRICKLAND

Headteacher, The Duston School, Northamptonshire

Heads are in no-man's land, basing decisions on best bets

support.

Recording staff and posting material online, staged demonstrations and vaping in toilets have exploded. This is compounded by local media outlets jumping in to shame schools when a lone parent complains about

Behaviour only worsens as children feel legitimised to disregard rules their parents don't like; heads are increasingly anxious about where the boundaries lie in the parent-school social contract, fearing such an event could trigger an Ofsted inspection.

“ Accountability needs to reflect the job we have

an "overly stringent" rule. Groups of parents turn into protest movements – and "pressure groups" appear in the national press.

Collapsing wellbeing

This winter, schools were hit by Covid, strep A, bronchitis and other seasonal viruses. This impacted



on staff attendance as much as pupil. Many schools struggled to get supply teachers, prompting some to ask (with some validity) about exam mitigations – for their accountability as much as for a fair deal for pupils.

Meanwhile, pupils present with challenges of a magnitude I have never known in my career. Attendance figures may mirror those of the early 2000s, but it will take even longer than it did back then to remedy the situation. And I am yet to speak to a school leader who is not alarmed by the growing number of mental health problems in our young people, which directly link to and/or stem from safeguarding issues.

There simply isn't sufficient funding in place to address all these issues, which are compounded by a lack of external support and alternative provision places.

If funding doesn't follow, then we need nothing short of a full recalibration of the role of schools and education. Heads can't keep being held to account for the same results when they are tackling hunger, helping families who are having to choose between heating or eating, and ensuring children are adequately clothed and in a position to come to school worry-free.

And that's not to mention catch-up or huge uncertainty over policy direction, the explosion in energy costs, repairs to school buildings, increased PFI costs and any teacher pay increase. Heads are in a sort of no-man's land, basing their decisions on best bets and speculation.

Headship has changed. Perhaps it's time for accountability to reflect the job we have, rather than the one policymakers – and maybe some of us – wish we still had.

Opinion

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JOHN ROBERTS

Director of Product and Engineering,
Oak National Academy

Oak can be trusted launchpad for edu's AI revolution

John Roberts explains how open government licensing will make Oak National Academy a launchpad for lesson planners, curriculum designers and edtech developers

such as extracts from a book or video clips.) All that we ask is that users attribute Oak as the original source.

We know Oak's resources will only ever be a starting point, and sharing them in an open way means teachers can adapt them for their contexts and pupils. Teachers who choose to use our materials will be able to edit and add activities or modify our curriculum. They'll also be free to innovate. There will be no restrictions on taking what we have, creating something better and then sharing it with colleagues.

This freedom extends to others too. Multi-academy trusts, subject associations, teaching hubs and edtech and publishing firms, including those using AI models, will all be able to draw, adapt and re-use any of Oak's new resources free.

Open licensing is important for another reason. We are just starting to see AI's potential to support planning, generate ideas for lessons and help individual pupils with their learning. But there are risks, and chief among them is inaccuracy.

AI models operate entirely from a best-guess model. They don't "know" the right answer. So the content on the internet that

Innovation requires a number of things – ideas, collaboration and openness among them. Oak National Academy would not have been built without them, and that's why we are throwing open our work to others. From our data and platform code to how we'll let others re-use and adapt our new curriculum resources, we're removing restrictions and sharing openly.

From this autumn we'll start rolling out new teaching resources created by schools and education organisations. Eventually we'll cover 14 subjects, with resources to support 14,000 lessons. To make sure everyone can access, use and innovate with them, we'll publish them on an Open Government Licence (OGL).

Oak is funded by public money, so it is right that everyone can have free access to what we create. The OGL won't cover everything we publish, but most of it. (We will need to protect any resources with content that is not ours –



“ Others will be able to build on what we are creating

models are trained on is crucial; poor quality information in means poor quality answers out. Teachers and pupils need 100 per cent accuracy. So we can't yet rely on generative AI, with its mix of reliable and unreliable content, to create classroom resources.

We hope Oak's open licence can make a difference here too. It means anyone developing an AI educational tool has a reliable, freely available set of resources as a trusted launchpad – it could put the UK at the forefront of potential in AI in education.

OGL isn't new. There's a growing global movement towards sharing educational resources to benefit as many pupils and teachers as possible, while also encouraging innovation. It's been adopted as the standard approach for public sector organisations such as Oak and is recommended by Unesco.

