

# SCHOOLS WEEK

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

SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK | @SCHOOLSWEEK

FRIDAY, JULY 7, 2023 | EDITION 329

DfE tanks on the 'secret garden' lawn don't promote growth



P29

We must reclaim accountability from a muscular DfE



P26

Schools at centre of hostile immigration policy fallout



P23

'Appoint a Chris Whitty of education to advise on schools policy'



P8

## SPIELMAN'S OFSTED REPORT: 'I'M BROADLY HAPPY'



Page 6

# Starmmer sets out his £1bn schools policy stall

- Curriculum: Skills and creativity push; expert-led review
- 'Teacher hit squads': 'First aid approach' to improvement
- Accountability: EBacc mandate for a vocational subject

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Pages 4-5



BTEC Tech Awards (2022)

#OfferingYouMore

60% less admin\*, 100% more inspiration!

\*Compared to the Legacy BTEC Tech Awards

➔ [go.pearson.com/offeringyoumore](https://go.pearson.com/offeringyoumore)

 Pearson | BTEC

# SCHOOLS WEEK

## Meet the news team



**John Dickens**  
EDITOR

@JOHNDICKENSSW  
JOHN.DICKENS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Freddie Whittaker**  
DEPUTY EDITOR

@FCDWHITTAKER  
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Samantha Booth**  
CHIEF REPORTER

@SAMANTHAJBOTH  
SAMANTHA.BOOTH@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Amy Walker**  
SENIOR REPORTER

@AMYRWALKER  
AMY.WALKER@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**Jack Dyson**  
SENIOR REPORTER

@JACKYDYS  
JACK.DYSON@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



**JL Dutaut**  
COMMISSIONING EDITOR

@DUTAUT  
JEAN-LOUISDUTAUT@LSECT.COM



**Jessica Hill**  
INVESTIGATIONS AND FEATURES REPORTER

@JESSJANEHILL  
JESSICA.HILL@LSECT.COM



**Nicky Phillips**  
HEAD DESIGNER

@GELVETICA  
NICKY.PHILLIPS@FEWEEK.CO.UK



**Shane Mann**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

@SHANERMANN  
SHANE.MANN@LSECT.COM

### THE TEAM

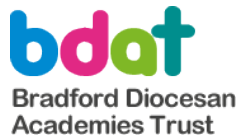
Senior designer: Simon Kay | Classifieds Manager: Clare Halliday | Sales Executive: Tony Hudson | Operations and Finance Manager: Victoria Boyle | Event Manager: Frances Ogefere Dell | Senior Administrator: Evie Hayes | Office Administrator: Zoe Tuffin | Office Administrator - Apprentice: Sanchez Nandi

## education week jobs

### FEATURED JOBS

THIS WEEK'S TOP AVAILABLE JOBS IN THE SCHOOLS SECTOR. TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION PLEASE TURN TO THE BACK PAGES OF *SCHOOLS WEEK* OR VISIT THE WEB ADDRESS LISTED

TO ADVERTISE YOUR VACANCY WITH EDUCATION WEEK JOBS PLEASE CALL 020 81234 778 OR EMAIL [ADVERTISING@SCHOOLSWEK.CO.UK](mailto:ADVERTISING@SCHOOLSWEK.CO.UK)



**BRADFORD DIOCESAN ACADEMIES TRUST - DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SECONDARY EDUCATION-£74,283.00 - £86,040.00 ANNUALLY (ACTUAL)**

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/BDAT-SW329-P2](https://tinyurl.com/bdat-sw329-p2)



**HABERDASHERS' ACADEMIES TRUST SOUTH - DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE - L24 (£86,609) - L26 (£90,417)**

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/HABERDASHERS-DOP-SW328-P2](https://tinyurl.com/haberdashers-dop-sw328-p2)



**PENWORTHAM GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL - HEADTEACHER - GROUP 6**

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/PENWORTHAM-SW328-P2](https://tinyurl.com/penwortham-sw328-p2)



**LEADING EDGE ACADEMIES PARTNERSHIP - EXECUTIVE LEADER OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - LEADERSHIP SCALE**

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/LEADING-EDGE-SW328-PAGE2](https://tinyurl.com/leading-edge-sw328-page2)



**SOUTH PENNINES ACADEMIES - HEAD OF EARLY TEACHER DEVELOPMENT - £64,423.00 - £74,641.00 ANNUALLY (ACTUAL) L15 - L21**

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/SOUTH-P2](https://tinyurl.com/south-p2)



# The funding elephant in the room over Labour's schools plan

After years of quiet, it is reassuring to see Labour putting flesh on the bones of its education policy platform.

Sir Keir Starmer's speech and the party's published plans are the first real indication of the direction of travel for a Labour government, a scenario that looks likely following the next general election.

The party's focus on inequality is welcome, as is its acceptance that the problems in our education system cannot be solved without addressing the recruitment and retention crisis.

However, Starmer's insistence that the party must wait to see the state of the economy when it takes over before talking about school revenue funding will not hold for much longer.

The education policies announced so far by Labour are supposed to be funded by tax receipts that might result from the party's plan to lift private schools' charitable status.

That means the party has so far only committed to about £1 billion of education

spending. The schools budget is almost 60 times that amount.

The cost to just fix all the building issues in our school estate is nearly 12 times the amount Labour has so far pledged to spend.

If the party really wants to solve some of the sector's knotty problems, as well as implementing big change, that will cost money. A lot more than £1 billion.

And the plan's this week, notably, mention little on the SEND system, which is swallowing up money and not working for anyone.

With reports the government will snub the recommendation from its own pay review body for a 6.5 per cent pay rise, this will push the money problem into Labour's remit – should it form a government.

It's the big elephant in the room for Starmer. If he wants to fulfil lofty ambitions and promises, he must find a solution. Because overpromising and underdelivering will only further disengage the sector.



## Most read online this week:

- 1 [School loses injunction bid to halt publication of 'unfair' Ofsted report](#)
- 2 [AQA also hit by exam paper cyber attack](#)
- 3 [Trust boss sets up 'school-owned' teacher supply agency](#)
- 4 [Starmer signals curriculum swing back to skills](#)
- 5 [How inclusive are mainstream schools?](#)

[CLICK LINKS TO READ STORIES](#)

**Disclaimer:**

Schools Week is owned and published by Lsect Ltd. The views expressed within the publication are those of the authors named, and are not necessarily those of Schools Week, Lsect Ltd or any of its employees. While we try to ensure that the information we provide is correct, mistakes do occur and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of our material.

The design of the digital newspaper and of the website is copyright of Lsect Ltd and material from the newspaper should not be reproduced without prior permission. If you wish to reproduce an article from either the digital paper or the website, both the article's author and Schools Week must be referenced (to not do so, would be an infringement on copyright).

Lsect Ltd is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites linked to.

Please address any complaints to the editor.

Email: [John.Dickens@Schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:John.Dickens@Schoolsweek.co.uk) with Error/Concern in the subject line. Please include the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is.

SCHOOLS WEEK IS PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF



LEARNING & SKILLS EVENTS, CONSULTANCY AND TRAINING LTD  
C/O RUNWAY EAST, THE HICKMAN, 2 WHITECHAPEL ROAD, LONDON E1 1EW  
T: 020 8123 4778  
E: [NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK](mailto:NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK)

**ADVERTISE WITH US**

If you are interested in placing a product or job advert in a future edition please click on the 'advertise' link at the top of the page on [schoolsweek.co.uk](http://schoolsweek.co.uk) or contact:

E: [advertising@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:advertising@schoolsweek.co.uk)  
T: 020 81234 778 or click here

# Starmer wants knowledge AND skills revolution

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Sir Keir Starmer has pledged to introduce a “curriculum fit for the digital age” and provide pupils a “grounding” in “both knowledge and skills” as he launched Labour’s education policy platform.

In a speech that lamented what he described as a “snobbery” over vocational education, the Labour leader called for a “greater emphasis on creativity, on resilience, on emotional intelligence and the ability to adapt”.

Appearing at MidKent College in Gillingham, the opposition leader said those outside the classroom were “baffled” by the “debate about the relative importance of knowledge and skills”.

“Everyone with their feet on the ground in the real world knows you need both, and these old arguments, old practices, old divides – they’re holding our children back.”

Labour has also published an extensive document, *Breaking down the barriers to opportunity*, setting out more details of its education plans. The policies will cost £1 billion, funded by the private school tax. Here are the new announcements this week:

## 1. Reform starts with Progress 8

Labour has pledged to “update” the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 accountability measures to hold schools to account for performance in at least one creative or vocational subject.

“This can help schools to encourage a broad curriculum for young people and recognises the value of creativity in young people’s education,” says the document.

It will also review the other metrics to “ensure that these support and align with a reformed curriculum and assessment system”, but expects this wider review to “take time”.

## 2. Curriculum review ‘principles’ revealed

Labour’s “full, expert-led review of curriculum and assessment” will follow the following principles:

- An excellent foundation in core subjects of reading, writing, and maths.
- A broader curriculum, so that children do not miss out on subjects such as music, art, sport and drama.
- A curriculum that ensures young people leave



school ready for work and ready for life, building the knowledge, skills and attributes young people need to thrive. This includes embedding digital, oracy and life skills in their learning.

