

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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

MAT central teams:  
Game changers or  
management bloat?



P13-15

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- Government closes at least four schools after 'crumbly' concrete found
- Labour slams 'national disgrace' as pupils sent home or to other schools
- One school closed for months still waiting to see if DfE will foot bill

JACK DYSON | @JACKYDYS

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# SCHOOLS WEEK

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# education week jobs

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# Current capital funding can't be stretched to fix RAAC issues

Schools were forced to close suddenly this week because they ran out of water. Others had to close because their buildings are in danger of collapsing. Students have been sent to learn at home or in other schools.

The cases are symptomatic of a government that has allowed the private sector to fill its boots, but with poor regulation, as its own spending on maintaining public buildings has flatlined. As we near election time, it is not the sort of legacy the Conservatives would want after 13 years in office.

While they can rightly point to things like rising standards in reading, the state of school buildings has for good reason been seized upon by Labour. The much-lauded school rebuilding programme, launched by former prime minister Boris Johnson, is supposed to rebuild 50 schools a year.

At this pace, it would take until the year 2500 to rebuild every school. Expecting schools – some already 100 years old – to last another 500 years shows just how starved of funding the school estate is.

Current estimates put the bill to repair

the school estate at more than £11 billion. And that's just schools. A new report by Sam Freedman cited a paucity of capital funding as a key reason for the current NHS crisis.

The government is taking seriously the potential danger of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). All schools have been asked to check for the "crumbly" type of concrete that is now reaching its expiry date and deemed "liable to collapse".

But the big, unanswered question is who will foot the bill? One school has been waiting months for an answer as to who will pay its £2 million repairs. In the meantime, its pupils are dispersed across neighbouring schools.

If the government cannot get more money from the Treasury – which would seem unlikely given the extra money that will have to be found to settle the teacher pay dispute – then other coffers will have to be raided.

We cannot risk another Building Schools for the Future debacle – capital funding must be committed, and for the long term.

## Most read online this week:

- 1 [Ofsted removes school's 'inadequate' rating after internal review](#)
- 2 [The 8 Ofsted inspection changes following Ruth Perry's death](#)
- 3 ['Wake-up' call for schools as weeks of lessons lost to misbehaviour](#)
- 4 [Investigation: teacher deregulation, by the back door](#)
- 5 [Keegan suggests pay decision won't come until end of term](#)

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NEWS: BUILDINGS

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# Schools forced to close due to 'crumbly' roofs as concrete fears grow

**JACK DYSON**  
**@JACKYDYS**

Three primaries have closed in the past 10 days following the discovery of "crumbly" concrete as news emerged that a school building with the same problem has been shut for months.

The Department for Education told the four schools, which are spread across Essex, Tyne and Wear and Newcastle, to shut after finding reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in their ceilings.

The potentially dangerous material has been dubbed "Aero-like" by structural engineers amid fears it is "now life-expired and liable to collapse".

Government officials have been asking responsible bodies – trusts and councils – to complete surveys on the presence of RAAC on their sites since last March. Now it has emerged that pupils have had to attend lessons remotely or on alternative sites, with reports expected to increase "by the week".

Labour shadow minister Stephen Morgan branded the "dangerous state of school buildings" a "national disgrace".

He said: "It is the direct result of 13 years of Conservative disregard for teachers, parents and pupils. The government's complacency on this is inexcusable given the scale of the problem, with stories of crumbling school buildings that pose a risk to life increasing by the week"

Liberal Democrat education spokesperson Munira Wilson urged ministers to "invest to clear the backlog of school and college repairs".

Mistley Norman C of E primary in Essex has been renting space from an alternative school and



providing transport for the six-mile-round trip "to ensure learning for our pupils can continue" since April.

Emma Wigmore, the CEO of Vine Schools Trust which runs the school, said the repair bill could total £1.9 million. The trust does not have "necessary funds to pay for the extensive repair work required for the school building to remain in use", she added.

They are "exploring funding streams with the Department for Education to see if there is a possibility of covering the repair costs".

RAAC was found in the ceiling of the school's main building. Some parts of the school will be habitable in September, but the trust "will rent as much classroom space as we can from local schools to accommodate remaining pupils".

Last Wednesday, Hockley Primary School in Essex was told to "stay closed next week and for the rest of the school year" by the DfE. It was deemed "not safe to open".

Academies Enterprise Trust, which runs the school, said youngsters will move to remote learning before attending class at two of the chain's other schools nearby.

A spokesperson said they were in discussions with the DfE about the "nature of the works and plans for September".

Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, which

runs two affected schools in the North-East, said the buildings "are closed while we review our options for long-term remediation".

A spokesperson added that children "will have remote learning and, in the coming week, we will organise alternative arrangements" to return to the classroom.

The DfE pointed to its three capital funding streams: the school rebuilding programme, condition improvement funding and urgent capital support.

However, where the government "is alerted to significant safety issues with a building that cannot be managed within local resources, the department will provide additional support on a case-by-case basis", the spokesperson said.

Where the presence of RAAC is confirmed, the DfE supports schools "on the advice of structural engineers", which can include "capital funding for measures", they added.

While the department is working to support the four affected schools, it did not confirm who will fund any repairs.

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 Office for Government Property issued a safety briefing warning that RAAC was "life-expired and liable to collapse".

The body fears the "crumbly" material, used widely in flat-roofed school buildings, is "liable to collapse".

More than 150 schools "have been identified as potentially having RAAC". This week the government widened its inquiry into RAAC to all public buildings.

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOTH

## Dwindling water supplies shut Sussex schools

Hundreds of children have been learning from home after water shortages forced at least five schools in parts of Sussex to close.

South East Water blamed the problems, also affecting Kent, on "very high demand" for tap water in this week's heatwave. The schools either have no water or low pressure. Households were also asked to use water only for cooking, cleaning and hygiene.

Rotherfield Primary School, in Crowborough, closed to its 213 pupils at Monday and was still shut yesterday morning because of "significantly lower" water pressure.

Children were given work to complete at home, with the school considering live online

lessons.

Kate Bishop, its headteacher, said there had been "no real indication" when the situation would resolve. "There is a sense of frustration now."

Beacon Academy's sixth-form centre also remained closed yesterday after moving year 12 and 13 pupils to its main secondary school site at 11.30am on Monday.

Pupils have been able to sit exams and none was remote learning, said Keith Slattery, its head of school.

"We have rigorous and robust contingency plans... we are hoping this comes to an end soon."

Mark Cross Church of England Primary School and Wadhurst Church of England Primary School in East Sussex were also closed on Wednesday.

Sacred Heart independent school in Wadhurst reopened at 1pm on Thursday after receiving bottled drinking water and water to allow toilets to be flushed.

After a scorching summer last year, government guidance told schools to prepare for "extreme heat" as part of emergency planning.

Nick Bell, South East Water's incident manager, said it was doing all it could to restore supplies.

# Call for watchdog to investigate trust CEO training contract

**SAMANTHA BOOTH**

**@SAMANTHAJBOTH**

**EXCLUSIVE**

Leadership training providers have demanded an investigation after the government handed a contract for its trust chief executive training to the flagship National Institute of Teaching (NioT).

The Department for Education ditched a competitive tender to give the contract directly to the School-Led Development Trust (SLDT), which runs NioT and was founded by four leading multi-academy trusts.

Ministers promised to launch a programme to ensure trusts have enough “highly effective leaders” as part of its 2022 schools white paper.

While NioT’s contract value has not yet been confirmed, the original tender was expected to be about £2.8 million.

The first cohort of 25 participants will start in February next year – later than initially planned – with a second 50-strong cohort “following later”. Recruitment will begin in autumn.

But three leadership training providers have written to the Competitions and Markets Authority warning their work “is now at serious risk”.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the school leaders’ union ASCL, Alice Gregson, the executive director of Forum Strategy and Ann Palmer, the chief executive of Fig Tree International, said the case “merits a review”.

This was in “the interests of competition law” and “culture of transparency in the awarding of public contracts”, a letter sent to the watchdog and seen by *Schools Week* states.

They point out the contract was awarded



“without competitive tender and will, we believe, result in the body being provided with significant government funding that will make it extremely challenging for other existing providers to compete on cost and therefore also quality”.

They claim the situation will “over time significantly hamper the ability of academy trust leaders to make a genuine choice that takes into account both cost and quality” of various leadership schemes.

“If there is preferential treatment of one provider over others by government, it will be highly detrimental to the sector in the long run and to a culture of healthy choice and competition between providers that keeps academy trust leaders in the driving seat in terms of what they wish to access.”

The DfE ran a market engagement exercise for potential suppliers last year. But it will instead use the existing framework agreement for NioT and contract the SLDT – founded by Star Academies, the Harris Federation, Outwood Grange Academies Trust and Oasis.

The DfE said this was part of NioT’s “overall scope of requirements to deliver the golden

thread of teacher and leadership development in the education sector”. Existing frameworks should also be used “wherever possible” to help with costs.

The department said it was “confident” the decision was right and met “all legal requirements”.

But Barton said school leaders “will suspect that there is a hidden agenda – to establish a group of government-approved system leaders” through a “top-down approach”.

NioT said training includes one-to-one coaching with a “successful” CEO, alongside “immersive learning” such as shadowing. Its founding CEOs have an “impressive track record of nurturing future” bosses, it added.

An email from DfE, seen by *Schools Week*, also states there will “likely be sub-contracting opportunities”.

Initial contract documents said roll-out would begin this September. But this was pushed back as market feedback advised more time would be required to design content, the DfE said.

Melanie Renowden, the chief executive of NioT, said it needed “to develop the next generation of courageous, pioneering people who will respond to the new wave of challenges and opportunities that are coming the way of all our schools”.

The government is also facing a high court challenge over its funding of curriculum quango Oak National Academy. Bodies representing publishers and ed tech firms say Oak “poses an existential risk to the future viability of the sector”.

AMY WALKER | @AMYRWALKER

## ‘Pragmatic’ solution will allow trainees to start in September

Prospective trainee teachers whose undergraduate degrees are delayed as a result of a university marking boycott will now be able to start courses in September.

*Schools Week* reported last week that the Department for Education was assessing the “scale and likelihood” of possible disruption to courses as a result of University and College Union (UCU) action over pay. It includes a marking and assessment boycott that could delay degrees being awarded.

The DfE said it had the “potential” to impact initial teacher training (ITT) as candidates

“usually need to prove that they have received their degree to start postgraduate courses”.

Now, universities and school-led providers will this year be able to recruit trainees whose degree status has not yet been confirmed.

This will ensure “all good candidates will be able to start their courses in September”, the government said.

But providers will need to make sure recruits’ graduate status has been confirmed before they complete their ITT course.

James Noble-Rogers, the executive director of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), said the move was a “pragmatic” solution and a “step in the right direction”.

It showed the DfE had “learnt from Covid” that rules could be relaxed in exceptional circumstances.

But one issue may be the “extent to which you can accurately predict degree classifications” – recruits who get teaching bursaries must receive 2:2 or higher in their undergraduate degree.

# PFI payments rise leave heads 'scrimping and scraping'

**JACK DYSON**

@JACKDYDS

EXCLUSIVE

Headteachers forecast having to fork out over £150,000 more in private finance initiative (PFI) payments, with one admitting: "I don't know what to do."

While leaders are already struggling with growing financial burdens, three in the West Midlands are bracing for a 12.9 per cent rise to annual payments owed to private companies that build their schools.

Bosses have revealed the spiralling costs have forced them to "scrimp and scrape" as they each have more than a decade left on their PFI contracts. Teaching vacancies are having to be left unfilled.

Successive governments have used PFI to fund new schools since the late 1990s. Private companies build and maintain sites in exchange for mortgage-style payments, typically for 25 years, before handing them over to taxpayers. Repayments also cover management of maintenance services.

Imran Iqbal, the headteacher of Holly Lodge High School in Smethwick, said he has not been able to update the secondary's 15-year-old IT software.

"I've got fewer teachers as a result, less admin staff and I'm scrimping and scraping on resources. The IT in the school is 10 or 15 years out of date. It's impacting on SEN support in the classroom.

"My biggest fear is if the charges continue to spiral, we would have to look at staffing restructure because I couldn't absorb another £170,000 increase."

Most PFI contracts are pegged to the retail price index (RPI), which stood at about 8.3 per cent in 2022 before rising to 12.9 per cent this year.

Iqbal said the leap would increase his repayment costs by more than £170,000, from £1.32 million to almost £1.5 million. The annual fee stood at almost £874,000 when the contract began in 2011-12.

The costs are paid to Sandwell Futures, which has similar deals in place with four other schools across the borough, including the Westminster School which is expecting a rise of more than £100,000.



Imran Iqbal, the headteacher of Holly Lodge High School

Oliver Flowers, its head, said an increase of 90 pupils was the "only reason" he was able to offset the costs in recent years.

Keziah Featherstone, head of Q3 Academy Tipton, said the increases had "severely limited the amount of money we have for the children". The secondary's payments are set to leap from just under £1.5 million to more than £1.6 million this year.

"Every role is now scrutinised about whether we need like-for-like replacements, whether we can go part-time rather than full-time. We're looking for as many savings as we can.

"The proportion of our budget we're spending on staffing is quite low – and that's having to be maintained, rather than increased."

Government figures show 694 PFI projects across the country holding a total capital value of £54.7 billion. Almost a third are for schools.

Ian Denison, a director of PFI adviser Inscyte, said "all" schools holding similar contracts were facing the same inflationary pressures.