We will be hearing a lot more about it in the years to come.

As well as high-quality teaching resources, Oak also has a world-leading education technology platform. We've decided to adopt the same open approach with that, so all our code is now open-sourced, shared on a MIT licence. That means other organisations and individuals will be able to use what we've done to help build and improve their own products and tech platforms for teachers.

We are doing the same with sharing the anonymised and aggregated data that is created by our users, which we analyse for trends and insights.

Like many educational and digital projects, Oak depends on making use of free and open work created by others. With this new approach, others will be able to build on what we are creating too.

Headteachers' Roundtable The Big Five

With both main parties' general election campaigns centred on five key priorities, the Headteachers' Roundtable sets out their own five urgent concerns for education. Read each in turn this half term, and visit them at the Festival of Education to add to the discussion.



JONNY UTTLEY

Chief executive,
The Education Alliance

The top priority must be to make teaching attractive again



Any incoming government will have to put an end to the failed experiment of competition that is driving teachers away, writes Jonny Uttley

removed for so long from the things that make the biggest difference to their lives: good teachers. Sadly, silver bullets are in desperately short supply.

It's a common line in education that there are no silver bullets. I thought this for a long time – but I was wrong. There is a silver bullet. It isn't a great pupil premium strategy or assessing without levels. It's not setting or mixed attainment, nor a homework policy or any of the multitude of less-worthy strategies I've spent half my leadership career discussing.

Teacher recruitment figures are terrifying. The lead economist of the National Foundation for Educational Research last month described the situation as "spiralling out of control" as the DfE was set to meet about 47 per cent of its secondary recruitment target.

It's much more straightforward. It's a good teacher in every classroom, every hour of every day.

The situation for retention is no better. The fact that one in four of new entrants leaved the profession within three years is well known. Last year's figures were better than pre-pandemic, but the DfE itself was predicting a post-Covid exodus. This year's dire figures, released this week, are really evidence of a self-fulfilling prophecy rather than any ministerial super-forecasting.

Find me a strategy that can make the difference between 0.5 versus 1.5 years' worth of progress for a disadvantaged pupil in a single year (Sutton Trust 2011). Or one that makes a difference of \$250,000 (£201,000) in lifetime earnings for a young person (Chetty, 2014).

The cause of poor recruitment and poor retention is the same: the lived experience of too many teachers is simply too poor. Almost one in seven describes workload as unmanageable; stress levels are high and too many work in toxic cultures. These cultures are created by leaders who either feel unable

There are many reasons why the pandemic undid 10 years of progress in closing the disadvantage gap, but none is as significant as disadvantaged pupils being

Teachers are not hanging around to be ranked and yanked

to resist, or gleefully embrace, a national zero-sum game that pits school against school through debunked progress measures and boils the extraordinarily complex work of a school down to a single-word judgment.

against trusts for the best teachers. Teachers are voting with their feet. They are not hanging around to be ranked and yanked. They are heading for professions where they will be appraised and supported – or at least where their pay will be commensurate with their stress.

Creating a successful school system in which all pupils can thrive isn't rocket science. We need a good teacher in every classroom. And to get it, we must get serious about recruiting, retaining and developing the best.

The cultures we need to make teaching attractive again require deep collaboration. This is actively discouraged by a system that sends in a small group of "experts" on the pretence that they can accurately judge everything a school does with a single word.

We must reduce workloads, rather than defer our efforts in the hope that AI will somehow manage what the internet failed to deliver. And we must stop asking people to choose between being seen as a good teacher and being a good mum or dad. But more than that, we must change the cultures of our schools to make them places people want to stay, not places they want to escape.

Ministers and Ofsted could change this overnight, but leaders have responsibilities too. We must stop playing along with the patently dangerous nonsense that is competing with other schools. We must stop lauding success over others and care as much about the school down the road as we do about our own. Only then will we have a national school culture in which teachers will stay and thrive.

We urgently need major reform of accountability to stop pitting schools against schools and trusts

Solutions

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JONATHAN ROE

Chief executive,
Thrive Co-operative Learning Trust

Attendance is an issue, but it is never *the* issue

They're not quick and easy to develop, but the answer to poor attendance can simply be high-quality relationships, says Jonathan Roe

So, Ofsted has told you that "leaders should ensure that the number of pupils who are persistently absent reduces", yet has offered no advice on how you might achieve this.