- A curriculum that reflects the issues and diversities of our society, ensuring every child is represented.
- An assessment system that captures the full strengths of every child and the breadth of curriculum, with the right balance of assessment methods while maintaining the important role of examinations.

## 3. Oracy ‘throughout school’ and primary cash

The document sets out how speaking skills – known as oracy – can “deepen children’s understanding, analytical skills and engagement leading to better classroom outcomes”.

Labour said its curriculum review will “explore how to weave oracy into lessons throughout school”.

The party will also “equip every school with funding to deliver evidence-based early language interventions” such as the Nuffield Early Language Intervention.

## 4. Ofsted ‘report cards’ will look at inclusion

Proposals to replace Ofsted grades with report cards, outlined earlier this year, will “reflect how well schools are supporting the attainment and inclusion of pupils eligible for free school meals and with special educational needs and

disabilities”.

This will “ensure that everything possible is being done to break down the barriers to opportunity and close the attainment gap”.

Labour will also “work with Ofsted to bring multi-academy trusts into the remit of inspection”.

## 5. Pilot of single ‘children’s number’

The party warned information about children is “disconnected”, with parents providing information to one professional and then having to “repeat themselves over and over, as information is not shared with others”.

Labour said it will “improve coordination between education, social care and the wider services that support families by piloting the expansion of a children’s number like the NHS number that stays with children not just for their school career but for their whole childhoods”.

By joining-up services, Labour also hopes to improve SEND provision.

The party will also “work to improve the inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools, alongside ensuring that special schools are able to support children with the most complex needs, breaking down barriers to education”.

## 6. ‘Strengthening’ the teaching profession

A series of policies aimed at boosting recruitment and retention were announced.

They include a £2,400 retention payment for teachers who complete the two-year early career framework and reintroduction of the requirement for all teachers to have or be working towards qualified status.

Labour has also pledged to “simplify” teacher incentive payments into “one payment scale incorporating different factors such as subject and geography”.

And the party has pledged to “revise delivery” of the early career framework.

The party’s “teacher training entitlement” will see it backfill roles “so teachers at every stage of their career can be released for training”.

## 7. School improvement teams

New regional school improvement teams, coordinated by civil servants and drawing on the expertise of local leaders, will encourage peer-to-peer support and share best practice.

Read more on the next page.



# 'We already have hit-squads. They're called MATs'

**FREDDIE WHITTAKER**

**@FCDWHITTAKER**

Labour's plans for "super teacher hit squads" are a "first-aid approach" to school improvement and will muddy accountability, say sector experts.

Sir Keir Starmer, the party's leader, has pledged to create new regional improvement teams to "end the scandal of 'stuck' schools".

These teams, which will answer to the Department for Education's regions group, will "work as partners with schools in responding to areas of weakness identified in new school report cards", which will replace graded Ofsted judgments.

The party said the teams would "bring together oversight of improvement programmes and work with teachers so that schools know what support is available and enable schools to work together to improve standards".

Schools Week understands the teams will encourage peer-to-peer learning and spread best practice between schools and regions, learning from programmes such as the London Challenge, New Labour's flagship improvement programme.

They will also rely on local expertise, such as experienced heads and teachers, although it is not clear whether schools will be compensated for the time given by their staff.

But Sir David Carter, who as national schools commissioner between 2016 and 2018 presided over the precursor to the DfE's new regions group, said school improvement hit squads already existed. "They are called multi-academy trusts."

Trusts have, he said, become good at improving schools because "the support is provided by peers and colleagues employed by the same organisation...there is a vested interest in the capacity givers helping the capacity takers".

Carter said he had seen "very few examples work where teachers from a different school have been effective in the short term by simply providing a first-aid approach to improvement".

"It has to be consistent, well thought out, approached from the starting point of the



Sir Keir Starmer

school being helped and monitored over time with proper accountability."

There are also questions over accountability, given the DfE regions group is also responsible for rebrokering academies between trusts. In effect, they would be judging the improvement work of those working directly below them.

Steve Rollett, the deputy chief executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said the desire to improve schools was "laudable", but the approach "raises some questions".

"Civil servants do many things well, but is there evidence that leading and coordinating school improvement is one of them? How does this function sit with existing civil service responsibilities in relation to regulation and commissioning?"

Rollett also asked where accountability would rest.

"What if actions are not taken? What if the actions suggested are the wrong ones? How do you avoid this triggering a bunch of workload-sapping, quasi-inspection activities as external actors try to work out the school improvement issues in the school?"

But the leader of a similar programme run in Bradford in recent years said such approaches could be successful – if they involved people who understand local areas.

The school-to-school support scheme, part of the opportunity areas programme, linked leaders of high-performing schools with struggling settings.

A DfE evaluation said the project was "generally well received amongst participants, with all case study schools reporting that improvements had been achieved in most areas targeted by action plans".

Anne-Marie Canning, who chaired the opportunity area, said "understanding local context really, really matters".

"Even the matching we did was quite carefully thought through. It doesn't play well, transporting people from, I don't know, London, into the north and saying: 'these guys are here to fix it'".

She said there was "scant information" about Labour's proposals, "but we know what we did in Bradford made a difference and was welcomed by the recipients".

For years, Labour has dodged the question of whether the current system for oversight of schools will remain in place if it takes power.

This week's announcement that new school improvement teams will answer to regional directors suggests they are here to stay – but it's not clear how much their roles will change under a Labour government.

ON LOCATION



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

# Yearly safeguarding audits ‘too complicated’, says Spielman

**JOHN DICKENS**  
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Ofsted’s chief inspector has poured cold water on Labour plans to introduce an annual review of safeguarding, saying it would be “much more expensive and complicated”.

Addressing the Festival of Education at Wellington College on Thursday, Amanda Spielman said the government would “have to make something four times the size” of Ofsted’s current operation to roll out the proposals.

Bridget Phillipson outlined Labour’s plans for yearly school safeguarding reviews when she spoke at the annual conference of school leaders’ union ASCL in March.

The shadow education secretary said the safety of children was “too important” to be left to infrequent inspections.

Safeguarding would remain within the remit of Ofsted and the two inspections would “complement one another”.

But Spielman said the proposal would make safeguarding “a bigger thing, relative to everything else. It would take a very big commitment of energy.”



John Dickens and Amanda Spielman

Last month, Ofsted announced changes to the school inspection system following pushback in the wake of the death of headteacher Ruth Perry.

It included a commitment to quickly reinspect schools graded ‘inadequate’ overall due to ineffective safeguarding.

Perry’s family said the Reading head took her own life after her school was rated ‘inadequate’ as a result of safeguarding failures at Caversham Primary School. An inquest has yet to be held.

On Thursday, Spielman described the case as

“very, very sad” and added that her sympathies “remain with Ruth’s family and colleagues”.

Asked if she would have responded to the situation any differently in hindsight, the Ofsted chief appeared to suggest she would not.

“I’m confident that my team were professional, fair, sensitive and humane,” she said. “There’s a very distressed family, every body has to be very sensitive and careful around that.”

Spielman will step down as chief inspector at the end of the year after seven years at the helm.

It is understood her successor will be appointed before the end of this month.

Reflecting on her overall tenure, Spielman said: “Broadly I’m happy with how I’ve approached the job.”

She did “a lot of listening” before starting and would encourage the next chief inspector to do the same.

She again defended single-word judgments. “Parents do value the simplicity and clarity,” she said.

Asked which single word she’d used to describe her tenure, however, she retorted: “I’m not playing that game.”

JACK DYSON | @JACKYDYS

## Ministers urged to add ‘depth’ to chain accountability assessments

An academy trust boss has warned that ministers “need to understand the limits” of metrics when using them to assess chains that have taken on troubled schools.

The boss of The Thinking Schools Academy Trust, Stuart Gardner, urged caution when using “quantitative measures” to compare chains during a session at this year’s Festival of Education on Thursday.

This came after new commissioning data published on the same day revealed how multi-academy trust (MAT) expansion bids will be decided by regional directors using “in-depth data” on school improvement and inclusivity.

But Gardner pointed to how his chain’s decision to take on several schools meant “the debt we’ve taken on over the last 10 years is close to £2 million, of which we paid back £1 million”.

“Then the ESFA wrote a letter saying why are your reserves up by £x. They knew we took on schools who were financial basket cases because they asked us to do it.

“Let’s have depth [to quantitative measures], so we really understand the trust when we are comparing levels of accountabilities.”

This came after Jenna Julius, of the National Foundation for Educational Research, argued during the session that the Department for Education’s trust quality descriptors are “woolly”.

She said the introduction of performance measures would add greater levels of “robustness” and transparency to the system.

The descriptors were published by the Department for Education three months ago as it attempted to provide a formal definition of trust strength based around five “pillars”. Ministers

said these would help assess trusts’ “potential for growth”.

The five pillars of the descriptions are: high-quality and inclusive leadership; school improvement; workforce; finance and operations; and governance and leadership.

The session took place just a few hours after the government published its new commissioning guidance setting out how regional directors will attempt to assess “strategic need” and trust quality before ruling on academisation plans (see page 10).