"The ESFA would provide schools with money to cover their PFI costs. That met every cost of the PFI until 2019, but now inflation has

outstripped it.

"That adds another pressure on to schools, so their education budgets are being used to subsidise the PFI. Some of our clients have gaps that are over £100,000 a year – generally it's sizeable, about two to three teachers' worth."

Shaun Bailey, MP for West Bromwich West, told a House of Commons debate last month the legacy of PFI meant schools having to choose between "resourcing the education of children or doing basic maintenance".

He said headteachers were pleading with him and telling him they did not know what to do.

Iqbal last month wrote to Gillian Keegan, the education secretary, urging her to support PFI schools by treating the RPI increases as "an exceptional funding factor".

He said this would mean schools would be reimbursed "the gap between what we originally paid and what we're paying now".

A spokesperson for Sandwell Council said it had an "ongoing dialogue with headteachers at these schools and we are working with them through these financial challenges."

It would help schools "review and closely monitor contracts for services they require".

Resolis Ltd, which is listed as Sandwell Futures' secretary on Companies House, did not respond to a request for comment.

Keziah Featherstone

# All you need to know about the Ofsted changes

AMY WALKER  
@AMYRWALKER

**Ofsted announced inspection changes this week following criticism after the death of head Ruth Perry. Here's what you need to know ...**

## 1. Faster re-inspections for safeguarding failures...

Schools graded 'inadequate' overall because of ineffective safeguarding, but where all other judgments are 'good' or better, will be revisited within three months of their report's publication.

If a school resolves the safeguarding concerns in that time, "it is likely to see its overall grade improve".

Only 1.3 per cent of all state schools currently have been judged ineffective for safeguarding. In the past 18 months, just 12 have been judged 'good' or better in every area except safeguarding.

"Although these circumstances are rare, we understand that schools in this situation will want to improve safeguarding quickly and parents will want to know this has been done," Ofsted said.

## 2. ... and academy orders can be revoked

Headteachers have been concerned that 'inadequate' Ofsted ratings trigger academisation or rebrokerage, even if they are later overturned.

In the example above, while an academy order will still be issued after the first inspection as usual, the government has committed that no action will be taken until the re-inspection.

The education secretary will then decide "whether to revoke any academy order issued to the school, or withdraw any warning notice issued to an existing academy".

Schools Week understands the order will be revoked where the school does improve.

## 3. 'Greater clarity' on effective safeguarding

The inspection handbook will be updated from September to "offer schools greater

clarity about the threshold for effective versus ineffective safeguarding".

Ofsted will also publish regular blogs and host webinars on the issue.

Ineffective safeguarding will also be described "more clearly" in reports to help "reassure parents and others that these judgments are not made lightly".

## 4. Consultation to overhaul complaints process

Ofsted has launched a formal consultation on significant changes to the way it handles complaints about inspections.

It is proposing to replace the current internal review with a direct escalation to the Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted (ICASO).

It has also proposed to allow schools to contact Ofsted the day after an inspection if they have "unresolved concerns".

**You can read more about the proposed changes here.** The consultation runs until September.



## 5. Schools told which year they'll be inspected

Schools will still get one day's notice of an inspection, but they will be given more clarity on which year they might expect a visit.

Leaders can usually "roughly estimate" the timing, but Ofsted admits the pause during the pandemic and efforts to inspect all schools by 2025 have muddied the waters.

The watchdog has therefore published a **blog post** with rough timetables for schools based on when they were last inspected.

## 6. Heads can share draft report findings

The family of Ruth Perry, the Reading head who took her own life after an inspection, has spoken of the burden of silence as she waited for the report to be published.

Ofsted said it would update covering letters that accompany draft reports to "make clear that it is entirely for a headteacher to decide who to share their report with, as long as they are aware that outcomes are provisional until the report is finalised".

The watchdog will also "provide assurance" to schools that "with a small number of exceptions" staff can choose to be accompanied by a colleague when they talk to inspectors.

## 7. Critical reports will be 'de-personalised'

The watchdog said it wanted to "de-personalise" language used in its reports to ease the burden on individual leaders.

From September, when discussing areas of weakness, inspection reports "will refer to 'the school' by default, rather than individuals".

The contextual information at the end of reports "will also be amended to list all those with responsibility for the school", Ofsted said.

However, there will still be some instances where leaders or governors are referred to because of their particular responsibilities, such as upholding legislation under the Equalities Act.

## 8. DfE expands heads' wellbeing service

The Department for Education has expanded provision offered through the government-funded teacher wellbeing charity Education Support whose helpline offers counsellor support.

More than 1,000 heads had benefited already from £760,000 of investment. Further funding of up to £380,000 will double the number expected to benefit over the next year from 500 to 1,000.



**Amanda Spielman**  
on the changes, page 9

NEWS: OFSTED

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# Poll contradicts Spielman's claims parents like one-word grades

AMY WALKER  
@AMYRWALKER

Half of Britons lack confidence in Ofsted ratings, a survey has found, despite chief inspector Amanda Spielman's insistence that the "majority" of parents find single-word judgments "helpful".

One in seven (16 per cent) of respondents to a YouGov survey of 3,201 UK adults were "not at all" confident in the system's ability to provide an accurate assessment of a school, while a third (33 per cent) were "not very" confident.

Just three in ten (28 per cent) had confidence in the ratings, including 5 per cent who were "very" confident.

Ofsted confirmed inspection changes on Monday, including re-visits over safeguarding issues and greater clarity on when inspectors will call (see page 7), as well as an overhaul its complaints' procedures (see below).

The watchdog has been heavily criticised following the death of headteacher Ruth Perry, whose family say she took her own life after her school was downgraded from 'outstanding' to 'inadequate'.

On why the inspectorate did not meet calls to ditch one-word judgments, Spielman said on BBC Radio 4 an alternative would be to "write a sentence that captures all the things that are typically reflected in an inadequate judgment".

"But the feedback when we talk to people is they know if the consequences are the same. If the significance is the same, it would come to mean exactly the same very quickly."



Asked where this feedback came from, Ofsted told Schools Week it regularly engaged with parents' groups "and the majority tell us they find the four grades helpful in understanding schools, especially in comparative terms".

But asked to produce evidence for this claim, the watchdog said it was "not a specific statistic".

The leaders' union NAHT said the measures were "sensible" but "they go nowhere near far enough in addressing the profession's concerns".

A wellbeing service for headteachers will also be extended.

But Caroline Derbyshire, the chief executive of the Saffron Academy Trust and chair of the Headteachers' Roundtable, said: "If you're Anne Boleyn heading towards an axe and you're told someone's looking after your welfare and there'll be someone to complain to after, that doesn't really cut it."

Ofsted has pledged to revisit schools that fail on safeguarding, but are otherwise good, within three months of its report's publication.

But Chloe Parish, a senior associate solicitor specialising in regulatory law, said it could take between three or four months before a report

was published..."and it can be even longer [where] complaints go over the timescales".

Julia Price Grimshaw, a former Ofsted inspector, also queried how quicker re-inspections for schools knocked down on safeguarding would "affect the inspection schedule, because they've only got the same amount of resources".

Ofsted said only 12 schools have been judged 'good' or better in every area except safeguarding in the past 18 months.

Spielman said Ofsted's priority "must always be children's education and wellbeing – but at the same time we want to make sure inspection is as positive an experience for school staff as it can be".

After meeting Perry's family, Gillian Keegan, the education secretary, said the changes were a "really important step".

Spielman has not yet met the family, but it is understood Ofsted has contacted them directly and offered a meeting. An Ofsted official also attended the Keegan meeting.

Julia Waters, Perry's sister, said she did not believe the proposals "adequately address the many problems that the system creates".

\* Ofsted removed a school's 'inadequate' report from its website on Friday, in a rare move that signalled a shift in its approach.

Queen Emma Primary in Cambridge was inspected in October and given the rating over its leadership and management, and safeguarding.

But Ofsted said "some doubt" had been cast over the judgment after an internal review.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## Ofsted's complaints overhaul out for consultation

Ofsted is proposing overhauling its complaints process. A consultation on the changes will run until Friday September 15. Here's what you need to know.

**1. Formal "checks" with heads during inspections** if they have any "queries or concerns". The stages for checks will be during the pre-inspection call, end-of-day meetings or the final feedback session. Inspectors can then address issues "in real time".

**2. Schools will get a new direct line to a senior inspector** on the day after their inspection to discuss "any unresolved issues". This may include informal concerns about the process or likely outcome.

**3. Ofsted has a four-step complaints process.** But in a **new first step** heads will highlight "minor points of clarity or factual inaccuracy", which will be addressed "promptly" before the final report is published. Those using this route will not "normally" have the chance to then raise a formal complaint.

**4. Formal complaints will be investigated by an Ofsted staff member "independent of the inspection"**. Reports and grades – including overall effectiveness – could be changed. Incomplete inspections will result in a revisit. Complaint outcome letters will be clearer about the reasons for decisions.

**5. The internal review process of how Ofsted handles complaints will be scrapped.** Instead, schools concerned their complaint has been mishandled can go direct to the Independent Complaints Adjudication Service for Ofsted (ICASO). This will "reduce the burden on providers raising concerns", the watchdog said.

**6. Ofsted also plans to introduce periodic reviews of how it handles complaints.** This will be done by taking a sample of closed complaints, which will be submitted to a **panel of external reviewers**, which will include people from the sectors that Ofsted inspects.



# Opinion: Ofsted

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## AMANDA SPIELMAN

Chief inspector, Ofsted

## It's up to the government to change the grading system

**Amanda Spielman explains why Ofsted is treading softly on proposals to change the way it works**

There has been considerable debate around Ofsted's work since the sad death of Ruth Perry.

This week, after discussions with unions, sector representatives and the secretary of state, we announced a package of measures aimed at improving the way we work with schools.

Some of the changes are responding to anxieties around inspection, particularly related to schools exempt for a long time because they were graded outstanding.

Measures, such as giving schools a better idea of when they'll next be inspected and explaining who can be told about the outcome, are designed to give greater clarity to headteachers.

Other measures, such as the proposed changes to our complaints process, are things we've been looking at for longer.

Safeguarding is one of the most important things we look at and this will not change. However, we plan to return more quickly to schools graded inadequate overall due to ineffective safeguarding, where all other grades are good

or better. For context, in the past 18 months, only 12 schools have found themselves in this position, but we hope this change will allay concerns. It's also worth noting that nearly 99 per cent of schools are found to have effective safeguarding when we inspect; schools overwhelmingly get this right.

So, we're certainly not moving the threshold for effective versus ineffective safeguarding. We know there's no desire among school leaders for us to soft-pedal in this area. Safeguarding is about making sure everyone working at a school is safe to work there, and that teachers know how to respond when they think children are at risk of harm. The expectations are set out in statutory guidance (*Keeping Children Safe in Education*), we don't look for anything more.

I have listened to the reaction to our announcement this week and I know there are those who would have liked us to go much further and change our grading structure. I'd like to explain why we didn't do that.

I recently described the debate about grading as legitimate – and it is. I've also said that inspection needs to work within the wider accountability system. Ofsted is just one part of that system. We inspect as we find and then the



“ Inspection is rarely something that schools look forward to

government decides, based on the outcome, whether a school needs any support or intervention. These consequences of inspection undoubtedly raise the stakes for schools and are baked into the grading debate. But as grades are an integral part of how it regulates the sector, any changes would rightly be a matter for the government.

It's also worth saying that the clarity and consistency of the grading system, while unpopular in some quarters, has other benefits. We use it to describe all four sub-judgments as well as the overall judgment.

I believe that this suite of judgments, with the report itself, presents a rounded picture of a school. Parents know that all schools are judged in the same way, so comparisons can be made – and the same is true for the government. It can compare the grade profiles of schools in, say, Brighton and Blackpool, and make broader decisions about how to

allocate resources.

It's undoubtedly a difficult time to be a school leader, with a range of challenges including the hangover from Covid and ongoing pay disputes. And in this context, an Ofsted inspection is rarely going to be something that schools look forward to.

But our inspectors are all serving or former school leaders who understand the pressures of school life and have been through the inspection process in their former roles. They bring that experience to their work with us.

Our priority must always be children's education and safety, but at the same time, we will always do what we can to make inspection as positive an experience for schools as it can be. And of course, that means we will continue listening to you.

[Click here to view the consultation](#)

NEWS

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# DfE eases inclusion agreement with grammar schools

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**  
@FCDWHITTAKER

The government appears to have watered down its agreement with grammar schools to admit more disadvantaged pupils.

A new memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Department for Education and Grammar School Heads' Association (GSHA) was published this week, covering the period from this year up to 2027.

Although the new document refers to a "shared ambition" to see more pupils from lower-income backgrounds admitted to selective schools, success measures in the last agreement have been slimmed down.

Schools Week revealed last year that the disadvantage gap between grammar schools and their non-selective neighbours had widened.

In the previous agreement, the DfE and GSHA agreed to report on progress against a number of measures. This included "upwards trends" in the number of disadvantaged children applying to



and admitted to selective schools.

The document now commits only to "evaluate progress", including by "monitoring the numbers of disadvantaged children being admitted to selective schools with a view to seeing an upward trend".

The goal of higher numbers of disadvantaged applicants has also been removed, with an ambition that all schools should prioritise disadvantaged pupils in admissions by the end of this parliament.

Dr Nuala Burgess, the chair of Comprehensive Future, said the new MoU was "a pretty toothless affair".