You have attended every DfE webinar and have sought the advice of the regional team.

Your trust runs monthly attendance surgeries at which you discuss a live case from your school. You seem to be doing everything that everyone else is doing.

You have recently had local authority scrutiny, and everyone's scratching their heads.

And in spite of all of that, persistent absence is refusing to budge. Why?

In my experience, most schools are already doing all the nuts-and-bolts stuff: high expectations, clear lines of accountability, rigorous application of policy and procedure, wisely interrogating data, working collaboratively. But the most successful are doing all of this within the environment of supportive and empathic

relationships with pupils and families, established over many years.

Take our own Chiltern Primary School in Hull, for example. It serves one of the most challenging communities in England; 99 per cent of pupils are in the top quintile for deprivation.

This may not bode well for attendance, but year-to-date attendance is higher than the England average, and persistent absence lower than the England average – and that's been the school's track record for many years.

People are central to this success. Claire Lundie, the assistant head, leads the school's work on attendance and inclusion, alongside Lisa Greig, the school's deputy safeguarding lead. Their mantra is that "attendance is an issue, never the issue", which speaks to the fact that her poorest attenders are often from families facing multiple challenges.

And so the school gets involved in establishing tangible, supportive relationships via a weekly school food bank that regularly has 80 queuing from 8.30am each Thursday.

Claire also coordinates wellbeing action plans where pupil, parent



“ Families know that the school cares

and school sit together to work out what will make a difference in the child's life. Six such meetings are planned this week. She believes that every child with poor attendance has a reason unique to themselves, with the school and family needing to figure out the unique solution for that child.

The school uses the "parent and carer engagement in child mental health" resources from the Anna Freud Centre to great effect. Six families are currently involved and past experience shows that they want to carry on talking about improving their child's experience of family and school, well after the support course finishes.

From all of this work we conclude that great attendance is built on high-quality relationships, based on trust that has been built up over many years. Claire believes that these relationships are relational capital that can be drawn upon when difficult conversations need to happen around attendance.

When the school needs to say "this must improve", the chance of gaining a positive response is higher because families know that the

school cares and that the school will do all it can to support the family. When the school calls to say "Mrs Lundie will be at your front door in ten minutes to collect your child" (with Lucky, the therapy dog), the chances of that child being ready, waiting, and in school uniform, are high.

The DfE's most recent guidance on attendance, *Working together to improve school attendance*, states that "schools should treat all pupils and parents with dignity and staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance".

What we know is that this isn't achieved overnight. It takes time. Lots of time. Trust is hard-won over many years as a school shows that it is consistently and doggedly there for people and follows through on its support promises.

All this implies that resources should be targeted at building these relationships, and here's the rub for the government. Great attendance doesn't happen overnight, and can't be delivered on a shoestring.

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THE REVIEW

BOYS DO CRY: IMPROVING BOYS' MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS

Author: Matt Pinkett

Publisher: Routledge

Publication date: May 29

ISBN: 1032168692

Reviewer: Sanum Jawaid Khan, assistant headteacher and DEI lead,
Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School

There is no denying the mental health crisis that schools are facing, particularly for boys. The golden threads of this book – that we need to unlearn some of our most rehearsed habits and beliefs, that clear teaching is key and that role modelling is more important than ever – come together in a neat framework.

The introduction makes a strong case for the need to focus on the wellbeing of boys, and the pages that follow scream confirmations of that fact. The experiences shared are vast and Pinkett's recognition of his own position are a reminder of the unusual nature of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work. It is a journey more than a destination, and work we cannot detach our personal lives from.

Pinkett offers a range of evidence to support the view that improving boys' mental health and wellbeing in schools cannot be seen as the role of a lone male or a singular DEI lead. Instead, it must be part of the entire school culture, from PSHE and tutor time to parental engagement and daily interactions. Responsibility must be shared to create a culture that prioritises the wellbeing of all.

I was pleased to see Pinkett's emphasis on explicit teaching of the habits we need to see in boys. High-quality teaching is one of the most valuable parts of school life, and to improve the mental health and wellbeing of boys we must express-teach these topics and review all our teaching to consider any accidental failures.

The book is studded with lesson plans and recommendations for organisations that can

support this. In addition, the importance of positive male experiences and identities and the significance of teachers as daily role models, are all tangible, low-cost ways for schools to deliver better outcomes for boys.