The document stated that evidence for each pillar will be broken down into “headline metrics” – drawn from MAT performance tables – which will then be used to “form a hypothesis about a trust’s quality”.

ON LOCATION



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

# Saxton: We won't let robot markers take over

AMY WALKER  
@AMYRWALKER



Dr Jo Saxton

Ofqual's chief regulator has said she will not allow robots to take over marking students' work – but some artificial intelligence (AI) could improve spotting errors.

Dr Jo Saxton told the Festival of Education how the exams watchdog thinks England needs a mixed approach to digital exams: some on-screen, others with traditional pen and paper.

However, she confirmed that when it comes to “relying solely on artificial intelligence to mark students' work, this is not something that we're going to allow”.

Ofqual does think AI “has a place to do things like quality assurance of human marking, spotting errors, those sort of things”, Saxton added. “But it cannot and will not replace humans. And Ofqual is going to make sure of that.”

In terms of AI, Saxton added Ofqual was “miles off the sense of it being safe enough to be sole marking”.

This year there were 70,000 markers across 15 million scripts, she said.

Saxton, a former academy trust boss, revealed some headlines from new research on the future of assessment.

Just one in five students and parents thought all GCSEs should be taken on a computer. In addition, 48 per cent of students and 54 per cent of parents preferred a mixture. Most thought exams going on-screen was four to six years away from implementation.

Respondents also felt the new approach would not work for music, drama, art or PE. Their main concerns were about cheating, data security and “potential unfairness that could arise from

unequal access to technology”.

Saxton said: “We should take the best of the traditional tried, tested and trusted approaches, and bring in some of the modern innovations too. In other words, we're not getting rid of handwriting anytime soon.”

Ofqual and the Department for Education are running a “feasibility study” on “what it would take” to make GCSE and A-level exams “fully digital”, Saxton added.

AMY WALKER | @AMYRWALKER

## Ofsted CPD warning over non-specialist maths teachers

Non-specialist maths teachers are less likely to receive ongoing training than those with a degree in the subject, but more likely to teach vulnerable children, new Ofsted research has found.

A subject report, due to be published by the watchdog next week, found “dramatic improvements” in maths teaching in English schools since it last published a report on the subject 11 years ago.

This included “regular ongoing training” for secondary maths teachers. However, Ofsted noted that non-specialists were “not getting the same quality of training that the specialists were getting”.

Presenting the findings at the Festival of Education at Wellington College on Thursday,

Christopher Stevens, HMI and subject lead for music, said in several schools “a significant proportion” of key stage 3 curriculums were taught by non-specialists.

Evidence from 25 secondary schools was used for the report, the latest in a series evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of subject teaching.

A history subject report will also be published next week.

Stevens said ongoing training for maths teachers helped improve the quality of their “explanations” of concepts. However, “often those non-specialists were not getting that training”.

The findings come after *Schools Week* revealed that take-up for a scheme to boost the

number of maths teachers by training non-specialists has plunged.

The National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM), which took over the scheme from the government, met just 57 per cent of its target for recruits over the past two academic years.

Stevens said Ofsted had also found that where schools’ “engagement was strong” with maths hubs, run by NCETM, “that was having a positive impact”.

Non-specialists, he added, were “far more likely” to be working with children “defined as more difficult or at the early stages of learning”.

“They didn't have that expert input and the consequence of that for some of those children was that actually gaps widened,” he said.



NEWS: POLICY

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

# Report wants ‘Whitty of education’

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

The government should appoint a “chief education officer” to advise ministers on schools policy in the same way Professor Sir Chris Whitty does for health, a new report has said.

The Foundation for Education Development (FED) also called for an independent “national council for education” to “oversee the development and implementation of a long-term plan” for the sector.

The foundation holds regular consultations across education, advocating for a 10-year plan to end piecemeal and short-term policymaking.

In its latest consultation report, the organisation said ministers should hire a chief education officer, “who would be an expert in the field, akin to the chief medical officer or chief scientific officer”.

They would be the most senior government adviser on education, and would “ensure that policies and plans are given the attention and priority they deserve”.

They could also “help provide continuity and stability in the education system”.



Sir Chris Whitty

The chief medical officer is externally recruited, but becomes a member of the senior civil service equivalent to permanent secretary level.

They have three main responsibilities: providing independent advice on public health, recommending policy changes and acting as a go-between for government and professionals.

They also produce an annual report on the state of public health.

The FED report said: “A dedicated, consistent appointee who provides guidance and oversight to education planning and policy development would ensure that long-term plans are not derailed by political shifts.”

“This could help build trust with the public, who would have greater confidence that plans are being developed and implemented in a thoughtful,

consistent manner.”

The new national council would then be responsible for advising ministers “on all key policy and implementation issues, including which should be delegated by ministers to regional or local level, and for conducting formal review cycles to monitor and evaluate essential aspects of the system”.

Such a body would offer a “framework to inform annual planning and budget setting, and a structure for organising national educational initiatives and policies”.

It would consist of leaders in education and beyond. Members “would not represent specific education interest groups but ideally would reflect broader experience in public and civil service, education, business, science, arts and culture”.

The report also recommended a “forum for widespread stakeholder involvement and input, akin to the NHS Assembly, to help drive ongoing dialogue about our education system and how to improve it”.

Carl Ward, the foundation’s chair, said it was time to stop “tinkering around the edges making incremental changes that don’t make a jot of difference on the big issues and start thinking about what we want the next evolution of our education system to look like”.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

## ‘Don’t tax private schools, cap fees’

Labour should abandon its plans to remove charitable status from private schools and instead cap their fees and require more work to support poorer pupils and state schools, a think tank has urged.

EDSK said the reforms “should not be pursued by either the current or a future government” because of financial risks and legal barriers.

But it also called for reform, warning some bursaries and scholarships were aimed at families earning up to £150,000 a year, and partnerships with state schools were not always beneficial.

An earlier report said Labour’s policy would likely raise £600 million less than the party hoped it would.

EDSK’s report found bursaries and scholarships distributed each year by private

schools “are sometimes being used to support well-off families”.

It cited Sevenoaks School, whose website states that “combined income up to £150,000 may still be considered” for fee assistance.

St Paul’s School states that “families with a gross household income of up to £126,000 pa or less and net assets up to £1.4 million may be eligible for a bursary”.

The report also warned that voluntary “partnerships” between private and state schools presented a “mixed picture”.

The partnerships “at their best” added value to state schools. But some “present a less encouraging picture”. Data from the Independent Schools Council shows the most common partnership is “playing sporting fixtures with or against state schools”.

The report said this was “hard to describe as an entirely selfless and charitable activity”.

The second most common partnership was members of staff serving as governors.

EDSK warned against Labour’s plan, but said to address critics’ concerns about the charitable status of private schools and “improve their image”, the government must “raise the bar for all these schools in terms of how much support they offer disadvantaged students and local state schools”.

The report proposes a legal definition of “public benefit”, a legal condition that fees cannot be “unduly restrictive” and an annual report on financial support for pupils.

Charitable private schools should also publish details of the “cost, frequency and scale of their partnership activities”.

# Schools fail to block Ofsted reports

AMY WALKER

@AMYRWALKER

EXCLUSIVE

Ofsted has fought off two injunction bids to keep school inspection reports secret in the space of a fortnight, *Schools Week* has learnt.

Earlier this week we revealed Thomas Telford School in Shropshire had unsuccessfully sought a gagging order on a report in which it was downgraded from 'outstanding' to 'good' over misrecording suspensions.

It has since emerged that All Saints Academy Dunstable, Bedfordshire, also applied to stall the publication of its latest inspection report.

But the appeal is understood to have been rejected at London Administrative Court, leaving the watchdog free to publish its findings.

However, both schools are now pursuing judicial reviews.

On Monday, a judge at Birmingham Administrative Court heard how Thomas Telford was knocked down to 'good' on leadership and management because of the way in which "cooling-off periods" were documented.

Russell Holland, the school's counsel, said the lead inspector had planned to rate the school 'inadequate', accusing the school of "acting illegally" or "gaming the system".

But the inspector then established that statutory guidance on exclusions and suspensions did not apply to city technology colleges (CTCs). Thomas Telford is one of only two CTCs in England.

Inspectors reached their final decision partly based on how attendance codes were used.

The school recorded "cooling-off periods" as a leave of absence, as opposed to suspensions.

Sir Kevin Satchwell, its head, argued the school did not believe in "labelling pupils" with suspensions.

Holland argued that because statutory guidance for suspensions did not apply to the school, how such periods should be recorded was also ambiguous.



"It may look like a suspension...But if it is a city technology college...It is not a suspension."

But Ofsted said this contradicted non-statutory guidance on school attendance, which did apply to CTCs.

It advised schools to regularly review attendance data and urged governing bodies to challenge "current trends" in attendance.

The report, which was published on Wednesday after the injunction bid failed, noted that leaders had not ensured "staff use attendance codes consistently to record when pupils are sent home due to poor behaviour".

Governors therefore did not have "clear oversight" of pupils' behaviour and attendance.