"There is nothing in the memorandum, but an implication that they intend to keep an eye on things with fingers crossed."

Grammar schools should "come clean", she

said, and "clearly state the percentage increase of disadvantaged children they aim to admit, with a timeline, and how they intend to go about achieving their target".

It follows a shortlived ambition by the government of Liz Truss last year to lift the ban on new grammar schools, something that was promptly dropped when Rishi Sunak took over.

Dr Mark Fenton, the chief executive of the GSHA, said the "level of ambition" in the agreement "remains unchanged".

However, he admitted a "lack of available data around applicants to grammar schools meant that one of the previous success measures proved difficult to assess reliably".

"By far the most important indicator of success remains the overall number of poorer children who benefit from the excellent education that grammar schools can offer. This has continued to rise, even though the achievement of disadvantaged children in primary school has fallen even further behind their peers as a result of the pandemic."

A DfE spokesperson said the number of grammar schools offering priority admission to poorer pupils had risen from 63 in 2017, to 136 last year.

EXCLUSIVE

AMY WALKER | @AMYRWALKER

## London university closes EP training programme

The longest-established training programme for educational psychologists will close after the government reallocated funding outside London and the south east.

Professionals fear pupils in the region could now face longer waits for help.

UCL is "winding down" its training after 24 years because of a dip in government-funded places.

The Department for Education has extended its scheme to train three cohorts of 200 educational psychologists from 2024, as part of a £32.2 million contract, but just 65 are for providers in London and the south east. This compares with 80 under the scheme that ends next year.

Other regions will be expected to deliver 139 places per cohort, up from 120.

The Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) warned reallocating cash from the capital would "limit access" to professionals for vulnerable children in the region at a time when

many are "already struggling" to see them.

UCL accepted the final recruits on to its CPD doctorate in educational psychology in January. The Institute of Education, UCL's faculty of education and society, also runs a doctoral programme.

In a letter to staff seen by *Schools Week*, the university said it was "not financially viable to maintain two overlapping programmes within the reduced funding envelope".

Cath Lowther, the general secretary of the AEP, said the UCL course was "highly renowned and greatly valued by local authorities who provide placement for trainees and who recruit EPs who qualify via that course".

The government scheme offers a free postgraduate doctorate if graduates then work for at least two years in a local authority or alternative setting.

"The course closing... will reduce access to places in London, potentially decreasing the diversity of the profession and limiting access to

EPs for vulnerable children and young people in the area," she said.

Workforce figures suggest the number of educational psychologists in England has fallen from 1,900 in 2010, to 1,530 last year, although there are now 517,026 children with education health and care plans, a rise of 46 per cent since 2019.

Educational psychologists assess pupils at school and can support staff to help those with special educational needs and disabilities.

Lowther said the AEP has advertised 119 positions in London and the south east since January, versus 78 in the same period in 2020.

"We understand there are gaps in training provision within England...however, we would have hoped increasing numbers of training places overall would have been a more effective approach," she said.

The DfE said funding will be "distributed to help boost course places where they are needed most".

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

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# Minister wants schools to benefit from AI revolution

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

Ministers are scoping out how to ensure schools benefit financially from any future use of pupil data by artificial intelligence systems, *Schools Week* has learned.

The rapid rollout of generative AI such as ChatGPT and Google Bard has prompted a scramble across government to harness the technology's power, but also to guard against any risks.

Such "large language models" could quickly process huge amounts of data, which experts say could help schools to understand their pupils better and analyse the impact of innovations.

Third-party organisations, including private companies, can already request data from the national pupil database for analysis.

The development of more and more sophisticated AI systems could make this analysis easier. However, ministers are understood to be concerned about any use of pupil data to generate profits for private companies without any benefit for schools and pupils.

Baroness Barran, the minister leading on AI for the Department for Education, told *Schools Week* ministers were "absolutely thinking about all of these issues".

"It wouldn't be truthful to say that we're clear on what principles we will follow, but obviously, we are extremely sensitive and aware of the use of individual or aggregated pupil data. That's clearly a real priority that we get that right".

Barran said ministers were asking "a number of questions", including on ownership of the data and "what's it worth".

"It's about as complicated as anything I've ever looked at. But we're working with people who are experts in data ethics and privacy, to really think through these problems."

Ministers this week launched a call for evidence about the future use of AI in education, having already issued guidance for schools on how to combat issues such



as cheating.

Gillian Keegan, the education secretary, told London Tech Week on Wednesday that AI was "transforming the world", and that education must not be "left behind".

Niel McLean, the head of education at BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT, said there were potential benefits to using AI and pupil data.

"If you build up a really large data model, and you train it using the pupil level data, then you can use that data model to help you understand your students as whole people.

"Everything matters. Their attendance matters, their performance matters, all those sorts of things. You've got a better sense of them as individuals. AI can do that. It can just help you just know your learnings better."

But he urged ministers to think about "four Ps".

"There's an ethics of purpose – what you're actually using this to do? There's an ethics of processes – how is data handled? What's the confidentiality? How secure is it? There's a people side. You want the people doing it to be professional, and feel they're accountable.

"The fourth P that came to my mind is the payback. Having a clear public

benefits statement about giving that data to this entity, what does it deliver? And it shouldn't just be financial return. It should be something that improves things for young people."

But the DfE already faces questions about its approach to data-sharing.

A damning audit by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in 2020 found the department broke data protection laws in how it handled pupil data. The full report still hasn't been released.

It was also reprimanded over a "serious breach" that allowed a company providing age-verification for gambling companies access to the personal information of millions of young people.

Jen Persson, from the campaign group DefendDigitalMe, said the department should "publish the evidence of today's data reality before getting ahead of itself with imagined futures. The 2020 DfE ICO audit must be published in full, with a timeline for what remains to be done.

"And the DfE must commit to giving families control over the current commercial re-uses of their own and their children's information from the millions of named records in the national pupil database, that few know exists."

ANALYSIS: MATs

# Trust team players – but who are they?

JACK DYSON

@JACKDYDS

**Trust central team growth has outstripped trust expansion. But the government admits it knows little about them. So what do they do? And how much do they cost? Jack Dyson reports**

The spotlight has long shone on academy trust chief executives, but many now lead growing numbers of centrally employed – and sometimes well-paid – senior leaders.

But what do we know about such central teams?

The Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) admitted in April it has a “data gap” and is reviewing whether to collect information on these teams. Scoping research is ongoing.

Government guidance states “strong” trusts ensure all staff are focused on improvement. The trust structure allows “administrative functions, policies and financial management to be delivered centrally, allowing school leaders to prioritise education”.

A 2021 report by the National Governance Association (NGA) noted that central teams are “emerging as powerful drivers for realising many [of the] benefits of trust-wide collaboration”.

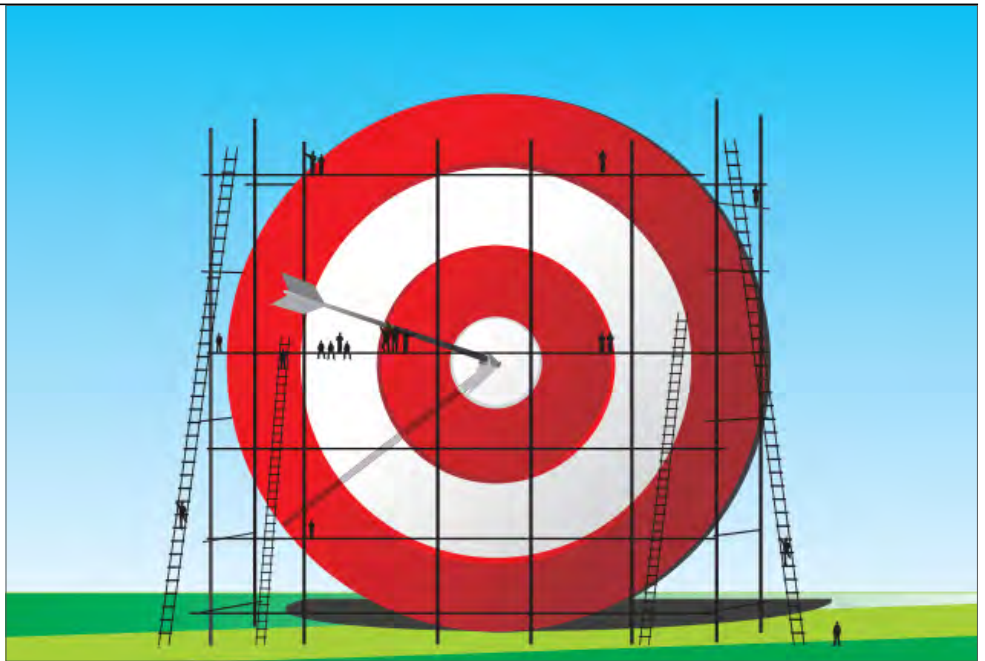
Many are providing more services, such as HR, in-house, allowing them to recruit people with specialist expertise.

Sir David Carter, the former national schools commissioner, says another key role is improving education standards more quickly by ensuring “successful practice to be transmitted from one classroom to another” across schools.

A third, and lesser talked about, benefit is delivering economies of scale on saving time by stopping duplication of tasks, he said.

But while most larger trusts have established central teams, smaller chains and those looking to become MATs are grappling with how best to do this.

Mark Greatrex, who leads the 10-school Bellevue Place Education Trust and has advised others on central teams, says they tend to be formed just before trusts take on their second school.



## ‘We didn’t want to replicate a load of roles and costs’

At this point, chief executives start “thinking about what they need to do to have that structure and the promises it’s sold” to secondaries or primaries set to join the group.

### Who are our central team leaders?

The academies accounts direction states MATs “must describe the types of central services provided to schools during the year”. But they aren’t obliged to include how many people are centrally employed.

Of the 30 biggest trusts, 15 either didn’t list the information on their website or provide their central team numbers to *Schools Week*.

Unity Schools Partnership provides the names of every central team worker, including cleaners, junior technicians and HR admin assistants.

But the Harris Federation simply mentions online that its “central team includes around 60 highly skilled teachers available to our academies as a resource to use as they need”. Its website does not appear to list any of those leaders other than Sir Dan Moynihan, its chief executive.

Tom Richmond, the founder of the EDSK think tank, says it is

“vital we have transparency” over such roles as it is “simply not possible to understand the drivers of effective practice if we have no collective sense of how to invest wisely to improve schools”.

Interpretations of what constitutes a central team varies.

Paul Tarn, the chief executive of Delta Academies Trust, says: “I have 42 specialist subject directors. Are they part of the central team? I don’t know. It’s really difficult [to work out], and where I draw my line and say ‘this is my central team’, someone else may say that’s not.”

Two-thirds of chief executives across the 30 biggest trusts that formed part of our analysis are men, and all but one of the chain bosses are white.

But of the 357 members of central staff that trusts listed online, our analysis suggests nearly two thirds are women.

### Is bigger better?

It’s difficult to get comparable figures on the size of these teams, and not all trusts responded to our request for data.



Mark Greatrex



Sir Dan Moynihan

ANALYSIS: MATs

Of those that did, unsurprisingly, United Learning – the country’s largest trust – had the biggest central team. Its 230 staff provide services across areas that include payroll, accounts and technology systems for its 81 schools.

Services can be delivered “more efficiently and effectively”, with the “specialist expertise” offered “particularly valuable to schools”, the trust says.

But services are only centralised “where doing so is demonstrably more efficient and/or effective than doing it locally”.

United Learning says the cost of all these services equates to £234 for each pupil.

Of our analysis, just four trusts appear to have 20 or fewer central team members. All are faith-based, including the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust that has just 11 people in its central team.

Oliver Burwood, it’s chief executive – who oversees one secondary and 37 primaries, “about half of which have less than 100 pupils” – says a company performs several “back-office roles” on its behalf.

His trust, with another in the same diocese, launched the company because they “didn’t want to replicate a whole load of roles and costs that are already sitting in one MAT”. Burwood says it gives them “better value for money”, as it operates across the two groups.

This has allowed his central team to “focus on school improvement”. At the same time, some members of staff also act as line managers to the chain’s executive headteachers, who run federations of up to four small primaries.

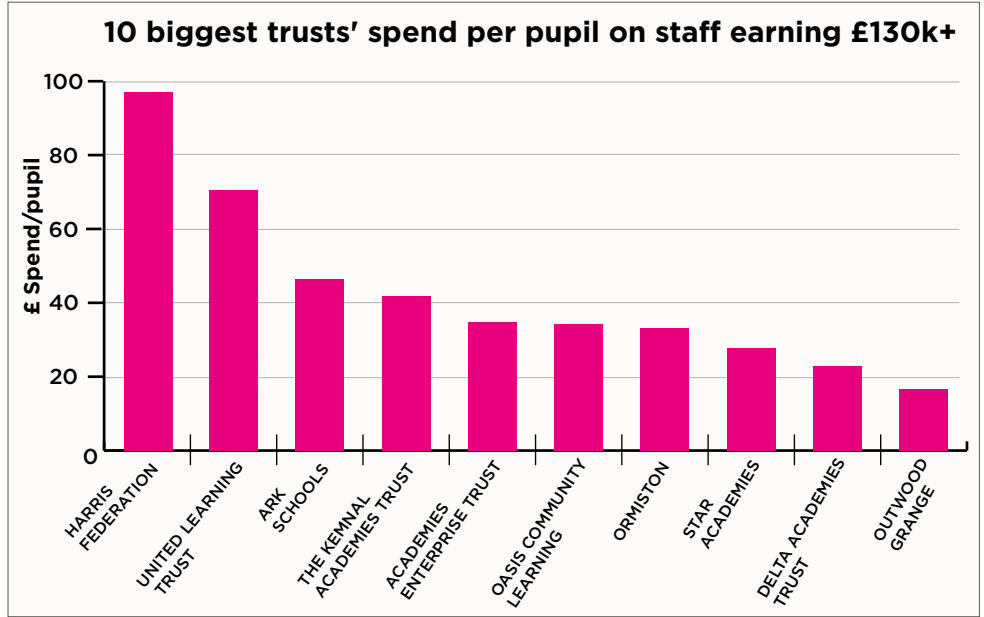
“If you’ve got a good leader, it’s best to have them across those four schools than having them teaching a lot of the time,” he says.