At times, my response to some of the bleak statistics and experiences was more emotive than I had anticipated. I found myself questioning whether the shared interests I have with my daughter mean that we have practised some talking skills that my son and I haven't.

Similarly, I know that I don't ask my classes for "two strong lads" to move boxes, but I'm sure I have commented on how much older or taller pupils look after the summer. Rightly, Pinkett points out that this "...suggest[s] that bodies are an acceptable object of praise or negativity" and that the impact of such comments for boys (whether comments are aimed at them or they witness it) can be damaging.

I tend to scribble my take-aways down when I'm reading and in this case I needed two lists: one as a parent and another as a teacher. That felt like good value to me!

It was refreshing to see space given to specific groups such as black African/Caribbean boys, Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) boys and LGBTQ+ people. The recognition that true inclusivity and progress for boys cannot be achieved if we do not consider the individual experiences of young people is clearly presented and Pinkett's outward-looking approach adds authenticity.

However, there are aspects that don't reflect

BOOK

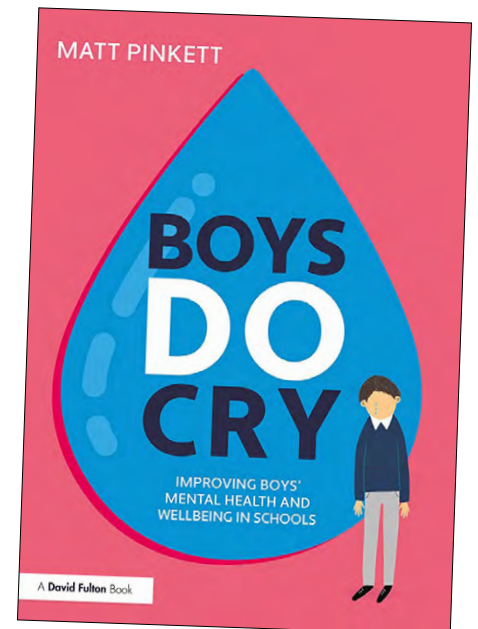
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this intersectionality. For example, GRT and black-African/Caribbean experiences are explored in some depth in a chapter on exclusions. But while Pinkett rightly notes that "both groups [...] are *excluded* because in many schools they don't feel *included*", the lack of explicit engagement with the experiences of these boys outside this chapter leaves some unanswered questions.

Boys Do Cry offers multiple windows into the experiences of boys and young men. It is a compelling argument that everyone benefits when we prioritise male mental health and wellbeing. It does leave some important questions around intersectionality and some nuanced experiences, but DEI work is a journey, not a destination. This book is a significant milestone on that journey.

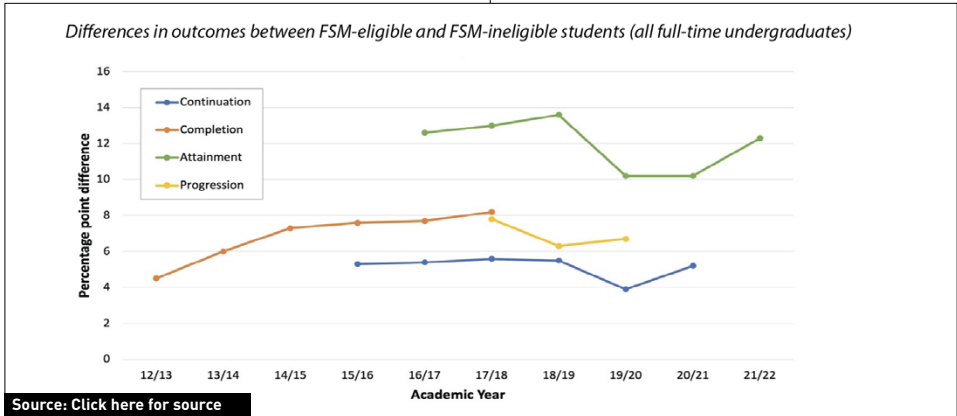


Rating

THE CONVERSATION
LISTENING IN ON THE DIGITAL STAFFROOM



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



last week on educational outcomes for students formerly eligible for free school meals (FSM). HEPI finds that inequalities of outcome for FSM-eligible students in higher education are worryingly similar to earlier education.

The research shows that these students are less likely to progress from year to year or to complete their qualification compared with their more affluent peers. Nor are they as likely to gain a "good" honours or get into a graduate-level job or further study soon after they graduate. Most worrying, and echoing Dr Shaheen's findings, there is no evidence to suggest that the situation is improving.