During Monday's hearing, it emerged that some aspects of a formal complaint to Ofsted were upheld.

This led to a "revised" report, which had "softened the tone" of what was said about leadership and management.

Judge David Worster said he had "sympathy" for the school, but was "not persuaded" by its case. Preventing publication of an Ofsted report required "something so powerful as would outweigh the public interest".

While staff and parents would be "deeply

disappointed" with the overall outcome, the judge said he hoped that anybody who read the report would "go beyond the headline and see that what sits behind that is... a glowing report".

In a letter to parents on Tuesday, Satchwell said governors and staff believed the judgment was "disproportionate and wrong". It was "based upon Ofsted's lack of understanding regarding the school's legal position" and that inspectors were "inadequately prepared".

The grounds for All Saints' application are now known. Its hearing was listed for June 22.

Ofsted and the school failed to provide further clarification, but the final report is due to be issued to the school for parents and carers.

It is understood that a complaint to the watchdog about its findings – which are also not known – is at the internal review stage.

In a rare move, Ofsted last month removed an 'inadequate' report for Queen Emma Primary School in Cambridge from its website, after admitting findings were "not reliable" following an internal review.

Queen Emma had also lodged an application with the High Court for a judicial review.

# DfE reveals metrics for academy decisions

**JACK DYSON**

@JACKDYDS

The Department for Education has published guidance on how it will make decisions relating to academies. Baroness Barran, the academies minister, said it would “increase transparency around how commissioning decisions are made to support trusts to know how to grow and improve”.

Here’s what you need to know about the guidance...

## 1. Identifying top academy trusts

Regional directors will perform an initial assessment of financial performance and governance compliance for any trust under consideration for growth.

The five pillars identified in the trust quality descriptors published in April will underpin decisions. They are: high-quality and inclusive education, school improvement, workforce, finance and operations and governance and leadership.

The new guidance stated that evidence for each pillar will be broken down into “headline metrics” – drawn from MAT performance tables – which will then be used to “form a hypothesis about a trust’s quality”.

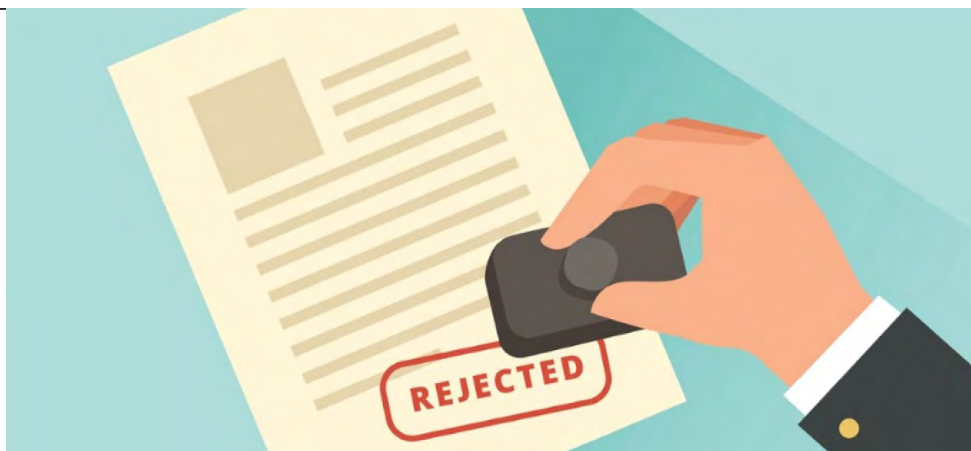
The metrics include phonics pass rates, the percentage of ‘good’ and ‘outstanding’ schools in a chain and attainment trajectories.

The hypothesis will then be tested by “in-depth data” and “qualitative evidence”.

For example, regional directors “may contextualise headline metrics with information about the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language or with SEND.

“A trust’s track record in school improvement adds to the picture, helping us to understand the trust’s ability to support schools. This will be explored using a headline metrics and verifiers.”

However, the DfE admitted it was still “working towards having headline metrics for all pillars”.



## 2. How does this apply to a special school?

While the same principles apply to special and alternative provision schools, regional directors will look for “strong evidence of expertise in managing such specialist provision”.

They also recognise “challenges in using traditional academic performance metrics” for these schools, so will instead use a wider range of metrics and intelligence. This will ensure decision meet the “specific needs” of pupils, and include, for example, Ofsted reports, post-16 destinations and absence data.

## 3. How academy order decisions will work

When an under-performing maintained school is issued with an academy order, regional directors will “prioritise identifying trusts with the expertise and track record in delivering high-quality and inclusive education”. They must also have the “capacity to rapidly transform performance”.

An initial longlist of local chains or ones interested in taking on the school will then be compared using performance data.

When considering voluntary moves, regional directors “will look for evidence that any new school will be able to contribute to a clearly defined and effective strategy to improve and maintain” the trust.

“For the incoming school, the regional director will examine whether the trust is a good match to support it in addressing any developmental needs identified through Ofsted inspection reports or by the school itself.”

## 4. The guidance on transfers and mergers

Regional directors will look for evidence that schools proposed for transfer will be able to “contribute to a clearly defined and effective strategy to maintain and improve the performance of the incoming trust”.

Officials will then examine whether the trust is a good match to support the school in addressing any identified “development needs”, including from Ofsted inspection reports.

On mergers, regional directors will look at whether the proposed new structure is right for the schools and the areas they are in. It will also decide if the new trust can provide new opportunities and benefits to the schools and if there is a “clear leadership structure”.

For new free schools, the assessment process will confirm whether a trust is “in a position to grow” and that it is “well matched” to the proposed school.

## 5. Assessing the academy needs of areas

Regional directors will look at an area’s “pattern of educational provision” when assessing its strategic needs.

This will consider the need for high-quality trusts to grow, new trusts and understand specific local challenges, such as over-capacity or large numbers of small, rural schools.

They will also take into account “phase coherence” so schools close to each other can work together and ensure feeder relationships between primaries and secondaries are understood.



## EXPLAINER: ACADEMIES

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

# Ministers simplify (and cut) academies handbook

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOOTH

Ministers have published their simplified academies handbook for September.

Baroness Barran, the academies minister, said the handbook was “clearer and more concise” to “provide more clarity on the requirements of academy trusts”.

There are also fewer pages – down to 62 from 78. Here’s what you need to know....

## 1. Board should have ‘sufficient’ financial knowledge

The previous handbook said the governing board should identify the skills and experience it needs, including financial knowledge. It now reads that they should have “sufficient” financial knowledge.

The board should also address this in its committees.

Ministers have made it clear that the roles of the accounting officer and chief financial officers “should not be occupied by the same individual”.

The DfE also “emphasises the importance and value” of good estates safety and management.

## 2. Six board meetings mandate scrapped

Previously, if a board met less than six times a year it had to describe in its governance statement and accounts how it “maintained effective oversight of funds with fewer meetings”.

The handbook now confirms boards no longer need to provide this explanation.

The guidance also confirms that trusts now have an extra month – the end of August instead of July – to submit their budget forecast return to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The DfE has also simplified the preparation and circulation of management accounts – which must be shared with the chair of trustees every month – to “include more discretion”.

Details on the format of these monthly accounts have been removed.



## 3. Threshold raised for related transaction approval

The threshold for obtaining the ESFA’s permission for related party transaction contracts has risen from £20,000 to £40,000.

But this approval does not apply for contracts for supply of goods or services by state-funded schools, colleges, universities or schools that are sponsors of the trust.

The exception does not apply to transactions with a subsidiary of the related party.

The requirement also doesn’t apply for the provision of services to an academy trust with a religious designation, “for essential functions fundamental to the academy trust’s religious character and ethos which can only be provided by their religious authority”.

## 4. GAG pooling ‘important to consider’

The position on general annual grant (GAG) pooling has also been simplified to “strengthen the value and importance of this practice for trusts to consider”.

The handbook now says the ability to amalgamate and direct funds “to meet improvement priorities and need across the trust’s schools can be integral to a trust’s successful

financial operating model”.

The practice “can enhance a trust’s ability to allocate resources in line with improvement priorities and running costs across the trust’s constituent academies”.

## 5. Clarity on notices to improve

Ministers have also clarified when a trust may receive a notice to improve, including insolvency risks, cash flow problems or trustees’ lack of skills.

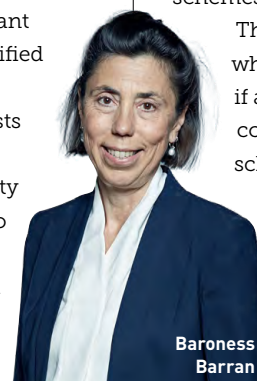
The DfE “will engage with the sector in developing its approach to intervention, including the process to be followed by the department’s regions group and the evidence that they will rely on to determine the strength of trustees’ oversight of educational performance”.

## 6. New electric vehicle scheme rules

Details on electric vehicle salary sacrifice schemes have been added.

They do not need ESFA approval where “no liability falls on the trust if an employee does not fulfill their contractual obligations with the scheme provider”.

But for “other types” of EV salary sacrifice schemes – or where the trust is under a notice to improve – ESFA approval must be obtained.