“You can grow central teams as big as you want, but they’ve got to be effective, and they’ve got to produce outcomes for pupils. You don’t want them to be bloated because, ultimately, it’s money that should be spent on kids.”

Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust has a 42-person strong central team – which Nick Hurn, it chief executive, describes as “bigger than most”. The group expanded from 10 to 47 schools in just four years.

“The difficulty we had was matching the required expansion of our services and team with the income that does not come in as

Stephen Morales



‘Ultimately, it’s money that should be spent on kids’

quickly as the converted schools,” Hurn says. “So, you have a funding gap, but still have the extra schools to support.”

‘Command and control leads to bigger risks’

But the NGA concluded two years ago that “central team power and influence continues to contribute to ongoing tensions between individual school expression and trust control”.

Hugh Greenway, the chief executive of the Elliot Learning Foundation, which has 30 central staff for its 32 primaries, describes his team as “medium-sized”, but adds “the trouble with command and control is you take bigger risks”.

“You need people in the field to make decisions. We want to encourage innovation and development.

“When we see something silly or dangerous being done, we step in. My approach costs more because there are areas of duplication and development.”

While rising trust chief executive pay has been well scrutinised, the salaries of other centrally employed staff has not.

It is difficult to work out exactly how much central teams get paid. But a good proxy is salaries.

Tom Richmond

Pay scales show headteachers can earn up to £131,400 this year, although trusts can set their own pay.

Using analysis provided by the Campaign for State Education (CASE), we found 90 people across the 10 largest trusts earned more than £130,000 last year. This equated to £42.57 per child. The CASE analysis found the comparable figure for staff in councils and authority-maintained schools was £4.17.

The Harris Federation, for instance, now has 20 people paid more than £130,000. Of those, four earn more than £200,000.

Moynihan received £455,000 last year. But the salaries of the other three Harris leaders – who are not named in annual accounts – places them in the top 20 of the best-paid CEOs across the country.

Harris appears to be an outlier, though. No other large trust has more than one person paid more than £200,000.

United Learning had 25 leaders who received salaries of more than £130,000, the second-highest, while Ark Schools had nine.

But the trusts say this is not a good indicator of central team wages because most people earning more than £130,000 are heads or executive heads working in their London schools.

‘We’re custodians of public funds’

Accounts for the 10 largest trusts over the past six years show the number of

Alice Gregson

ANALYSIS: MATs

employees in that pay banding climbed by two thirds. Over the same period, the chains only grew by 30 per cent. The findings suggest central team growth has outstripped trust expansion.

Five chains had no one in the higher bandings. Among them was Oxford Diocesan Schools, which noted its “central team salaries are 10 per cent to 20 per cent lower relative to those of other trusts of similar size”.

A spokesperson says the chain “strikes a balance of paying at an appropriate level for high-quality staff [and] recognising we are custodians of public funding for children’s education”.

And the costs of growing teams doesn’t sit well with some. “It’s about the amount of money that’s taken out of schools,” says Tarn.

“My trust is probably one of the most financially efficient in the country. There’s a reason why we’re spending £15.1 million on school buildings this year, and that’s because we generated in 2021 about £15 million surplus. We’re not doing that because we’re sloshing money about paying people to hybrid work and filling offices with executives.”

But a survey of 84 trust leaders last week by The Key and Forum Strategy found that budget pressures have forced just over a third to reduce investment in “specialist central staff”.

**Top slicing vs GAG pooling**

Central teams are generally funded by one of two ways. In the first – and most common – trusts collect a percentage slice of each school’s budget, or general annual grant (GAG) funding.

Chains using the second method, GAG pooling, collect their schools’ budgets in one pot before dishing out funds based on their own formula, which doesn’t have to be published.

Our analysis shows just five of the country’s biggest trusts GAG pool.

The Diocese of Ely MAT started pooling funding in 2020-21. Accounts state “smaller schools have benefited from this approach”.

The highest top slice was 7.25 per cent, charged by Unity Schools Partnership.

Meanwhile, Bishop Wilkinson’s accounts show the amounts range from 0 to 5 per cent. Hurn says this allows the trust to make sure it does not take a top slice from schools in financial difficulty “until we are able to stabilise them, which can take a year or two”.

The trust does not GAG pool “at this stage in our development as many of our schools have managed to save decent amounts in their reserves”. Despite this, heads have all



Paul Tarn

agreed that this money can be pooled and used by the trust “if or when necessary” to support an ailing academy.

A report by auditors Kreston Reeves this year found that nearly 25 per cent of its more than 300 trusts GAG pool, compared with 14 per cent last year. Altogether, two in five are either pooling or considering it.

REAch2 will begin pooling budgets in 2024. The trust, which is England’s largest primary-only chain, currently takes a 6.5 per cent top slice.

Burwood says his chain is considering GAG pooling “slowly because we’re doing it in consultation with headteachers to make sure we’re doing it right. It will help us to serve a small number of schools that aren’t by the current formula. Due to vagaries of postcode, they don’t ever seem to have enough money.”

Alice Gregson, the executive director of Forum Strategy, says some trust bosses are “waiting to see how GAG pooling is working for others before perhaps taking it on themselves”.

But Robert Farmer, the chief executive of Hamwic Education Trust, says “pooled funding can also be a barrier to successful schools joining as they feel they may be worse off”.

Tarn calls it opaque, arguing that it must be “really transparent in order to be fair”.

Stephen Morales, of the Institute of School Business Leadership, says money can’t be taken into the centre and it “not be clear where you’re putting it... But I don’t accept the local

protectionism of ‘this is my school and I’ve got a track record of running it perfectly – I don’t need a central team to tell me what to do.’

“Don’t join a trust



then. If you’re going to be part of one, you accept everything’s done in the interests of the whole, not the one.”

**‘Government mustn’t interfere’**

For trust bosses to ensure their models are efficient, Carter says they “must release capacity for school leadership teams to target educational improvement”.

“The sharing of resources, training, development opportunities, curriculum and assessment systems can and does result in a reduction in workload across MATs.

“But for this to work, there needs to be a culture where school staff value being part of a trust that leads in this way. They need to be willing to accept that the trust might have more capacity and be better placed than their own school to do all of this work in isolation.”

The academy trust handbook only states that central teams must have an accounting officer – who is usually the chief executive – and a finance director in place. There is no further guidance issued on how they should be configured.

Leora Cruddas, who heads the Confederation of School Trusts, describes this as an “important point of principle”.

“The whole point of creating a MAT is that it, as a specialist organisation, gets to determine the most effective structure for its group of schools.

“I would resist to my dying breath any government decision to issue guidance on how they should perform or organise operational functions. It would completely undermine the trust movement.”



INVESTIGATION: REGULATION

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# Revealed: Scale of parent shut-out on academy decisions

JACK DYSON

@JACKDYDS

EXCLUSIVE

Just one in ten regional director meetings had representations from the public, shows analysis that backs up concerns that important school decisions are being quietly determined with little input from parents.

Fifty-eight of the 65 advisory boards convened since September did not receive a single representation, *Schools Week* has found.

The government this week delayed plans to academise Sheffield's last council-maintained secondary, King Edward VII School (KES), after a fierce local backlash.

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

Parents who challenged the decision said this left them with just three days to make their views known. They also claimed KES was not made aware it could be absorbed by the Brigantia Learning Trust until this point.

Boylan said the current system "seems completely unfair. The schools need to be told that it's on the agenda and it ought to be a requirement that they then inform the parents it's happening."

Our analysis shows about 25 comments were lodged in all. Eight of these were made at an East of England advisory board in March, seemingly opposing a proposal to move the Ortu Federation MAT's last two schools into a separate chain. The proposal was rejected by the regional director.

It was the only item to be refused after attracting critical comments.

Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of Schools Trusts – who did not want to comment on the Sheffield situation – said there should not be system "where people are left to accidentally find out" about advisory boards.

While she cautioned against "parents



everywhere" starting to get involved with boards, she said they should be told if there was a change of a school's legal status and a trust put forward by the regulator.

"The regional director should ask the school to communicate with its parent body. They're core stakeholders and therefore have a legitimate interest in the legal status of a school."

Guidance published by the Department for Education says agendas – released 10 working days before boards meet – "all contain information on how anyone can make representations about any of the projects due to be discussed".

Boylan said representations had to be submitted not less than five working days before the meeting. "That needs to be longer. It's not very transparent and doesn't make for very good decision-making because the parents may have information that should be known."

Parents at KES questioned whether Brigantia was the right choice after learning two of its five schools had received back-to-back 'requires improvement' Ofsted scores.

They argued that the move contradicted the government's "coasting" crackdown to force schools with two less-than-good inspections into new trusts.

Regional director Alison Wilson deferred any decision "to allow further analysis to be carried out, comparing a number of suitable multi-academy trusts, including Brigantia".

But the attempts to academise KES have since been paused while waiting for the results of a follow-up Ofsted visit.

A DfE spokesperson said new "commissioning guidance" to "clarify the role of advisory boards" is due to be published.

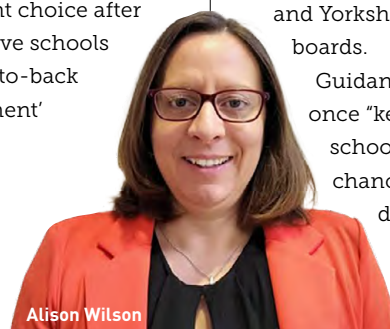
"We will also improve the transparency and consistency of meetings and published decisions as the revised commissioning approach is implemented."

Our analysis found minutes from meetings in April and May are yet to be published by the north-west, south-east and Yorkshire and Humber advisory boards.

Guidance adds they are published once "key stakeholders", such as schools and trusts, have had a chance to respond to the regional director's decisions.



Mark Boylan



Alison Wilson



NEWS

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# Keegan suggests another end-of-term pay outcome

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

The School Teachers' Review Body's recommendations on teacher pay and the government response are unlikely to be published until the final weeks of the school year, Gillian Keegan has suggested.

Ministers have come under growing pressure to release the report, following the leak of its main recommendation – a pay rise of 6.5 per cent for next year.

But the education secretary said on Monday they would publish the report "in the same sort of timeframes as we usually do".

Reports traditionally have been published much earlier. In was published in June in 2014, March in 2015.

However, since 2016, the reports have been published in July, and since 2018 have come in the latter half of the month, sometimes just days before the end of term.



Gillian Keegan

Last year this delay was particularly problematic because the STRB recommended – and the government approved – a pay rise of 5 per cent, above the 3 per cent expected. It meant many schools and trusts had signed off budgets based on the lower amount.

Maintained schools have to submit a three-year budget forecast each year, at a date set by councils between May 1 and June 30.

Academies usually have until the end of July to submit their budget forecast return, but this year the deadline has been pushed back to August 31.

Pressed on when the report and government response would come, Keegan told MPs this week that she was following "the same process that goes we go through every year".

Leora Cruddas, the chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts (CST), said previously that trusts' budget forecasts submitted to government last year were "out of date within days" because of the late announcement.

The CST has called for a multi-year school funding settlement.

Speaking at an event earlier this month, David Withey, the chief executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency, told leaders he wanted to be "working to a time frame that allows you to plan with certainty".

"It helps you to deliver better outcomes and it helps me because quite a lot of our budget forecast return data last year wasn't worth the paper it was written on because of the changes that came later.

"We have extended the budget forecast return deadline out by a month to buy us a little bit more time to make sure that happens. We will continue to have that under review if necessary."

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOTH

## Tory peer to chair music monitoring board

A Conservative peer will lead a team of experts appointed by the government to monitor the success of its plan to boost music education in schools.

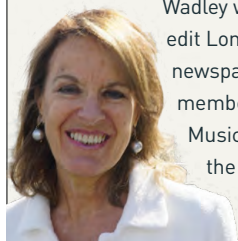
Last year, the Department for Education published its non-statutory national plan for music education to 2030.

Ministers would "like" every school to have a "music development plan" by September at the latest. Schools have also been "asked to offer at least one hour of music curriculum a week".

It follows the model music curriculum, published in 2021, for key stages 1, 2 and 3.

Conservative peer Veronica Wadley (pictured) will lead a monitoring board to "keep track of the progress in delivering the commitments in the plan".

Wadley was the first woman to edit London's Evening Standard newspaper and is now a council member of Royal College of Music, co-founder and chair of the London Music Fund and a national council member



for Arts Council England.

The team will meet termly, with the first meeting later this month. Terms of reference state a board will be in place until 2030, with members attending for two years at a time.

The government will work with the monitoring board to create an "impact framework" to set out how to "monitor and measure" the plan's success.