THE MYTH OF CHOICE

Some proposed solutions to addressing this are found in [an article](#) on closing the so-called poverty attainment gap through addressing social divisions in which certain pupils are clustered in schools along class lines.

One of the suggestions is that the variety of types of state school is one of the driving forces of social segregation. Grammar schools supposedly select pupils by ability, but this is clearly closely tied to socio-economic background. Faith schools select by religion, which is linked to ethnicity. Special, free, foundation, specialist, and community schools, as well as academies and university technical colleges, can each end up with somewhat different pupil intakes, so driving segregation. We can also see in the way that [languages and creative arts are losing favour with GCSE and A-level pupils](#) in state schools, that this marketisation of schools and subsequent narrowing of subjects is driving pupils to more vocational pathways such as computing and business studies.

THE NIGHTMARE OF WELLBEING

We know that child abuse, mental ill-health and general poor wellbeing are rising to epidemic proportions. So it was disappointing to learn of the government's refusal to accept the [recommendations made by the Child Sexual Abuse inquiry](#), which means that children will not get adequate abuse protection.

Most worryingly, Suella Braverman, the home secretary, has defended the government's rejection of a recommendation to ban "pain compliance techniques" on children, saying that officials could be "trained in the safe use" of such tactics in custody.

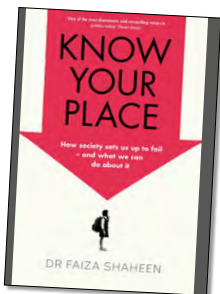
Carceral behaviour techniques and police in schools, rising exclusion and suspension rates, and issues such as the [adultification of black children](#), are all adding to the chances of children being left unprotected as they fall through the cracks of our overstretched schools, failing care system, NHS and adolescent mental health services.

I had to look to Ireland for a glimmer of hope of a more child-centred approach. There, the minister of education [announced a €5 million \(£4.3 million\) pilot](#) that will offer free counselling to children in all primary schools across seven counties. A second strand will involve a cluster of schools focusing on building capacity more widely to support mental health and wellbeing. I live in hope that a Westminster government will eventually see sense.

Half term is over and as teachers head into the end of the school year and hopes of sun and sea, there's been little this week to suggest our children's longer-term prospects are anything like sunny.

THE FAIRYTALE OF MERITOCRACY

The eternal question about the link between education and outcomes in later life has yielded some interesting thoughts, opinions and research findings. Dr Faiza Shaheen's new book *Know Your Place*




uses examples, statistics and her own experiences to look at how society is built, the people it leaves behind, and how we might change things for the better.

She says that social mobility is a "fairytale", analysing factors that include race, class, education, housing and income to reveal how Britain has become less mobile over generations. So much for meritocracy and education being the great leveller.

THE FANTASY OF ASPIRATION

As if timed to back up Dr Shaheen's argument, The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) [published new research](#)

Click the links to access the blogs and podcasts 

The Knowledge

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



What will work to improve recruitment and retention?

Becky Francis, chief executive, Education Endowment Foundation

Teachers are the beating heart of our school system. No matter the age group, subject or school, it's high-quality teaching that makes the biggest difference to pupil outcomes, particularly for children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

And yet one of the biggest challenges is staffing; we know that many schools are struggling to fill vacancies and that levels of teacher churn are unsustainably high.

This recruitment and retention challenge is an urgent cause for concern. Simply put, when schools are understaffed, pupil learning and teacher wellbeing suffer. We cannot let this continue, especially in light of the hugely damaging, far-reaching impacts of the pandemic.

As ever, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) looks to the research for solutions. Today, we've published a new evidence review authored by a team from UCL's Institute of Education that summarises findings from international research about how to attract teachers to – and, crucially, keep them in – the profession.

We wanted to find out what has and hasn't worked in the past for improving recruitment and retention. Our aim was to signpost promising avenues for future research to explore.

The first step was identifying relevant studies from the global evidence base, making sure that they were conducted appropriately and that their findings were robust and worthy of inclusion. The research team then dug into the findings to draw out recurring themes to inform our conclusions.

One of the most well-evidenced findings was that financial incentives, such as higher salaries or recruitment bonuses, can help to attract teachers, particularly in challenging schools. Rewards given directly to teachers, rather than allocating extra funds to their school, show particular promise.