Baroness Barran



Subject Advisors:

A Dedicated Guide on Your Side

Our dedicated subject advisors offer unmatched support

Book an appointment, call, email or follow on social media. Whatever you need, our subject advisors are your trusted partners in nurturing your learners' knowledge as you deliver the BTEC Tech Awards 2022 series.

#OfferingYouMore

➤ [go.pearson.com/offeringyoumore](https://go.pearson.com/offeringyoumore)



# Councils forced to approve more school deficits

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

Councils are signing off on more deficits in their primary schools' budgets as funding woes continue to plague the sector.

Local authorities are allowed to approve "licensed deficits" for schools that cannot find any more savings. It allows them to continue running a deficit for a fixed period while working towards a balanced budget, with the gap initially plugged with surpluses from other schools.

Last week Brighton and Hove Council wrote to the headteachers of 35 schools that could not set balanced budgets for 2023-24, asking them to reduce their planned deficits by 10 per cent. It warned that licensed deficits for next year would total £5 million.

Several other councils have told *Schools Week* they face having to approve more deficits next year. The matter is complicated by schools not knowing the government's plan for teacher pay from September.

Ian Hartwright, the head of policy at the school leaders' union NAHT, said no school or council should be faced with having to go into deficit "just to ensure children receive the education they deserve".

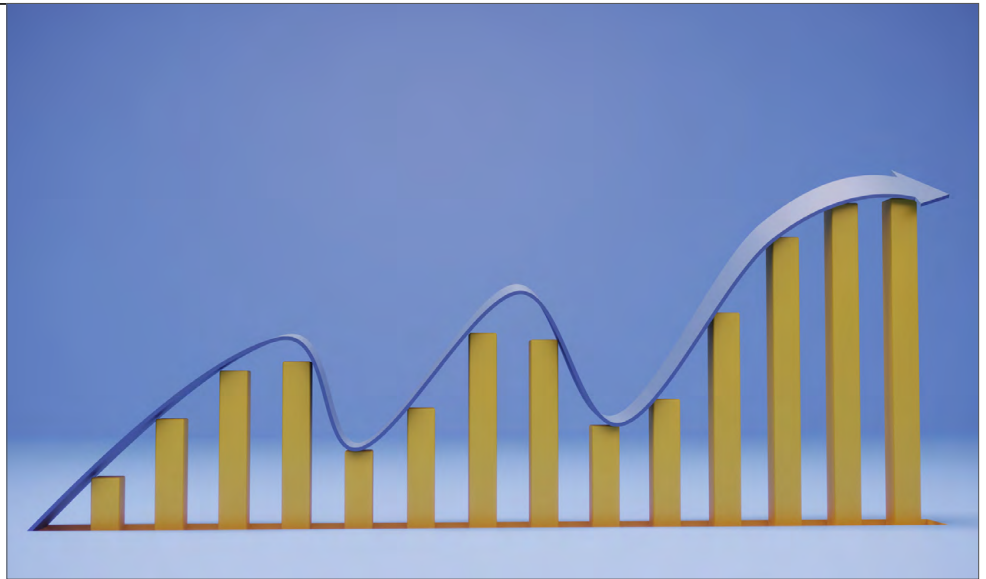
It was "understandable" that councils wanted to ensure schools could continue to operate efficiently, but it "inevitably means school leaders, under enormous pressure to reduce staffing and other operational budgets, are finding it increasingly difficult to protect provision for pupils".

Lambeth, an inner-London borough, said the number of schools setting deficit budgets had risen from 15 to 22 in a year.

Ben Kind, its cabinet member for children and young people, said it was a "very difficult situation that we are doing our best to manage, while also looking for support from the government".

"We place incredible value on our local schools ... We are doing our best to work with them for the best possible outcome, but face the very real challenges that schools across the country, and particularly in London, are facing."

In Hackney, the number of primary



schools setting a deficit budget increased from 10 this year to 13 from September. Twelve will be allowed to set a licensed deficit, averaging £280,000 each.

Cabinet member Anntoinette Bramble said there had been "a recent increase in demand for support from the council" in the form of licensed deficits, adding that the council was also looking to "potentially close or merge" schools with falling rolls.

In Calderdale, a district of West Yorkshire, the council will allow three schools to have a licensed deficit, averaging £42,000. Just one set a deficit budget last year.

A survey of primary schools by Calderdale Against School Cuts found 98 per cent said they had concerns about balancing their budget over the next three years.

Sue McMahon, from the campaign group, said the "tsunami of this crisis will hinder the life chances of the most vulnerable in our schools".

"The government has forgotten what they pledged they'd do in their manifesto and invest in the nation's children."

Cheshire West & Chester council expects to approve licensed deficits for seven primary schools, with an average of £75,000. Last year four primaries submitted deficit budgets.

Schools with a licensed

deficit must agree a three-year plan in which they were "expected to" recover the shortfall and set a balanced budget, the council said. This could be longer in "exceptional circumstances", such as a school re-organisation.

In Bracknell Forest in Berkshire, two primary schools submitted deficit budgets last year. This year, the council expects to approve five licensed deficits.

Stephen Morales, the chief executive of the Institute of School Business Leadership, said setting a deficit budget was "a last resort... and I suspect that no stone has been left unturned trying to balance these budgets".

When approving deficit budgets, councils have to make sure that their overall schools budget is balanced – that deficits do not outstrip surpluses in the system.

Brighton has warned that if schools with projected deficits "cannot reduce these by at least 10 per cent, this could require funding from the council's general fund, resulting in cuts to everyday council services".

Jacob Taylor, Brighton's finance lead, said many schools in the city faced difficult circumstances in setting balanced budgets. "We as a local authority have to work with them to try and achieve this as best as possible. "This doesn't mean we would consider asking schools to do anything that would jeopardise the education of our children."



Ben Kind



# Trust reviews policies after CEO's 'premium' Apple event flights

**JACK DYSON**

**@JACKDYDS**

**EXCLUSIVE**

One of the best-paid academy trust chief executives in England spent more than £1,000 of public cash on “premium economy flights” to an Apple conference in California.

Auditors have raised concerns the upgrade by Hull Collaborative boss Estelle Macdonald last year “could be seen as excessive and unnecessary expenditure”.

It is the latest example of a trust getting into hot water after leaders visited the tech giant. One estimated as many as 200 leaders have attended summits in the US hosted by Apple, which it says are professional development conferences.

But Schools Week spoke to two leaders who turned down the trips after feeling “uncomfortable about flying on public money” – while another compared the events to a “sales pitch”.

Some trusts later rolled out Apple products in their schools.

It’s understood that while Apple pays for accommodation and the event, schools are expected to pay for flights.

Hull Collaborative has now launched a review into its “policies linked to travel, staff development and training” after auditors flagged the “financial issue”.

The accounts for the year ending August 31, 2022, noted: “There was a transaction relating to the CEO travelling to America for an Apple leadership conference with other multi-academy trust CEOs.

“The expenditure was for the CEO’s premium economy flights at a cost of £1,021 with other costs being incurred for travel to and from the airport as well as an overnight stay at the departure airport.”

The auditors added this was “a regularity issue... as the upgrade flight costs could be seen as excessive and unnecessary expenditure and may not be in line with the trust achieving best value for money”.

Macdonald’s £205,000 salary for running her 16-school group puts her among the top 35 best-paid chief executives in the country.

A spokesperson for the trust said the visit was part of an “exercise to assess how Apple



products could enrich the ICT curriculum”.

This led “to a trust-wide initiative, which will launch in 2023-24, not only delivering huge advances to ICT but also the wider curriculum”. She would not say what the “huge advances” were.

But the spokesperson insisted the flights were “approved by trustees prior to the trip” and that “all other expenses were in line with existing policies”.

“On review the additional cost incurred for the flights was in the region of £300. The trust is reviewing policies linked to travel, staff development and training... with a view to ensuring this does not happen again.”

A government investigation in 2020 found Olive Tree Primary School trust in Bolton had paid more than £900 for its chair to stay in a top Chicago hotel while attending an Apple event.

Foreign travel expenses for trustees were forbidden and chair Abdul Chohan – who also worked as a consultant for the technology giant – had to repay the expenses.

Windsor Academy Trust was at the centre of controversy two years ago after it emerged then deputy chief executive Dawn Haywood had visited Apple’s headquarters in Cupertino, California, before a chain-wide iPad scheme was wheeled out.

Heywood, who is now the chief executive, was invited on the trip in 2020 with 19 other trust leaders. The trust paid for her economy travel and she paid for expenses, while accommodation and attendance were covered as part of Apple’s international leader programme.

Windsor had asked some families to contribute towards an iPad when the scheme was rolled out. But a spokesperson stressed the chain-wide programme was now fully funded and that “any parents who had paid initially have been fully reimbursed”.

New Bridge trust boss Graham Quinn said in a blog post he came back from Cupertino in 2018 “with a vision of rolling out a 1:1 [iPad] project”.

Documents published by IT firm Academia the Technology Group noted that Woodland Academy Trust director of education Julie Carson had journeyed to Apple’s base as well.