### The national plan for music education monitoring board

- Veronica Wadley CBE (Baroness Fleet) (chair). Council member of the Royal College of Music, co-founder and chair of the London Music Fund and national council member for Arts Council England
- Catherine Barker. Head of music and performing arts, United Learning, and president of the Music Teachers' Association
- Carolyn Baxendale MBE. Head of Bolton Music Service (Greater Manchester music education hub lead)
- Rachael Coulthard. Chief executive, The

Wings' CE Trust

- Richard Gill CBE. Chief executive, The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership and chair, Teaching School Hubs Council
- Anne Heavey. Director of insights, Ambition Institute
- Jamie Njoku-Goodwin. Chief executive, UK Music, national council member for Arts Council England
- Gill Jones. Group chief quality officer and safeguarding lead for Busy Bees Nurseries
- Simon Toyne. Executive director of music, David Ross Education Trust
- Ed Watkins. Director of music, West London Free School
- Bridget Whyte. Chief executive, The UK Association for Music Education: Music Mark
- Cassie Young. Executive inclusion officer, Our Community Multi-Academy Trust
- Hannah Fouracre. Director music education, Arts Council England (observer)
- Christopher Stevens. HMI specialist adviser and subject lead for music, Ofsted (observer)

NEWS: PAY

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# NEU forced to pay £150,000 to support staff unions

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

The National Education Union has been forced to cough up more than £150,000 to three other unions after its ballot of support staff last year was deemed to breach member recruitment rules.

A Trades Union Congress panel ruled that the ballot and associated campaign breached its principle that member unions cannot “knowingly and actively take into membership existing or recent members of another union”.

The move also breached a principle relating to “actions that would have the effect of undermining the position of an established union”, the TUC ruled, after a complaint from Unison, the GMB and Unite.

NEU, the largest education union with more than 450,000 members, was ordered to pay the three unions £153,952, with £85,161 of that going to Unison.

The NEU is not recognised for collective bargaining on behalf of support staff, something that happens through the National Joint Council (NJC). It has now had to publish a statement stating



it is “not seeking and will not seek recognition to collectively bargain on behalf of support staff”.

The union has also been forced to pledge “not to undertake any campaign or organising activity on behalf of support staff that could be construed as infringing on the established collective bargaining arrangements that exist without the express agreement” of the other unions.

However, it pointed out this directly contradicted a motion passed at its conference this year.

The motion instructed its leadership to “seek, at the earliest opportunity, recognition and negotiating rights for our support staff members” and “end the undertaking not to actively or knowingly recruit support staff”.

“Because of this difference, the NEU will be seeking meetings with Unison Unite and GMB to explore how we can resolve the contradiction between these positions.”

Unison, the GMB and Unite are balloting support staff members for strike action in response to the latest NJC offer.

The NEU said it had “expressed solidarity” with the campaign, adding it wanted to “talk with them about balloting our support staff members to make that solidarity very practical”.

A spokesperson added it was “in contact with them about how to campaign together on school funding, as well as how to set up a mechanism to ensure the views of NEU support staff members are taken into account in NJC pay negotiations”.

In a joint statement, the three support staff unions said they “would have preferred not to have had to bring the formal complaint ... but are satisfied with the outcome”.

A Unison spokesperson said: “The dispute between the unions is over.

“That paves the way for all the unions to get back to working together again, starting with the joint lobby over schools funding next week.”

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER | @SCHOOLSWEEK

## Federation staff end strike over academy plans

A strike over academisation plans at the country’s largest federation has been called off after the schools made new concessions, including allowing a councillor to sit on the new trust board.

Staff from the Leathersellers’ Federation of Schools, which educates 3,000 pupils in Lewisham, south London, have taken 12 days of action so far this year. Nine more days were planned.

Lord Knight, a former schools minister whose daughter attends one of the schools, said the strikes’ impact on children was “catastrophic”.

The action was called off last week after an agreement between the federation, the National Education Union and GMB union.

The federation’s three all-though schools will now become a multi-academy trust in January. It previously consulted on the plans, saying it would save money, allow it to

collaborate more with other local schools and provide better professional development for staff.

A total of 381 responses were received, of which the federation said 244 were opposed and just 22 supportive. Another 115 were neutral. Parents made up 201 of the responses, staff 68, community partners 58 and pupils 44.

The federation, which said its heads backed the move, had already committed to protecting current terms and conditions for existing and future staff.

It has now agreed to other concessions, which include only employing unqualified teachers in the same circumstances as permitted for council schools and forming a joint consultative committee with unions to provide a “regular and formal forum” to discuss issues of “strategic importance”.

Councillor Chris Barnham, Lewisham’s

cabinet member for children and young people, will also be appointed to the trust board to “strengthen the federation’s place within the Lewisham family of schools”.

Andy Rothery, the federation chair, said: “We know that last half term was incredibly difficult for pupils and families and we will support pupils to catch up on missed learning.

“We are looking forward to working with parents, carers, pupils, staff and our wider community over the next few months to help shape our future local multi-academy trust.

“We are very proud of the strong individual identities of our schools. We will remain the same schools, with the same leaders and the same culture.”

An NEU spokesperson said it voted to accept the outcome of talks which gave “guarantees on working conditions for both new and existing staff – a significant issue for our members”.

NEWS

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# Teach First trims its executive team

AMY WALKER  
@AMYRWALKER

EXCLUSIVE

Teach First has made half of its eight-strong executive team redundant, months after it recruited its lowest number of trainees in four years.

The government's flagship provider for attracting high-flying graduates said the executive team would only fall by three, as it is creating a new executive role.

It is currently recruiting a chief growth officer, with a salary of £118,750.

A spokesperson said it was "making this change to bring key teams closer together, further helping them to do their best work for young people from low-income backgrounds.

"For example, in the new structure the same executive director will lead the team developing our programmes and the team delivering programmes, supporting more



seamless collaboration between them.

"Our school partnership teams will work more closely with our fundraising teams to get resources into communities."

The move was part of Teach First's 2023-30 strategy and was "the right thing to do at this time".

"As greatly valued colleagues are impacted by this change, it would not be appropriate to go into further detail."

However, several new junior roles are being advertised, including a director of service

operations and director of recruitment.

In April, the provider's government contract was extended for another two years, despite recruitment woes.

Teach First admitted "significant" challenges last year when taking on 1,394 recruits, missing its target by a fifth.

But the charity said it was "proud" of last year's numbers, "given the significant recruitment challenges the whole sector is facing".

It also outperformed the overall teacher recruitment numbers, which fell 40 per cent below the government's own target.

However, it lost £2 million in bonuses. The charity has agreed to "make adjustments" to its approach, including rerunning its autumn institute that allows recruits to apply outside the recruitment window and last year used by 122 graduates.

Other new measures include a "targeted" campus recruitment campaign and a "taster course" that will allow STEM undergraduates to access "a bank of online, internship-style content".

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## DfE launches consultation on GCSE in British Sign Language

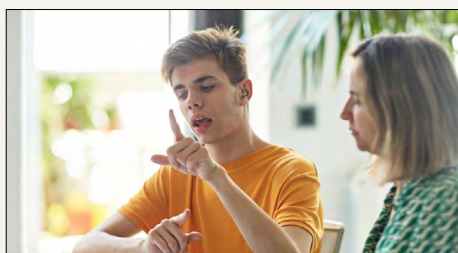
The long-awaited introduction of a British Sign Language GCSE has moved one step closer after the government launched a consultation on course content.

Ministers said the qualification, which they hope will be taught from 2025, will help pupils "communicate effectively with other signers for use in work, social and academic settings, providing them with valuable life skills welcomed by employers".

Deaf charities and other campaigners have been calling for a GCSE in British Sign Language (BSL) for years, and the government has been planning to introduce one for about five years, but with little progress.

Gillian Keegan, the education secretary, said it was "fantastic that British Sign Language will soon be taught in schools up and down the country".

"Good communication is essential both inside and outside the workplace and this historic GCSE will give students a vital life skill valued by employers.



"It will break down barriers, advance equality of opportunity, and celebrate the history and rich culture of British Sign Language."

The Department for Education said it had been "working closely with subject experts, stakeholders and schools to develop proposed content to ensure that this new GCSE is internationally recognised and accepted in school and college performance tables".

Views on the new qualification, "including the language skills to be studied and the role of history, are being sought from teachers, employers and the deaf and hearing communities".

Dr Jo Saxton, the chief regulator at Ofqual,

said qualifications were meant to "increase opportunities and break down barriers".

"This GCSE in British Sign Language will do that by encouraging more people to study the language ... We want anyone with an interest in this new GCSE subject to tell us what they think about our proposals and whether these allow students the best opportunity to show how well they understand and can use British Sign Language."

Susan Daniels, the chief executive of the National Deaf Children's Society, said BSL was a "native British language used by tens of thousands of people, so it's only fair and right that BSL users should have the opportunity to achieve a GCSE in their own, legally recognised language".

As well as learning how to sign effectively, the GCSE "will also give students an understanding of the history of sign language in the UK".

"This will provide a solid foundation for students' understanding of how the language has reached its current form," the DfE said.



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Mayor, Greater  
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**HMCI  
 AMANDA  
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His Majesty's  
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**MEG  
 ZEENAT  
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**PROFESSOR  
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 KIRSCHNER**

Educational psychologist,  
 researcher and author,  
 kirschner-ED



**DANNY  
 DORLING**

Social  
 geographer



**WILL  
 SELF**

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**BEN  
 SOLANKY**

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 director, Empathy  
 Action



**DERRON  
 WALLACE**

Writer, storyteller  
 and sociologist,  
 Brandeis University  
 and the University of  
 Manchester



**ALISON  
 PEACOCK**

Chief executive,  
 Chartered College  
 of Teaching



**DR ANGELA  
 HERBERT MBE**

Founder of IOTC Solutions  
 and Chair of the violent  
 crime prevention board



**DR SALLY  
 UREN OBE**

Chief executive,  
 Forum for the Future



**JO  
 SAXTON**

Chief regulator,  
 Ofqual



**LAURA  
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**Profile**  
 JESSICA HILL | @JESSJANEHILL



# ‘I just want to be useful’

**Jessica Hill meets Reuben Moore, executive director of programmes at the flagship National Institute of Teaching to talk recruitment, expert teachers and lessons on TV**

**H**ow do you skill up the next generation of teachers without overloading them? And then keep them motivated enough to stay in the profession?

That’s the big question that Reuben Moore, the executive director of programmes at the National Institute of Teaching (NiOT), is weighing up.

The NiOT is the government’s £121 million flagship teacher training provider. Launched last

summer, it has more than 1,000 people doing national professional qualifications (NPQs) and 100 “system leaders” in training. Meanwhile, it aims to recruit about 500 initial teacher trainees to start in September, which it is believed it is on track to do.

The question Moore is trying to solve is one that he’s well acquainted with. Before joining the NiOT last year, he held a similar role with Teach First. He also sat on the government advisory group that

helped to shape the early career framework (ECF), the standards setting out what new teachers should learn.

He’s proud of how the “massive change” – affecting 30,000 new teachers – became embedded so quickly, and how early career teachers (ECTs) have “really embraced” it.

However a recent Gatsby report found two-thirds of new teachers felt the ECF programme added to their workload. Similar numbers said it didn’t cover

# Profile: Reuben Moore

anything they didn't already know.

Moore admits there is room for improvement. One idea is that when NiOT's courses start in September, a "diagnostic" is taken of what teachers already know as there's a "perception of duplication".

It is ironic the ECF is blamed for increasing workload, because for Moore it was intended to do the opposite. It was, he says, about providing "the base entitlement...to reduce the idea there's a million ways to plan lessons or look like a stand-up comedian".

He is adamant the ECF has achieved this; ECTs are no longer providing "the worksheet for every individual in class", for example.

But "if the sector is feeling that workload is an issue, then we need to tackle it", and "that is what the DfE is now focused on. But let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater."

## Technical painting by numbers?

Underpinning Moore's career has been a strong conviction that the craft of teaching takes many years to perfect, and new teachers need to first get to grips with the basics.

It was something he learnt back in 2003, as one of the first cohorts on the Teach First programme, which attracts high-flying graduates into the profession.

But he admits that he's "not sure" that all the trainees "got" some of the things taught at its inaugural summer institute. "We were probably trying to teach them too much at one time... almost overloading it. I started to get a better sense of what needs to come first."

He dismisses the idea that giving new teachers lesson plans and schemes of work is "technical painting by numbers" that will "turn teachers into robots". Instead, it creates an "early sense of success".

"Benedict Cumberbatch learns his lines, but will do it completely differently from how you would. There is still autonomy."

Moore believes building up confidence in this way helps to stem the tide of teachers leaving, adding it's "very worrying" that almost a quarter who qualified in the past five years have quit.



## 'Let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater'

You can see how Moore's humble and self-effacing manner lends itself to nurturing trainee teachers' confidence.

Our conversation is peppered with tales of his early teaching mishaps. While training for a PGCE at Cambridge, he recalls "struggling" to get a year 10 class to listen, while they were "like a different group" with their permanent teacher.

"It was because this teacher had been there for so long, it was like upsetting a family member. That taught me how when you're learning to be a teacher, it looks like magic. When you're not amazing, it's scary. Yet, just like magicians those expert teachers have honed their craft."

## Getting expert teachers to stay

Moore advocates nurturing this role of "expert teacher", partly by giving them mentoring roles and adequately rewarding them for it.

There have been previous attempts to do so; maintained schools could introduce advanced skills teacher in 1998 on separate pay grades who were allocated time to support teaching colleagues.