With regards to retention, there is evidence in support of reducing workload and improving working conditions. Heavier workloads were consistently associated with higher staff turnover, with factors such as working hours and leave



'We'll supercharge the evidence base to uncover the most effective'

entitlement strongly influencing teachers' decision-making.

Importantly, making sure teachers have proper access to good quality professional development, proper support during their induction and effective school leadership also show potential in supporting recruitment and retention.

This evidence review is a significant step in our understanding how to approach fixing staffing issues in our schools.

But there's more work to be done.

There's been a real lack of research conducted in England on this topic. As a result, this review relied heavily on findings from international studies.

If we're serious about improving recruitment and retention, we need to better understand which approaches are likely to work in English schools and for those working in them.

One of our top priorities at the EEF is to supercharge the evidence base in this area, through a multi-year research plan that aims to uncover the most effective strategies. We're especially interested in those that could be effective in more challenging schools.

We've therefore recently commissioned further evidence reviews, each of which will focus on specific practices that have shown promise in

supporting teacher recruitment and retention in English schools, including school leadership, flexible working, and workload management.

One of these reviews will look specifically at practices in schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged communities, so that we can look to bolster numbers of high-quality teachers where pupils need them most.

These reviews will use a range of methods to explore the evidence base and current practices, including analysing school policies and teacher job descriptions, as well as gathering perspectives from teachers and leaders through surveys and interviews.

It's difficult to overstate the importance of getting our approach to recruitment and retention right, not just in terms of securing the best academic outcomes for our children but for making sure teachers feel valued and want to stay in their jobs.

Today's findings will be hugely helpful in sharpening the focus of our future research, making sure we put our resources behind trialling strategies with the greatest potential to make a difference in this crucial area.

The full report, Teacher quality, recruitment and retention can be read here: bit.ly/3J2kfJQ

Week in

Westminster

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

FRIDAY

We're most certainly not going to make crass jokes about there being too much shit at the DfE, but new figures show the department's offices suffered two sewage leaks in the past 12 months.

Responding to a parliamentary question from Lib Dem MP Wendy Chamberlain, schools minister Nick Gibb said the sewage leaks were "contained within the building". LOL.

Meanwhile, another PQ response from the Gibbster shows the model history curriculum expert panel has met just since its formation – and that was in last July.

It will only meet again "later this summer to consider a draft" of the new curriculum, which suggests the panel isn't doing much of the writing and perhaps the forever-schools minister is penning it all himself.

SATURDAY

Good news! Our generous prime minister has delivered a huge school funding boost.

The Daily Mirror unearthed that back in 2018 he gave a whopping \$3 million to the already super-rich Claremont McKenna College near Los Angeles, where his wife studied economics and French.

The college's hi-tech computing lab is now called Murty Sunak Quantitative and Computing Lab. Hurrah!

Also – showing just how patriotic the Brexiteer PM is – this donation is three times as much as he's reportedly given to his alma mater in England, Winchester College.

WEDNESDAY

A Yew Dawn has broken. Yew Tree primary school will join Leigh Trust in November. The Walsall school hit the headlines after spending tens of thousands to successfully overturn an academisation order.

While the DfE is keen as mustard to get all schools into MATs, we imagine it approved this move with gritted teeth – particularly as it had to pay the school's legal costs of £75,000 after the 2021 high court case.

A government announcement actually turns out to be **better** than it made out. An update today on a pledge to roll out high-speed internet in England's schools by 2025 shows that £180 million will be available.

This is £30 million more than announced last year. To take part, schools must be in an education investment area (EIA) and have Ofsted ratings of 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate', or be in a "priority" EIA.

THURSDAY

The government will start to publish a yearly evaluation from 2024 showing how many schools are taking up its cost-cutting (sorry, "resource management") tools. The survey will monitor annual trends in use, says an impact strategy document published today.

More good news! The DfE proudly tweeted how new workforce data showed a record 468,371 teachers in England's

schools last year – more than 2,800 more than the previous year and 27,000 more than in 2010.

It **didn't** say, however, that the 6 per cent rise since 2010 has been well outstripped by the 11 per cent rise in the number of children over the same period. This means the government has missed its targets for secondary schools in nine of the past ten years.

PS. Neither did it mention the number of teachers quitting for reasons other than retirement is at a record high, as is teacher sickness.

The government's system for funding schools is so complex that even the head of its school funding agency admits he struggles "to get to grips" with it.