The papers said the trip helped her see “Apple would dramatically enhance [the chain’s] use of technology, offering the variation that their existing curriculum lacked”. Woodland has also launched a trust-wide iPad programme.

But other leaders have voiced concerns.

One, who did not want to be named, said he “was not comfortable flying on public money”, claiming “people come back saying they were asked not to say what the course content was”.

Meanwhile, a chief executive familiar with the trips, described them as “effectively a sales pitch. How do you then get away with sending someone to California on the taxpayer’s dollar?”

School leaders’ union ASCL has organised three study visits to Apple with school leaders in recent years.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary who led two of the trips, said they “offer insights into organisational culture, leadership and strategy, and the potential for digital technology to improve opportunities for teachers, leaders and young people”.

Apple did not respond to a request for comment.



Geoff Barton

# Trust hopes merger will ease repair worries

**JACK DYSON**

**@JACKDYDS**

**EXCLUSIVE**

A small trust refused cash for vital repairs is set to merge with another chain in part so that it can access regular capital funding.

*Schools Week* analysis shows that the Department for Education approved just one in three bids for money from the latest round of the condition improvement fund (CIF).

Trusts with fewer than five schools or 3,000 pupils must bid for cash to keep buildings in "safe and good working order". Larger trusts automatically receive capital funding through the school condition allowance (SCA).

The four-school Compass Academy Trust has had four of 14 funding bids for maintenance work approved over the past two years.

Stuart Ellis, its chief executive, said until this year, he had been refused funding to fix a "failing" boiler and a roof that was leaking water into a school corridor.

He forked out more than £80,000 on temporary repairs while waiting for the CIF cash.

He has now launched a bid to merge with the Connect Schools Academy Trust, hoping finally to be able to receive guaranteed sums to maintain his estate.

In merger consultation documents, the trusts said they "will be given a guaranteed annual amount" for capital work.

Ellis said: "Some of our bids have had to be resubmitted a number of times over a number of years, while some have been successful first time. Of course [it's frustrating].

"The consequence sometimes of not getting the funding that we really feel we need – whether that be for a roof or a boiler – is then we have to find further money out of our own reserves to mend and make do until the funding is approved."

The boiler problem was found in 2018, but Compass only received funding after three snubbed CIF applications.

The roof started leaking in 2017. It was the subject of three separate bids, the last of



which was approved.

Ellis said the government should give "all trusts" the same kind of funding. He estimated the merged trust would receive about £600,000 through SCA.

A damning National Audit Office report released last week found years of chronic underinvestment have meant 700,000 children across England are educated in structures requiring major fixes.

The watchdog revealed a £2 billion annual capital funding shortfall and that more than a third of school buildings were past their "use-by date".

Figures obtained through a Freedom of Information request reveal only 1,033 of the 3,061 (33.7 per cent) applications lodged for this year's CIF were given the go-ahead.

Our findings also show responsible bodies that committed more of their own cash for the maintenance projects were more likely to win funding.

Stephen Morales, the chief executive of the Institute of School Business Leadership, said issues surrounding CIF were increasing the levels of "disrepair" in schools across the country.

This was also "exacerbating cost pressures on schools as they're having to use revenue in their reserves to fund capital projects".

Ellis stressed the "main drivers" of the merger were to improve "educational capacity and financial sustainability".

But he added: "Some people may argue



Stuart Ellis

that the amount of money you get through SCA is lower than CIF, but you are at least in control of the timing and the use of that money.

"Those entities that are large enough to attract guaranteed sums can at least strategically plan their ongoing estates programme and later development."

Sir David Carter, the former national schools commissioner, described the differing funding arrangements for small and larger trusts as an "incentive" to grow.

It would "probably create some inequities", but it was "one of a number of reasons why trusts are thinking about mergers".

The merger between Compass and Connect is expected to take place in September next year. The proposals will be discussed during the next London advisory board meeting on Thursday, July 13.

The Department for Education has been approached for comment.

# Turnaround trust no longer needed, says DfE

**JACK DYSON**

@JACKDYDS

**EXCLUSIVE**

A turnaround academy trust launched by the government to take on unwanted schools is set to shut.

Ministers unveiled Falcon Education Academies Trust as part of a pilot called EdMAT in 2019, with the original remit of absorbing the most challenging primaries and secondaries in the north.

Even though the trust was later given the go-ahead to branch out nationwide, it has just four schools – spread across Stockton-on-Tees, Leeds, Birmingham and Swadlincote.

It will close in the 2023-24 academic year, after the Department for Education decided not to extend the trial.

## Government 'no longer needs' trust

A DfE spokesperson said its pilot "supported schools facing a variety of challenges and has delivered benefits to pupils, parents and staff and the communities those schools serve."

"The trust landscape has changed since the launch of the pilot, with the growth of the sector and high-quality trusts, and we no longer need a chain focused exclusively on schools requiring intervention."

Falcon accounts published in March said it was established to "take on and turn around very challenging schools... which MATs have been unwilling" to run – usually because the establishments "have



significant sustainability and infrastructure issues that present too great a risk" to a prospective trust.

The DfE-backed chain was intended to secure the long-term viability of the academies, before transferring them to "another successful MAT". It was hoped this would free Falcon up to then turn around more schools.

Records show six local authority schools that were given academy orders after 'inadequate' ratings more than five years ago are still to convert. Four still do not have sponsors lined up.

## Covid blamed for missed targets

It was initially planned that the trust would have three academies under its wing by the end of August 2020..

But it did not reach this mark until it took

on its last school – William Allitt Academy in Swadlincote – in September.

*Schools Week* revealed two years ago that Falcon's trustees believed its pilot status and small size might "inhibit applications" for a new chief executive, suggesting its government-backed status failed to tempt recruits.

Applicant numbers were "disappointing", despite an executive search and advertising campaign.

Falcon's latest accounts – which showed it had "free reserves" of £1 million at the end of August – noted the delays "will impact levels of funding and lengthen the time before [it] achieves capacity".

They also mentioned one of its "priorities" was "to ensure it is able to build capacity to support further schools" this year. Another aim was to "effect a successful transfer of one [academy] out of the trust to another".

## Three schools set for new academy trusts

The DfE said it was "working jointly with the trust to agree what will happen to each school", before taking "the steps necessary to close" it.

Falcon stressed three of its three secondaries – Oulton Academy in Leeds, Thornaby Academy in Stockton-on-Tees and the William Allitt – were "strong enough" to join another chain.

Meanwhile, a decision "has not yet been reached" on its fourth site, the King Solomon International Business School in Birmingham.

JACK DYSON | @JACKDYDS

## Parents want academy order for Sheffield secondary revoked

The last authority-maintained secondary in Sheffield has demanded ministers tear up its academy order after the school overturned an 'inadequate' Ofsted.

The Department for Education had initially wanted Brigantia Learning Trust to absorb King Edward VII School (KES) following its poor inspection grade in September.

But a campaign led by parents – who argued the chain was not suitable for the secondary – prompted Yorkshire and Humber regional director Alison Wilson to defer her decision.

The watchdog has now rated the school 'good', with its report saying "leaders have

taken robust action to address the significant safeguarding weaknesses evident" last year.

A DfE spokesperson said it was now considering the school's application to revoke the academy order.

KES was rated 'inadequate' last September over ineffective safeguarding. Inspectors said that leaders did not do enough to keep children safe, with a significant minority of pupils feeling they did not have "an adult to speak to".

However, during their latest visit two months ago inspectors judged the safeguarding arrangements to be "effective".

The government announced last month academy orders could be ripped up if schools rated 'inadequate' mostly over safeguarding issues were awarded an improved grade in new quicker reinspections.

While the school did have a 'requirements improvement' rating for 'quality of education' – suggesting safeguarding wasn't the only issue – it did appear to have benefited from the new rules.

Guidance published in October also noted that the secretary of state can rip up academy orders in "exceptional circumstances".



# Government ‘not walking the walk’ on T-levels

SHANE CHOWEN

@SHANECHOWEN

EXCLUSIVE

The government has been accused of “not walking the walk” on T-level industry placements as an investigation reveals a dearth of opportunities being provided by Whitehall departments and education agencies.

Data obtained via Freedom of Information requests by sister title FE Week reveals that the majority of government departments, including the Treasury, have not offered a single placement since the launch of the flagship qualifications in 2020.

This is despite suitable T-levels, which are the vocational equivalent of A-levels, now being available in subjects such as digital and management and administration.

The figures show that just four placements have been provided by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE), the government body responsible for developing and promoting T-levels.

Other Department for Education agencies including the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Student Loans Company, the Office for Students and Ofsted, have all provided no T-level placements to date.

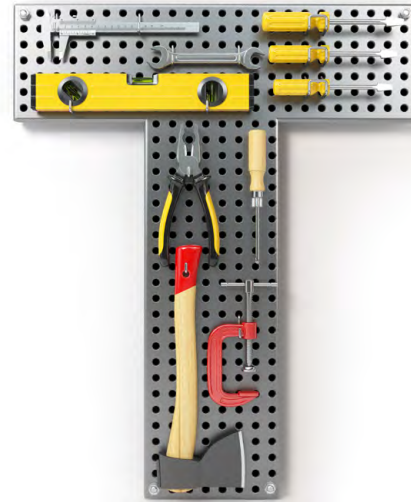
The industry placement element of T-levels is lauded by education ministers as the main reason why their new “gold standard” technical qualification stands above other level 3 rivals.