But funding was axed in 2013.

Mentors are currently required to support ECTs in their induction programmes, but there aren't enough of them. Last academic year, at least 26,927 teachers started ECF training, but only 24,895 mentors were trained to support them.

Moore says the DfE is "trying to think of ways to channel more resource into schools to acknowledge the role that mentors play".

Incentives could be providing more time rather than more money – whether for "professional development", or "their children's sports day". Creating designated mentor roles is "particularly difficult" for isolated primaries, but he welcomes "emerging ideas" about schools teaming up to share mentors.

# Profile: Reuben Moore



Moore on the left with brother and Dad

### Belfast troubles

Moore's early sense of confidence took a hit when he failed the 11-plus. Although he got a place at Belfast's Methodist College a year later, he found it hard to shake the feeling he was "not quite good enough".

He had eyed a career in journalism, but was put off after seeing the Troubles in Belfast up close during a work experience stint for the Republic of Ireland broadcaster RTÉ – "there were funerals to go to and I found all that quite scary".

He embarked on a teaching career in which he made the most of opportunities to apply research to the classroom. After spending his NQT years at Gillingham School in Dorset, he became head of the history at Lampton School (now academy) in Hounslow, west London, during a period when Teachers TV – a government-funded free-to-air television channel – was in vogue.

Its crews filmed Moore teaching and being critiqued by experts. He now cringes about those videos, still available on YouTube, in which he "looks about 12".

Moore then became involved in practice research with St Mary's University, trialling ways to get pupils to give "better explanations" in history essays – a technique nicknamed the "shepherd shuffle".

It drilled home the importance of "getting that balance right" between research and practice, and how "tricky that can be".

### Alcatraz of education

After training with Teach First, Moore started developing its training programmes, especially for teachers serving disadvantaged schools.

He then had an 18-month stint, very much back



Moore during university years in Washington DC, where he taught in a local school

## 'Like magicians, expert teachers hone their craft'

in the firing line, as vice-principal of St Michael and All Angels academy in south London. The now-closed school made headlines when its deputy head Katharine Birbalsingh told the Tory Party it was "the Alcatraz of the world of education".

Moore's "formative" time there demonstrated the challenges school leaders face in setting high expectations for pupils but being met with "challenges from outside".

Returning to Teach First, first as Yorkshire director then executive director, Moore grasped the opportunity to shape education policy with a seat at the NPQ review, ITT Core Content Review and the ITT Market Review.

On recruitment struggles, he says while it "remains a challenge... we are pleased with the interest, volume and quality of applications we are receiving".

NiOT also has big research plans into such issues.

Its first evaluation – looking at the new "intensive training and practice" part of training next year – found a "potential overburdening of schools and mentors", with a warning for the government

to ensure it provides the proper resources to avoid problems.

This autumn, the institute is also running

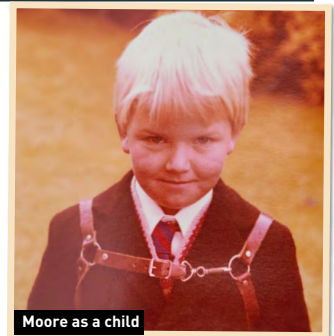
a pilot of a SEND-specific primary postgraduate teacher apprenticeship in 14 London schools.

Moore wants to "explode the myth that you can't train in a special school... knowing for years that trainees feel less confident with [SEND]".

He also has his eye on DfE plans for an undergraduate apprenticeship in teaching, which could "grow more teachers in certain communities".

Amidst a prevailing mood of negativity over teacher pay and conditions, Moore remains resolutely upbeat.

"Throughout my career, I've just wanted to be useful."



Moore as a child

# Opinion: MAT leadership

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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## SIR DAVID CARTER

Former national schools commissioner

### Why trust central teams can be worth their weight in gold

**A strong and high-performing central team has many benefits, as Sir David Carter explains. But they must get their approach right...**

An academy trust central team is one of the key ways of sustaining improvement. Alongside supporting schools, it also creates capacity for leaders at school-level to focus ever more relentlessly on standards.

But giving labels to teams can be tricky. "Central team" does not really describe what work takes place.

Even within trusts there is sometimes a view that these are the mysterious people who sit at HQ throwing out more challenges than support.

In the worst examples, staff may not even be aware that this group of people are their colleagues.

But without them, pressure on school teams to do even more of the non-educational delivery would increase.

For me, there are three key benefits to creating a strong and high-performing central team.

#### 1. Improve standards quicker

Raising educational standards as quickly as possible, and then sustaining them, should be at the heart of any trust investment.

A central team has a responsibility to ensure that the sum of the parts across their schools enables

improvement to be quicker than if the team did not exist.

Many trusts have developed school improvement teams that spend part of their week supporting their colleagues and the remainder teaching their own classes in their "home" school.

This brings credibility to the support conversation, but also enables successful practice to be transmitted from one classroom to another in different schools.

Large parts of staffing budgets are allocated to those in leadership positions. This has been true for decades, but the challenge is often that such responsibility includes a whole catalogue of other things that gets shoved their way.

For example, an IT issue, cover and supply, HR, the quality of the classroom environment.

A strategically focused trust with central capacity can take some of this away – allowing leaders to focus on their core responsibilities. It means the classroom experience of their children is front and centre of leaders' focus.

#### 2. Professionalisation of services

School management changed in the 1990s, when schools could become grant maintained and took on many of roles previously fulfilled by councils: recruitment, CPD development, finances.

But the development of workforce competence to do these tasks



“ There’s another economy of scale less talked about: time

didn't always work. For example, managing school finances often fell to the senior deputy head looking for a new role ahead of retirement.

Academy trusts – answerable directly to Whitehall – cannot leave such important functions to chance. That is why we have qualified accountants appointed in finance roles and qualified HR leaders who understand the risks and opportunities associated with employment law.

Growing the professionalism of teams who are responsible to their trustees for the management of such core functions is critical.

#### 3. Time efficiency can solve workload woes

There's lots of discussion about how trust economies of scale can save money. But there's another economy of scale less talked about: time.

Workload continues to dominate the debate around retention. Trusts have a real opportunity to take a fresh look at this and make some serious inroads.

However, if trust schools merely replicate and duplicate many of

the educational tasks they did as a standalone, then the opportunity will be missed.

But there is already lots of good practice. Trusts with an assessment calendar that focuses on all year 6 children across its schools taking the same test and during the same week avoid duplication of effort.

Trusts that have aligned their curriculum in key stage 3 modern foreign languages and have provided lesson-planning resources for teachers are saving hours in preparation time.

Trusts that advertise vacancies on behalf of their schools get to see straight away how many applicants there are. This can be shared with other schools, who are anticipating the need to appoint.

Central teams are worth their weight in gold. But they must remember their very existence can create additional work if their approach is wrong.

Their role is to build capacity, raise standards and execute professional duties better than ever before. Get that right, and a sustainable model becomes a reality.



# Opinion: MAT leadership

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
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**A new leadership pyramid is pulling talent up faster than it can be replaced, argues David Benson**

“It is unquestionably a difficult time to be a headteacher,” chief inspector Amanda Spielman said on the BBC’s *Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg* earlier this year. A welcome acknowledgment, but hardly news and far from controversial.

The pressures of Covid, cost of living, strikes, recruitment and a more exacting Ofsted framework are all generally understood. To these, Sam Strickland’s article here last week did well to add increases in behaviour incidents, parental complaints and mental health issues.

But a rise in complex safeguarding cases, unprecedented battles around student attendance and the stress of navigating sensitive cultural debates also play out in the classroom just as much as they do in parliament and social media.

Something else is affecting leadership retention, however, something more systemic. With more than 80 per cent of secondaries (and counting) now part of multi-academy trusts, a subtle but important shift has taken place in how the profession builds and sustains its capacity.

Instead of serving one school for an extended period, many heads now become executive heads, then regional directors, directors of education and MAT chief executives. The professional pyramid that has existed for decades has been fundamentally altered. In fact, another pyramid has been built on top of it.

The logic is that these skilled heads then coach the next generation, disseminating strong leadership across a wider group of schools. An attractive prospect, especially for the DfE.



## DAVID BENSON

Principal, Kensington Aldridge Academy, west London, and head designate, Mill Hill School, north London

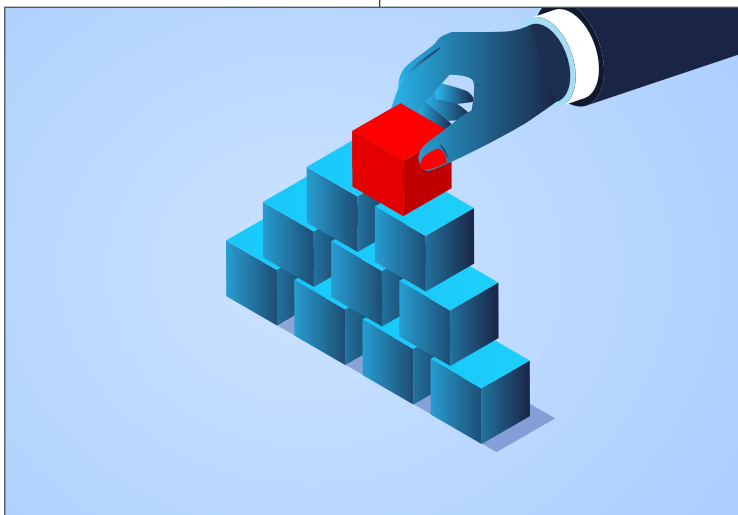
## Is moving up a bigger retention problem than moving out?

This model is undoubtedly transformative when it works – and I’ve been fortunate to see it. But when it doesn’t, it can lead to top-heavy, bureaucratic structures and a feeling among staff that decision-making has been divorced from the school. This is

happening at the exact moment when schools need maximum flexibility to respond to a changing landscape, and high levels of transparency and staff voice. And then, of course, there is the

“It’s questionable whether elevating effective heads is always smart”

small matter of there not being enough heads, full stop. Schools Week recently reported a 54 per cent increase in headteacher vacancies compared with last year, with hundreds of schools having to re-advertise headships two or even three times. Restoring some of the traditional status and responsibilities of heads – including fuller autonomy over financial and educational strategy – could be key. It’s certainly



questionable whether elevating effective heads out of their roles is always smart, given this context.

Many chief executives and heads in MATs will swear by the collaborative power of what has emerged as the dominant MAT structure, and plenty of trusts – like those I’ve worked with – are careful not to move heads too quickly.

There is clearly merit in dividing up executive responsibility, be that among a large and experienced senior leadership team or a group of MAT executives who operate around the head. It’s also true that coaching for new heads, whether by an executive head or a leadership coach, is essential.

My enthusiasm remains undiminished after my first decade as a headteacher (all at the same school). In January, rather than “moving up”, I will be starting a second headship, beginning all over again.

The heads I learned from all measured their impact in (minimum) five-year blocks. They understood that as a head you grow through different phases, and the continuity you provide adds deep community value.

So for any head who secures great results this summer or has just banked a successful Ofsted, I would take pause if your CEO pops their head round your door to offer you a new challenge. Perhaps you should take the (well-earned) pay-rise, thank you very much, but not the move.

The new pyramid may or may not be a permanent feature of the education system, but schools and their communities will always need headteachers who know them and are committed to their children for the long haul.

# Opinion

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## KATE CHHATWAL

Chief executive,  
Challenge Partners

### Peer review cannot replace inspection, but it can inform it



**Peer review loses its power as soon as it is tied to formal accountability, says Kate Chhatwal**

This week's Ofsted reforms have done little to quell a re-energised debate about the future of accountability.

Headteachers and sector groups have taken the lead and, as a practitioner-led charity guided by the school and trust leaders in our partnership, Challenge Partners applauds their efforts. We also welcome their enthusiasm for the mutual accountability enabled by rigorous peer review. However, we don't see it as an alternative to inspection.

Inspection and peer review perform different functions; inspection is about public accountability while peer review focuses on development. Blurring the line between the two risks diminishing both.

What makes peer review so powerful is that it is a safe space where school leaders can talk candidly about what they find difficult. They invite honest and constructive feedback from trained peer reviewers whose job is to celebrate what is working well and provide robust challenge where provision isn't up to scratch – always empathetically and with a willingness to collaborate to leave

the school in a better place.

As soon as peer review is tied to formal accountability, it loses this developmental power. Hosts are more likely to lift the curtain on a performance than to lift the carpet on their realities.

When regional school commissioners got wind of the trust peer reviews we piloted in 2018, we were asked to share the reports written by our expert lead reviewers. Regional teams thought these might help with decisions about supporting a trust's growth. Our response was an immediate no. Peer reviews are solely for the trust or school being evaluated; not even the peer reviewers get to see it. The only thing we expect to be shared from a review is any excellent practice that others may benefit from.

Nevertheless, there are some features of the way we approach peer review that could improve inspection. First is ensuring that the process is consistently done with, not done to. Headteachers who report the most positive experience of inspection often describe good dialogue with the team throughout, but this isn't uniformly the case.

Our ethos is "one team, two parts". It is fundamental to our review methodology. Every evaluation activity is conducted jointly by senior leaders from the host school

**“ It must remain distinct from inspection ”**

and a peer reviewer. Time and evaluation tools facilitate rich professional dialogue, enabling the internal and external senior leaders to reach agreement on the strengths and weaknesses of what they have seen. This is triangulated with similar activities by other pairs across the school, building a rich picture of what is systemic and embedded and what is the quirk of a particular member of staff.