David Withey, who joined the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) in August last year, was asked at an event today whether schools can just receive one pot of money (rather than the current multitude of funding streams).

He said the systems of funding are "too complex" – and the agency will look at opportunities to simplify things.

However, he did say the ESFA was looking at creating what sounds like a one-stop shop to ensure schools have information on all their funding in the one place. This would stop school leaders having to cross-reference it with different spreadsheets "to work out what the total aggregate amount of funding is".





Headteacher – L20-25

Location: Margaret McMillan Primary School

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- A clear thinker and a good communicator, with a proven track record of success, who will stimulate trust and respect throughout the school
- Able to demonstrate strong leadership
- Able to successfully support and develop colleagues
- Able to ensure an outstanding quality of education for all children
- An integral part of making a difference to our whole Trust community

If you feel you have the qualities needed please contact **tracey.parry@priestley.academy** for an application pack.

Closing date: 08:00, 21 June 2023



Director of Secondary Education

Required September 2023

Salary: competitive to reflect the skills and experience of the candidate and the scope of the role

An exceptional opportunity for an experienced colleague to join a growing Trust with an inclusive ethos, leading on our secondary education strategy and supporting our Secondary Academies.

We are seeking to appoint a skilled leader with a demonstrable track record of school improvement to join our team and work with us on the transformation of schools and communities. This is a key role in the Trust and the Secondary Director will form part of our Directorate, driving Trust policies and practice to improve the educational experience of our students and ensure they enjoy their education and succeed.

If you are interested in the role and wish to find out more, then please contact Jane Hughes, CEO of the Learning Community Trust at jane.hughes@lct.education or Paul Roberts, Executive Director at paul.roberts@lct.education

Closing Date for applications: 10.00am, Tuesday 27th June
Interviews will take place on Friday 30th June

The Learning Community Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Successful candidates will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check, and satisfactory references.



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St Edward's Catholic Primary School, New Road, Sheerness, Kent ME12 1BW

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The Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership (KCSP), is a multi-academy trust (MAT) established by the Archdiocese of Southwark for Catholic education across Kent. Currently a MAT comprising 25 schools (20 primary and 5 secondary), our Trust is seeking to appoint a dynamic and innovative Headteacher for one of our wonderful schools - St Edward's Catholic Primary School, ideally from September 2023.

St Edward's is a one form entry primary school serving the Parish of Ss Henry & Elizabeth in Sheerness and the local area; it is an inclusive school in which every pupil is supported and challenged to be their very best and encouraged to grow spiritually and intellectually. St Edward's is graded as a 'Good' school both by Ofsted and for its denominational inspection.

Reporting to the Area Director, the Headteacher will build upon and further develop the excellent work that is already taking place at the school and will be responsible for its day-to-day leadership and management, leading a highly skilled and enthusiastic team.

The successful applicant will also take the lead role in providing inspirational Catholic education based on our shared Gospel values and will be the school's pastoral leader. We are therefore seeking to appoint a practising Catholic to this role.

Please visit <https://www.kcsp.org.uk/headteacher-st-edwards-primary/> to view the full job description and person specification for this role and to download an application form and all related documents.

Closing date for applications: Midday on Wednesday 28 June 2023
Interviews to be held during the week commencing: Monday 03 July 2023
Start date: September 2023/January 2024

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KS1 / KS2 TEACHER

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A proven interest in managing challenging behaviour alongside evidence of securing successful academic outcomes are essential requirements. If you have enthusiasm, commitment and a desire to work with some of the most vulnerable and complex young people in our community, we would welcome your application. High aspirations and a relentless approach towards excellence are the key skills we are looking for along with evidence of previous outstanding classroom teaching.



EXECUTIVE LEAD FOR SECONDARIES

We are delighted to be appointing an Executive Leader to take strategic oversight of our secondary schools at this very exciting time for Mowbray Education Trust. The Executive Lead for Secondaries will play a crucial role in developing our secondary phase, bringing leaders together as one new team within the culture of the Trust. As a member of the Executive Team, you will play a key role in the strategic direction setting and oversight of the Trust.

Much of our most recent success, we attribute to identifying, attracting and retaining people with humility, warmth and the potential to be brilliant. If you are an inspirational Headteacher with an ability to motivate others to develop a culture of high expectations and are interested in taking a key role, not only in our Trust, but in shaping the future of education, we can't wait to hear from you.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

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