Students are required to complete a placement lasting at least 315 hours (approximately 45 days) to achieve a T-level. But college leaders regularly cite local placement opportunities and lack of employer appetite for hosting learners as a key concern as more T-levels become available across the country.

Tom Richmond, a former adviser to DfE ministers who now heads up the EDSK think tank, said: “If government departments cannot find the time and energy to offer these placements then they can hardly blame other employers for being reticent about engaging with T-levels.”

The DfE itself has performed best out of all departments. It provided six placements in 2021-22 for T-level digital production, design and development students in their teacher services, digital and capital teams.

It has 11 placements planned for this year, three



further digital placements and eight for T-level management and administration students. However only one of those had been completed by the date of the FOI response, on June 26.

The DfE is a Whitehall outlier, however. The Department for Work and Pensions has offered just five placements, each of them for T-level digital students in their digital team.

The DWP did say that it had 24 placements planned for 2023-24 for management and administration T-level students within its commercial, counter fraud, customer service and digital teams.

The Cabinet Office and Department of Health have both provided just three placements each over the past two years. Two placements have been provided by the Department for Transport and one by the Home Office.

The Treasury, Foreign Office, Department for Levelling Up and Communities and Department for Culture, Media and Sport are all yet to offer a single T-level industry placement. The same is true for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Justice.

The Department for Business and Trade offered two placements this year but those have not been taken up by students. The Ministry of Defence is the only department yet to respond to FE Week’s FOI request.

Ofqual told FE Week that it previously sought to offer placements for students but, due to “geographical limitations”, has not “been in a

position to support students studying those courses for which Ofqual would be able to offer relevant placements”.

Other DfE agencies were blunter. “Social Work England has never provided and does not plan to provide T-level industry placements,” their FOI response said.

IfATE, which has lead responsibility for developing and promoting T-levels, has only offered four placements in total. Last year it offered placements to two digital support and services T-level students in their digital services and commissioning teams. To date this year, just one placement has been taken up with a further one planned.

Tom Bewick, chief executive of the Federation of Awarding Bodies, said the government should be leading by example. “This is an example of the government talking the talk and not walking the walk,” he said.

“If the government can’t be a leading employer in offering T-level placements, why should others?”

A DfE spokesperson said: “As more young people opt to take T-levels it will be vital that employers from across the public and private sectors can offer more placements.”

The poor performance of government departments comes despite DfE officials putting on workshops and providing online guidance on providing T-level industry placements for their Whitehall colleagues.

NEWS IN BRIEF

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

# More teachers say vaping is a problem

Nearly three-quarters of secondary teachers say vaping is a problem in their school. It comes as the government looks set to update RSHE guidance to include the potential risks. Data shared with *Schools Week* by Teacher Tapp shows that of more than 4,200 secondary state-school teachers surveyed in March, 73 per cent said vaping was an issue in their schools.

This included 27 per cent who strongly agreed. Just 13 per cent disagreed.

It marks a rise of seven percentage points from last June, when 66 per cent of secondary teachers said vaping was a problem. Twenty-five per cent strongly agreed, while 20 per cent disagreed.

But there was a fall in staff catching pupils vaping or with a device this academic year – 49 per cent compared with 53 per cent in 2021-22.

Schools have repeatedly warned about pupils hiding in toilets to vape.



In an oral evidence session on youth vaping last week, the health and social care committee heard schools were concerned about potential disruption to exam season.

Laranya Caslin, head of St George's Academy in Sleaford, Lincolnshire, told MPs she switched from smoke to heat sensors in toilets before the start of GCSEs and A-levels.

# Flu vaccines for all pupils



All secondary pupils will be eligible for a free flu vaccine from September.

Primary pupils and children in years 7 to 9 were eligible last year, but this will extend to all age groups in 2023-24.

The vaccine was offered to all year groups in 2021-22 during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The vaccine will be offered as a nasal spray through the schools vaccination programme during the autumn term.

The government said the decision is in line with a long-standing recommendation from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, said it was important children "are able to attend school as much as possible".

"We know that school attendance levels drop over the winter months due to illness, which is why today's announcement will not only protect children's health but also their education."

Consent letters will be sent to parents and guardians before vaccines are given.

Parents of home-schooled children and young people not in school can be vaccinated by their GP or in a community clinic.

Maria Caulfield, the health minister, said the vaccines would "reduce the risk of transmission to more vulnerable groups".

# Attainment gap widens

The attainment gap between looked-after children and their peers has begun to widen again in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Education Policy Institute said the gap had been narrowing until 2019, but this had been reversed as more children experienced social care.

Analysis by the organisation found 12.7 per cent of pupils who were in year 11 in 2021 had experienced social care at some point in the previous six years, up from 10.7 per cent in 2014.

In 2021, 2.2 per cent of pupils were classified as children in need with a child protection plan, up from 0.6 per cent in 2014.

In 2021, looked-after children were 2.3 grades behind in GSCE English and maths, up from 2.2 grades in 2019.

The gap grew more for children in need



with a child protection plan (1.9 to 2.1 grades) and among children in need without a protection plan (1.4 to 1.6 grades).

Emily Hunt, the associate director at the EPI, said the reversal for "some of the most vulnerable children within education" should be "concerning to government and policymakers".

A cross government strategy was needed, she said.

[Full story here](#)

[Full story here](#)

# Rotherham academies thought LA was in charge of admissions

**SAMANTHA BOOTH**  
**@SAMANTHAJBOOTH**

Some secondary academies in Rotherham had no admissions arrangements after a “fundamental misunderstanding” that the council was instead responsible, the Office for the Schools Adjudicator has ruled.

Academy headteachers believed Rotherham Council was their admission authority – despite academies being in control of entry to their schools.

An investigation by the schools adjudicator (OSA), published this week, found that “most” academies in the area were “under the impression” that the council’s co-ordinated admission process “extended to, and in fact was the determined arrangements for, the schools”.

Co-ordinated admissions simplify the process for parents. But they do not take away academies’ duties to set their own criteria.

Heads confirmed to the OSA that “they thought that the local authority was the admission authority for the schools”, even though all 16 secondaries were academies.

The admission authorities for the schools were either the academy trust or the school’s governing board.

The OSA concluded that “as a result of this fundamental misunderstanding, many of the schools had no determined arrangements”.

Nathan Heath, the council’s education assistant director, said a “number” of academies were following outdated admission arrangements determined by the council for local authority-maintained schools.

The OSA looked at the region after a complaint about one school’s arrangements. This was later withdrawn, but the OSA had already viewed schools’ policies.

After establishing the misunderstanding, each school created new arrangements. But in July last year, the OSA found three schools were still “non-compliant” with the admissions code and law.



Parts of the policies at Wales High School, Swinton Academy and St Bernard’s Catholic High School required “significant amendment”.

All had at least two-and-a half pages of quotes from the admissions code, which the OSA said could be “confusing and unhelpful to parents”.

At Swinton Academy, part of The Aston Community Education Trust, the governing body “did not fully understand their responsibilities” on annual checks on admissions policies.

They also believed it was the council that defined a school’s catchment area, which the OSA said was contrary to the code and was the governors’ job.

The acting principal at St Bernard’s remained “under the impression that the process of administering the admission arrangements which is undertaken by the local authority (the co-ordinated scheme) is synonymous with the admission arrangements and this is not the case”.

The schools now have two months to revise their arrangements.

Rob Slade, an education lawyer at HCB Solicitors, said confusion around admissions was “not very common”, adding: “The code clearly sets out that the academy’s admission authority is the academy trust.



“If we are considering the impact on parents appealing decisions, if there are no determined arrangements it becomes much harder for to put appeals forward. It makes it much harder to make sure it’s handled fairly.”

Rotherham Council told the OSA it planned to “enhance” its admission services, including externally commissioned training for the council and academies in September.

Heath added: “Since being made aware of this issue, the council has been working in collaboration with local academies to support them in ensuring they have compliant admission arrangements, which includes the provision of any training and development needs.”

The schools did not respond to requests for comment.



NEWS

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

# Unis with 90 years' experience ditch ITT

AMY WALKER  
@AMYRWALKER

EXCLUSIVE

Four universities with a combined 90 years' experience training teachers will stop offering PGCEs following the government's market review of the sector.

The University of Hull, University of Plymouth and University College Birmingham (UCB) have closed their initial teacher training (ITT) courses for September.

London South Bank University (LSB) is to wind down its primary-only PGCE course from next year.

The four were unsuccessful in the Department for Education's market review.

James Noble-Rogers, the executive director of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), said the loss of established providers "especially at a time of serious teacher shortage, is a matter for regret".

The impact on teacher supply in some areas "could be significant".

"The government should reconsider its decision

to remove accreditation from all the affected providers or reopen the accreditation window as soon as it can," he said.

Hull and Plymouth are in areas identified by the DfE as cold spots for ITT.

Both offered PGCEs in primary education, as well as several secondary subjects that included shortage subjects such as physics and maths.