If Ofsted were to systematically adopt this approach – openly discussing their observations with leaders throughout the inspection, rather than behind closed doors – it could yield some of the benefits inherent in peer review, usefully building capacity for school improvement.

Our "50:50 model" balances the need for robust evaluation on behalf of pupils with professional development for senior leaders. What incredible professional development Ofsted could be if inspectors brought school leaders fully into the process, sharing their insights and narrating how they

were applying the framework as they went.

As for one-word judgments, schools in Challenge Partners are given the choice before their review whether they would find it helpful to have evaluation of each element – and performance overall – summed up in "peer evaluation estimates". About 75 per cent do so, but the stakes are nowhere as high as with Ofsted. Besides, it is the rigour and inclusiveness of the process, not the estimates nor the report's narrative, that really catalyse improvement.

Finally, the accountability framework could usefully consider evidence of how schools and trusts seek and use external quality assurance such as peer review to demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement.

However, having delivered more than 4,000 school and trust peer reviews since 2011, we urge would-be reformers to focus on the "how" of peer review rather than the "what". Peer review must remain distinct from inspection.

# Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
CONTACT US NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

## Rhys Howells sets out some low-hanging fruit for policymakers

The recruitment and retention crisis in education is one of the most troubling and urgent challenges facing the government. A plethora of issues have contributed to a perfect storm, with teacher training numbers dropping and schools struggling to retain qualified staff.

Pay, workloads and stress still need to be addressed, but other factors have become barriers to people entering the workforce. By considering these, we can identify achievable policy solutions, including some relatively quick wins.

### Better use of technology

People have become accustomed to accessing almost everything instantaneously through their phones. Schools and colleges that use technology effectively therefore achieve higher numbers of teacher applications, providing them with more choice and enabling higher-quality recruitment. We've seen first-hand that accessible applicant-friendly processes, such as fully mobile-optimised forms, increase completion rates by more than 50 per cent.

Despite reducing the drop-off rates of potential candidates who may get bored or frustrated with older systems, many application processes still fail to provide the ideal candidate experience.

While it does differ between organisations, many other industries are making it easier than ever before, with application time in many sectors falling under five minutes. Benchmarking, guidance and implementation support for schools to improve the use of technology within applications would significantly boost recruitment efforts.



# RHYS HOWELLS

Managing director, Eteach

## Four policy solutions to help ease the recruitment crisis

### Overseas teachers

More immediate relief could be found among the tens of thousands of UK-trained teachers who now work abroad. Incentive packages with clear

our view of international experience we could access the talent of teachers who have worked in some of the world's highest-performing schools.

“ There is no single quick fix, just marginal gains

progression pathways could persuade them to return and share their insight and skills from foreign systems.

The government has recently introduced an international relocation payment to entice eligible non-UK trainees and teachers. Although this is progress, many are apprehensive of returning – not because they fear our system's accountability and workload, but our prejudice against international teaching. Pay is a factor, but by altering

Similarly, we must leverage other overseas teaching communities to lessen the strain. Since Brexit, the number of EU applicants awarded QTS has fallen dramatically. There were 4,795 in 2015-16, and 704 in 2021-22. Other countries such as Ireland and South Africa have a teacher surplus; attractive immigration pathways including teaching visas could allow us to access this talent.



### QTS barriers

The meticulous requirements of the QTS prevents the successful recruitment of international teachers. While it is important to maintain teaching standards, case-by-case consideration (as within the independent sector) would widen the recruitment pool and ensure well-experienced international teachers are not dismissed.

A shorter introductory course to UK education would provide overseas teachers with the relevant safeguarding training and curriculum information to enter the sector, instead of leaving them unable to work despite extensive experience.

### Funding for training teachers

Financial support for entrants has improved, particularly in shortage subjects, but this should be extended. Income support for training teachers, for example placing them on a teacher's assistant salary, could attract career changers with existing workplace knowledge.

It is a significant ask for experienced professionals with coveted skills to retrain without an income. As seen in social work and the police, a salaried training programme can lead to significantly increased rates of people entering the sector.

Small, tangible policy changes such as these represent an opportunity to begin turning the tide on recruitment, if not retention. The complexity of the issues means there is no single quick fix, so government must instead look to marginal gains that will slowly but surely support the growth of a sustainable, healthy education workforce.

# 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.

**DUNCAN SPALDING**

Executive headteacher,  
Aylsham High School



**JON CHALONER**

Chief executive officer,  
GLF Schools



**“ Quicker re-inspection is a patch rather than a solution ”**

## Safeguarding should matter to Ofsted as much as to schools

**The changes announced this week do not inspire confidence that Ofsted and the DfE understand the impact accountability is having on headteachers, say Jon Chaloner and Duncan Spalding**

**P**rimum non nocere – first, do no harm – is an axiom that has come to underpin modern medicine, and it is one that Ofsted would do well to heed.

A recent *British Medical Journal* article lists eight potential cases in addition to Ruth Perry in which Ofsted has been identified as a significant causal factor in a headteacher's suicide. It highlights cliff-edge judgments and unnecessarily combative inspectors as key problems and concludes that it would be negligent not to take serious steps to reduce the potential for harm.

The authors also note the discrepancy between Ofsted's emphasis on safeguarding by school staff and its apparent lack of reflection on its own safeguarding responsibilities. This week's announcement of rapid changes to the inspection framework begins to acknowledge the professional and emotional harm our accountability model is doing, but falls short of a

proper plan for sustainable renewal. Proposals for achieving this are not new. In an "Alternative White Paper" published in 2021, the Headteachers Roundtable suggested possible reforms that remain as valid after this week's announcement as they have been for the past two years.

**Annual safeguarding audits**  
Ofsted has recognised that the limiting judgment for safeguarding can be problematic, especially when the overall quality of education a school provides is at least good. But quicker re-inspection is a patch rather than a solution. What everyone surely wants is for safeguarding issues to be picked up in a timely fashion. The separation of accountability for quality of education and safeguarding by implementing annual safeguarding audits would ensure this and would avoid blighting schools with stigmatic labels and imposing the repeat stress of another inspection.

**Remove the grades**  
The purpose of inspection should be to identify excellence and areas requiring support. Instead, our system is geared towards giving a summary judgment that proffers to help parents choose, but does little to ensure they get the information

they need. Recent cases of inadequate judgments being quickly overturned, including one only last week, bring this harmful practice into sharp relief. This week's announcement does little to mitigate the problem.

Revoking academisation and re-brokering orders after re-inspection does little to alleviate the high-stakes nature of the judgment to begin with. And it does nothing for all the other schools that are subject to Ofsted's unreliable grades. The methodology is inadequate and should be halted altogether.

**Contextualise school accountability**  
Judgments are meaningless if they are not informed by a full appreciation of a school's circumstances and challenges, not least the sector it operates in and levels of disadvantage among its community. A growing body of evidence suggests Ofsted's one-size-fits-all methodology makes it harder for schools in certain contexts and teaching certain phases to achieve well. This is simply not good enough for hard-working colleagues in these schools.

**A leadership recruitment and retention strategy**  
A better idea of when we will be

inspected, "de-personalising" reports and increased investment in the Education Support charity are welcome, but they read like an effort to make the system a little kinder by helping leaders to pick up the pieces after devastation.

What we really need is root-and-branch reform to remove the cliff edges and make the job sustainable.

**Reframe accountability**  
Education needs a more coherent and purposeful accountability. Our current system seems premised on the idea that we are shy of it, when the truth is that we are held to account every day by our communities. Reversing the current assumption that we are poor until proven effective would create a better balance.

As Sam Strickland wrote in these pages last week, accountability must change to reflect the challenges schools face today, not those of 30 years ago or more. We couldn't agree more. Our practical ideas have been on paper for two years, and as the *BMJ* authors wrote: "It seems reasonable that we should listen when school leaders tell us, in different ways, that enough is enough."

# Solutions

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?  
CONTACT US NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**JO GALLOWAY**  
Director of education,  
Liberty Academy Trust

## How to make healthy eating week more inclusive for autistic children

**Children with autism and their parents need particular care and adjustments to expectations around any promotion of healthy eating, says Jo Galloway**

It is great to see so many schools embracing healthy eating week, but it can be an additionally challenging time for autistic young people and their parents.

Autistic children can have restricted diets, specific eating habits and routines or anxiety around food and mealtimes. For them, healthy eating week can be especially hard, and not at all enjoyable! It can also be a difficult time for parents, who may feel pressure to change eating habits and guilt when they are not successful. The reality for some autistic pupils is that their eating habits are fixed and hard to change.

Textures, smells and taste can be off-putting to any child, but may be exacerbated for autistic children and young people with heightened sensory processing. For some children who are hyposensitive, these things can be overwhelming and the main thing they focus on. One boy I worked with described

toast as hurting his mouth and feeling like sandpaper.

How food tastes to us can change in different places and over time – one of the reasons why some autistic children develop eating patterns where they stick with very predictable foods. These can often be potato-based, such as crisps and chips. It might also explain why they only want a type of food from a specific brand or place.

The school dining hall – often noisy, with lots of activity and movement – can present additional sensory difficulties. Indeed, rigid routines around eating usually have a function, and this is often about feeling safe and trying to stay in control.

If these routines are not harmful, it's worth considering whether they are really a problem. I once helped with a young person who was distraught because a staff member wanted him to eat his food in a certain way. He wanted to eat all his peas first, then all his potatoes, then his pie. The adult wanted him to have a forkful of each in turn. It does not matter!

Nevertheless, it is good to encourage healthy eating and if you are marking the week in



**“Textures, smells and taste can be overwhelming**

your school, you can support any autistic students by considering the following:

- Talk to parents to find out more about what foods their child struggles to eat and why.
- Talk to other staff and agree a consistent approach. Do not respond emotionally, or with strong verbal or facial reactions.
- Allow participation in cooking activities, for example making a smoothie, without any pressure to taste. Being able to tolerate some foods in proximity is sometimes an achievement.
- Any mention of food can cause anxiety, so a whole week of talking about food is a lot to cope with. Consider what opportunities the child has to engage in low-stress and favoured subjects and activities.
- Focus on other areas that build the child's self-esteem.
- Set realistic goals and celebrate achievements (but do not make too much fuss!)

- Introduce any new foods slowly.
- Have fun wherever possible. For young children, messy play with a variety of foods can be a fun way to feel safer around eating them.

Eating can be stressful for autistic children and young people, who may feel overwhelmed by the smell or texture of food, as well as a busy, noisy dining environment. Remember: they are not being “fussy eaters” or behaving badly, and the more pressure we put on them the less likely they are to feel safe around trying a new food.

By following some simple steps, it is possible to encourage good eating habits and to celebrate healthy eating week in an inclusive way. And if a child's eating is really of concern, then talking to parents about the support they are receiving and seeking medical guidance from a school nurse are better avenues than any classroom intervention alone is likely to be.

# THE REVIEW

## UNITY IN DIVERSITY: ACHIEVING STRUCTURAL RACE EQUITY IN SCHOOLS

BOOK  
TV  
FILM  
RADIO  
EVENT  
RESOURCE

**Author:** Rachel Macfarlane

**Publisher:** Routledge

**Publication date:** June 1

**ISBN:** 1032230169

**Reviewer:** Bukky Yusuf, senior leader and science lead, Edith Kay School, north London

Race, racism and anti-racism are extremely challenging topics to talk about and address, so I understand the tendency to give anything linked to these terms a wide berth.

But because we tend to avoid this focus is precisely the reason that I wanted to read Rachel Macfarlane's *Unity in Diversity*.

This is not a book that you can read in one sitting nor one that you can only read once. That's a good thing, not least because it will evoke emotions that you will need time to sit with, process and understand. Some of the case studies convey the heavy weight of the experiences that individuals from minoritised ethnicities carry, and you may have strong responses to some of the terms used. I certainly did.

The book is divided into four main sections: race inequity in education, developing racial literacy, the curriculum, and recruiting, retaining and developing a diverse body of staff, governors and trustees. Each is informed by recent anecdotes, research and references that ensure *Unity in Diversity* is relevant for our times and educational experiences.

It doesn't shy away from addressing the realities that some educators of colour face, and I applaud Macfarlane for highlighting and addressing what sadly too often remain elephant-in-the-room realities within schools. These include staff negativity to anti-racism initiatives, racist aggression from school community members and staff of colour being made to feel invisible.

*Unity in Diversity* guides educators who worry about saying the wrong thing or using the wrong words through the process of creating a "common language around race equity" within their organisations. This is important as there are many different definitions of and around race.

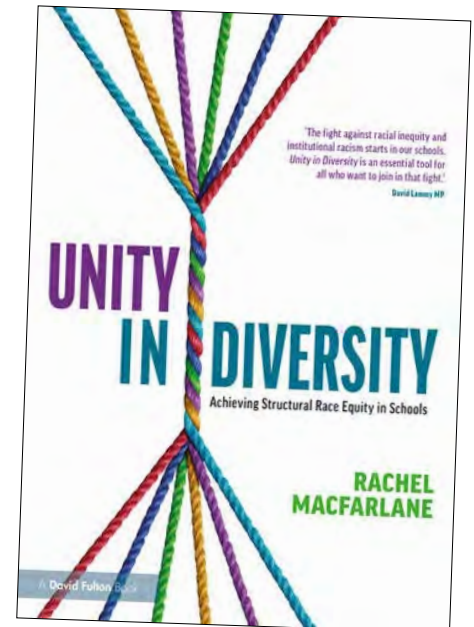
As Macfarlane points out, the most important thing for leaders to do is listen "without judgment and without interruption" as this will help them to learn to see things from different perspectives. To ensure this leads to the culture shift we need, she also provides a framework to help leaders demonstrate their commitment to anti-racism to their communities.

The book provides very clear definitions of the terms bias, prejudice and discrimination, and ways to distinguish between them. These are followed up with a thought-provoking exercise based on five scenarios to determine how to respond appropriately.

Macfarlane also provides a clear distinction between diversifying a curriculum and decolonising it. The result of this painstaking work on language is a practical, informative and well-researched book to do the internal and external work, with individuals and collectively, to achieve racial equity in education.

Each chapter has a number of exercises that require time, effort and, in many cases, deep reflection. That is a good thing. A commitment to this work should result in transformative changes and not mere tweaks.

In one respect, however, the book overlooked



a key factor. There is an assumed understanding about some of the terms used within a few of the case studies. I had to have some explained to me, so a glossary would have been helpful. This is especially important given some terms can have negative connotations and would be a good opportunity to provide more historical and theoretical background.

Having said that, undertaking unity in diversity is firmly based on the four fundamental truths Macfarlane sets out in the early pages. If you are committed to doing the work to address diversity in your setting, this is most definitely the book for you. She has taken the time to carefully craft something that is honest, transparent and meaningful, and I applaud her again for having the courage to use her "privilege as a force for good".

★★★★☆  
Rating

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



**Diana Young**  
 Governor,  
 Richard Atkins School

### PUPIL NUMBERS DOWN?

Tensions over proposed school closures as enrolments fall reached fever pitch this week. With multiple primaries and secondaries set to close in London, a debate chaired by MPs on Wednesday discussed pupil numbers and their impending impact.

The implications could prove disastrous for schools already experiencing extraordinary levels of persistent absence following the pandemic, socio-economic factors such as the cost-of-living crisis (especially where housing pressures exacerbate displacement), a drop in EU migration, and/or an increase in parents opting to home-school their children.

From a governance perspective, a falling school roll heavily impacts financial stability as funding is allocated per pupil through local authorities or directly from the government. This decline in pupils may eventually result in a deficit, forcing schools to restructure, amalgamate or, worse, close.

A merger is less disruptive than closure, but the former will certainly raise challenges for all senior leadership teams and governors such as: potential changes to the curriculum, new uniforms, staff redundancies, disengaged children, disgruntled parents, etc. The knock-on effect of any proposed merger will add to the challenges from the the cost-of-living crisis.

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP**  
 @BellRibeiroAddy

Thank you to my friend @FloEshalomi for securing yesterday's London school closure debate.

We're seeing a vicious cycle of declining educational services as families are priced out of our city.

The Government needs to give London the powers we need to tackle this.



**10% drop in households with at least one school age child.**

As a governor, we strive for higher standards of educational achievement; schools running at a deficit would likely impact performance and burden already disadvantaged pupils. Falling rolls undeniably create a detrimental effect on educational standards. Maybe it's the way schools are funded that needs a rethink.

### OR PUPIL NUMBERS UP?

Conversely, another impending burden on state schools could come from pupils moving from the independent sector. New research unveiled this week by the **EDSK** think tank questioned how much money could be raised as a result of the Labour Party's proposed removal of charitable tax status for independent schools.

While the research concluded that Labour's claims about "new revenue" for the government seem very optimistic, what might really make this policy less attractive is if it brings additional pupils without significant funding to upgrade school buildings, reduce class sizes, improve teacher recruitment and retention, support SEND pupils and provide well-equipped classrooms with access to modern technology.

Any gain to the public purse will have to be targeted there before it helps with any of the other pressing matters for a new government.

### TEACHING BY NUMBERS

One solution to the sector's falling teacher recruitment and retention is to tap into sectors of the population who don't

traditionally apply to or remain in the profession.



This week, the African Caribbean Education Network (ACEN) began that work, promoting its **Diverse City conference** for black and ethnic minority men and women interested in joining the sector. But given the NFER's figures on racial equality in the teacher workforce, schools themselves have work to do.

As Wimbledon High School headteacher Claire Boyd said at another ACEN conference last month, schools should strive to ensure that their approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion are woven through their practices as a golden thread, not just an add-on.

**Diana Young**  
 @Diana\_FI

Head of Wimbledon High School @ClaireBoyd83 spoke at today's @ACEN\_UK Racially Inclusive Approaches for Primary Years School Conference

She said their approach to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion is woven through school as a golden thread, not just an add on. I applaud you Claire




### COMING IN AT NUMBER ONE

And finally this week, the conversation in the staffroom of Richard Atkins School has been dominated by a visit from Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Edinburgh.

The Duchess was there to celebrate our pupils' fundraising efforts in aid of NSPCC's Childhood Day, an initiative to help keep children safe from abuse and neglect.

As well as meeting volunteers who delivered a "speak out, stay safe" workshop for older pupils, she also visited the playground and took part in a walking race. It would be inappropriate to say where she was placed in the rankings, but the children and staff thought her visit was first-class.

**Click the links to access the blogs and podcasts**



# The Knowledge

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



## Place-based challenges for schools mean locality matters

**Tanya Ovenden-Hope, provost and professor of education, Plymouth Marjon University**

An estimated 17 per cent of the population lives in a rural or coastal area of the UK, where educational isolation is common. Socioeconomic deprivation, limited cultural opportunities and poor job prospects negatively affect housing, transport, technology, and leisure facilities. Educationally isolated schools face challenging teacher recruitment and retention and limited access to high-quality staff development, school-to-school support, and external funding opportunities.

This spatial inequity plays out by limiting access to resources and in the end, this impacts pupil outcomes. Pupils from persistently disadvantaged backgrounds in rural and coastal schools have lower attainment at the end of secondary schooling than pupils from similar backgrounds in urban schools.

For more than a decade, Dr Rowena Passy and I have been exploring the experiences of coastal, rural and small schools. Our new report, published last week, demonstrates that locality matters. We share findings from a three-year study of a "hub model" for schools implemented in a 20-school multi-academy trust in the south west of England.

The hub was used to geographically group schools into smaller local units for school-to-school support with the aim of reducing the limiting effects of educational isolation.

The research team interviewed all senior leaders within the trust annually for three years. The MAT's vision was to give a better education to children by sharing resources, expertise and knowledge at a local level. The chief executive believed that smaller groups of schools working together as a hub could achieve this vision.

Our findings suggest it was achieved. The hub model was able to mitigate place-based challenges in different ways. It reduced the effects of remoteness, creating formal connections for staff development and the sharing of resources, including teachers. It also created opportunities for schools to work together to submit applications for innovative



### 'Supportive relationships was key to success'

external funding.

The key to the success was the development of trusted, supportive relationships between local school leaders. These relationships secured collaboration and encouraged partners to share resources and expertise within the hub. School leaders said they appreciated the non-judgmental, local peer support, and being close to each other meant that the context of their communities was shared and understood.

However, we also identified areas of development. The context of each hub was different. Some had more distance between schools; some had schools with different characteristics, such as size, or different foci, such as faith; and some had differentially experienced headteachers. In some cases, this resulted in a lack of sharing of expertise, uneven opportunities for professional development or a need for more rigorous MAT-level support for school improvement.

The role of hub lead was also an area of concern. Some found there was a lack of clarity about the responsibilities, while others noted a problem of capacity because of conflicting

priorities, such as headteacher and hub lead.

This said, enabling school leaders to develop close working relationships with a small group of nearby headteachers clearly supports them to share ideas for more effective school improvement. It can also help to mitigate elements of socioeconomic deprivation, such as a lower attainment. Hub school leaders were seen to provide new opportunities that widened experiences, raised aspirations and reduced cultural isolation for pupils and staff.

The key message is that bringing small groups of local leaders to work together supports greater access for each school to the resources needed for improvement. Awareness of potential pitfalls should also help to build further on the success the schools in our project experienced.

Our recommendation is that MATs with educationally isolated schools consider a hub model of local school-to-school support. We also recommend that, in a policy arena often driven by the considerations of urban schools, policy leaders recognise and respond to the specific needs of educationally isolated schools in coastal and rural areas.



*Week in*

# Westminster

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

## MONDAY

Gillian Keegan sought to channel Margaret Thatcher when she appeared at an event organised by the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) think tank in London.

She'd picked the right crowd – Thatcher, a former education secretary, was one of the founders of the CPS.

But anyone hoping to hear any insights into education policy will have been bitterly disappointed.

Keegan stressed her belief in her hero's legacy of "sound money, and solid economic foundations", and added: "If you believe in the market, you must listen to the market."

She also made clear her working-class credentials, frequently referring to her childhood and adolescence in Merseyside, and how union activities in the car factory in which she worked inspired her to become the only Conservative voter in her family.

Some observers see her speech as a soft-launch for a future leadership bid. Another minister seemingly distracted by the never-ending chaos in the Tory party...

## TUESDAY

The National Foundation for Educational Research hosted its annual reception in Parliament this week, with Ofqual chair and serial government adviser Sir Ian Bauckham among the guests.

In a characteristically reserved speech,

Bauckham reminded attendees that pupils in schools were "humans", and remarked how teacher training was far better than in his day.

He could be forgiven for not rocking the boat, however, as he is understood to be due to interview shortly for the Ofsted top job.

If he's successful, he won't be the first Ofqual chair to step sideways into inspection. Amanda Spielman also chaired the regulator.

\*\*\*

While the NFER celebrated another year of championing the importance of research, a gathering of grammar school headteachers gathered (ironically) next door.

## WEDNESDAY

The education secretary has had a busy week. She was busy impersonating Margaret Thatcher on Monday, and on Wednesday she was at London Tech Week to talk about the virtues – and pitfalls – of artificial intelligence.

Thankfully, Keegan didn't use any slideshows. The previous speaker failed to get hers to work, which doesn't bode well for a tech event, especially as the air con wasn't working either – on one of the hottest days this year.

\*\*\*

Regular readers may remember how the Department for Education launched

a voluntary exit scheme last autumn in a bid to cut about 800 jobs.

But things don't seem to have gone as well as hoped.

The DfE received 555 applications, and of those just 367 left the department by May 31 this year via the exit scheme.

Clearly Jacob Rees-Mogg was wrong about the expendability of civil servants!

## THURSDAY

*The Guardian* reported this week that the Independent Schools Council (ISC) was less than complimentary about shadow education secretary Bridget Phillipson in internal communications as it ratchets up its campaign against Labour plans to take away private schools' charitable status.

According to a subject access request, it said Phillipson "gets very chippy when people don't agree with her or push back at her", while also saying she "doesn't know diddly" and should "appreciate the great good our sector does".

Officials also pointed out that Phillipson has "no independent schools in her constituency" in the north east.

The revelations are embarrassing for the ISC, and have prompted accusations of classism, but don't expect any let-up in its campaign.

The communications show the organisation is very worried about an "increasingly likely" Labour victory, and the "damage" its policy on private schools could have.





## Headteacher – L20-25

**Location: Margaret McMillan Primary School**

The Priestley Academy Trust is a group of six primary schools close to the city centre of Bradford, West Yorkshire.

We are now looking for an outstanding leader who is a highly motivated person with successful leadership experience.

You will be committed to providing the best opportunities and achieving the best possible outcomes for our children and community.

We are looking for a high-quality professional who will be:

- 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](mailto: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](mailto:jane.hughes@lct.education) or Paul Roberts, Executive Director at [paul.roberts@lct.education](mailto: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.



'Academies in Christ'  
Part of the Archdiocese of Southwark



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

## VACANCY: HEADTEACHER

GRADE: L14 - L21 (£58,135 - £72,483) (WITH POTENTIAL UPLIFT FOR EXCEPTIONAL CANDIDATE)

Are you passionate about ensuring the best outcomes for children? Are you a creative and strong leader with the vision and ability to inspire and positively motivate a team? If the answer to both questions is yes, then our Trust would love to hear from you!

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**

ST-EDWARDS-SHEERNES.CO.UK



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We are looking for an experienced practitioner to join our team of professional, skilled and compassionate staff to work with a small class of SEN students and the wider school community, delivering high quality education to our learners.

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.



**MOWBRAY**  
Education Trust

## 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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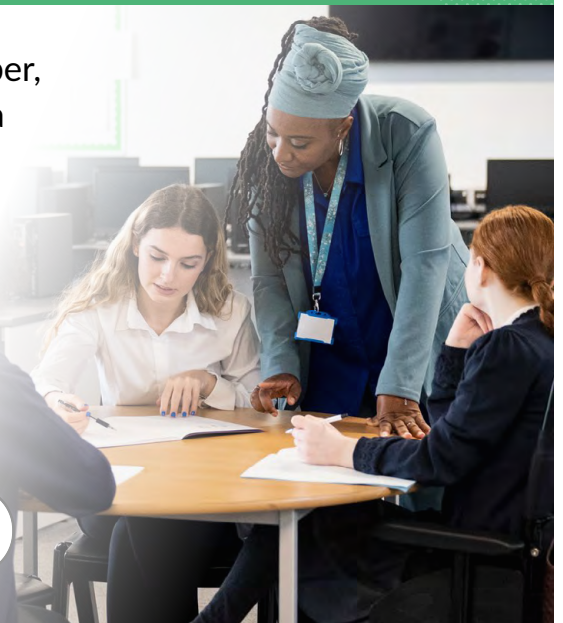
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