Universities without accreditation can partner up with an accredited provider.

But a spokesperson for Plymouth said it was "hugely disappointed" by the outcome of the review, adding: "The decision has left us with no choice but to close our PGCE programmes."

Current students would graduate this summer as planned.

LSB – rated 'good' for its ITT provision last year – has also chosen not to enter a partnership.

It will run its final PGCE course between April 2024 and March 2025. It is understood that this has been accepted by the DfE because the course will begin

before new accreditation rules kicks in.

A spokesperson said the PGCE was "highly valued" by schools, while teachers were "highly sought after" because they were trained to teach in urban primaries.

Until this academic year, UCB ran a PGCE primary education course accredited by the University of Warwick.

The course is not available for 2023, and UCB said students who completed its undergraduate primary education degree would be "guaranteed" an interview for primary and early years PGCE courses at Warwick.

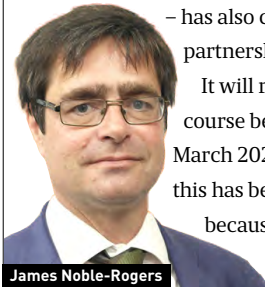
But UCB would not be drawn on why it would no longer provide ITT. Hull did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

MillionPlus, which represents UK universities, said the PGCE course closures were "concerning".

Rachel Hewitt, its chief executive, said it did "not oppose" the market review's aims to "quality assure" the sector.

"But we continue to question whether the ramifications of losing these long-standing, reputable institutions has been fully considered, given the risk to teacher supply."

The DfE was contacted for comment.



James Noble-Rogers

## education week jobs

Empowering education professionals to find their dream job

Organise your recruitment advertising for the year with an annual package. Providing unlimited listings, covering all vacancies including leadership roles.

From as little as £3000 + VAT

Prices for Multi Academy Trusts can be provided



# Panel for cultural education plan appointed

**SAMANTHA BOOTH**

**@SAMANTHAJBOTH**

An academy trust boss and a former ministerial adviser are among 22 members of a panel appointed by the government to help create a cultural education plan.

The 2022 schools white paper promised to publish a plan this year to help support youngsters into creative jobs.

The panel will advise government on a framework to “amplify, extend and signpost” cultural education (see full list below).

The 22 include vice-chair Sir Hamid Patel, the chief executive of Star Academies, Mandy Barrett, a specialist primary art teacher at Gomersal Primary in Kirklees, and Robert Peal, joint headteacher at West London Free School and a former adviser to schools minister Nick Gibb.

The panel will be chaired by the former professional ballerina Baroness Deborah Bull, who was appointed in August last year.

The plan’s objectives including tackling “disparities” in cultural education and to “champion the social value” of it.

Gibb said the plan “will help pupils instil a love and interest in culture throughout their education, along with guidance for those who wish to pursue creative and cultural industry careers”.

Schools have ‘central role’

The terms of reference state schools have a “central role to play” in the provision of high-quality cultural education.

It could be delivered through other organisations, such as charities and youth



clubs, so would look different around the country.

The plan would not focus on the national curriculum, exams, Ofsted’s inspection framework or performance measures.

Instead, it would look at spreading best practice to “identify, amplify, extend and equalise cultural education opportunities” for all young people.

The document said parents, teachers and young people found it “impossible to navigate the landscape”, making it hard to find opportunities.

A better understanding of existing provision, careers information and support for cultural sector professionals was therefore needed.

Bull said the panel “brings together expert voices and perspectives from education and the cultural sector across the country”.

She said she would ensure the plan “amplifies, extends and equalises cultural education, experiences and opportunities for all children and young people, whatever their background and wherever they live”.

## Cultural education plan expert advisory group members:

- Baroness Bull CBE (chair) – crossbench peer, House of Lords
- Lizzie Crump MBE (vice-chair culture) – UK strategic lead, What Next?
- Sir Hamid Patel CBE (vice-chair education) – chief executive, Star Academies
- Mandy Barrett – specialist primary art teacher, Gomersal Primary, Kirklees
- Ashley Bartlett – curriculum leader of history
- Emma Bray – head of art and design, Saint Martin’s Catholic Academy, Nuneaton
- Kate Fellows – head of learning and access, Leeds Museums and Galleries
- Rosie Heafford – co-director, Second Hand Dance
- Darren Henley CBE – chief executive, Arts Council England
- Charlie Kennard MBE – principal, London Screen Academy
- Mary Myatt – education adviser, curriculum expert
- Jacqui O’Hanlon MBE – director of learning and national partnerships, Royal Shakespeare Company
- Ndidi Okezie – chief executive officer, UK Youth
- Robert Peal – joint headteacher and history teacher, West London Free School
- Tina Ramdeen – associate director of young people, Roundhouse
- Steve Rollett – deputy chief executive, Confederation of School Trusts
- Professor Steven Spier – vice-chancellor, Kingston University
- John Stephens – director of music, Inspiration Trust
- Jenny Thompson – executive director, Dixon Academies Trust
- Keisha Thompson – artistic director and chief executive officer, Contact Theatre, Manchester
- Dr Jon Wardle – director, The National Film and Television School
- Adam Vincent – His Majesty’s Inspector, subject lead for art and design (observer)



Baroness Bull



Sir Hamid Patel

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

# SCHOOLS WEEK

# Introducing multiple subscriptions

The perfect solution for keeping your entire team informed and up-to-date with the latest developments in the education sector - a multiple subscription to Schools Week!



## NEW OPTIONS

FIVE PERSON |  
**£250/YEAR**

TEN PERSON |  
**£450/YEAR**

FIFTEEN PERSON |  
**£600/YEAR**

**CLICK FOR INFO**





# Investigation

JESSICA HILL | @JESSJANEHILL



## How hostile immigration policies are 'piling misery on to children'

Schools are being left to pick up the pieces as they scramble to accommodate traumatised refugee and asylum-seeking children,. Jessica Hill reports

I meet 14-year-old Fatima at the Essex hotel she's been staying in for seven months since she fled Afghanistan.

She tells me how much she appreciates being able to attend school each day. She knows that under the Taliban, girls are not allowed to attend school. Parks, gyms and swimming pools are also off limits.

But her new life in Colchester has its own problems. Her hotel food is "mainly rice and beans" and there's little space for her parents and five siblings.

It's Eid when I meet the refugee Afghan mums and children at a celebration they're holding in a small grassy area behind their hotel.

Back in Afghanistan, the mothers would have spent much of the day cooking. But Fatima's mother, Fakhriah, tells me she feels she "has no purpose" as they are forbidden from cooking their own food at the hotel.

English lessons are held two days a week. One

mother keeps nervously scratching her hands, and I'm told her extended family members were recently killed by the Taliban.

Fatima is also scared as her family is being moved again next month to more permanent accommodation. It will likely mean starting again at a new school.

She has settled into school life in Colchester and has made friends. But her life is soon to be uprooted again.

A months-long investigation by *Schools Week* has found she is one of thousands in this situation. We uncover how poorly co-ordinated and last-minute placements by the Home Office leave schools scrambling to accommodate dozens of traumatised children, who can then disappear without warning, leaving schools with big funding shortfalls.

The "chaotic" movement of families around the country is also disrupting children's education, while they are left for months in unsuitable hotels

without decent food and allegedly at risk of abuse.

Sebastian Chapleau, assistant director of Citizens UK, says: "The fallout from the government's hostile immigration policies is piling misery on to children who've already been through severe trauma getting to the UK.

"It is schools that are being left to pick up the pieces, but without the access funding for the additional language and emotional support these children so desperately need."

### Children left in limbo

Between May and September 2022, 44,300 school applications were made for refugee children arriving via official routes – half from Ukraine, a third from Hong Kong and the rest from Afghanistan.

Councils are expected to find school places within 15 days, but in 4,000 instances they took longer. Almost 3,000 children (7 per cent) were left with no place by September, according to the latest Department for Education data.

# Investigation

But even when children do secure school places, they can be taken away with little notice.

Most Afghan refugees were put up in hotels, with the expectation they'd soon be moved to more permanent accommodation.

There are currently around 8,000 Afghan families housed at 59 temporary hotels across the country.

The government "strongly recommends" that they start looking for new schools before moving. But many still have no idea where they will end up.

Fakhriah has been told she has to leave the Colchester hotel by August 8. "[The council] told us there's no place for you in Colchester. It's not known where we will be housed, or the fate of my children's education."

Local Government Association adviser Louise Smith says it can be difficult to find suitable and affordable housing, particularly for Afghan families, who tend to be large. "But the stability of school is so important."

Daniel Rourke, a lawyer from the Public Law Project charity that works on behalf of families in such situations, says "chaotic moves" have "already prevented some children from taking exams, and many of those same children are now facing the threat of homelessness".

Since fleeing Sudan in 2020, 16-year-old Ann Bashir and her family have been moved four times and are expecting to be moved again from their Hove flat. Each time, they're given half an hour's notice to gather belongings.

Last year, they were moved to detention accommodation in Tower Hamlets, east London, leaving Ann with a five-hour daily commute to her school, Cardinal Newman in Brighton.

In April, while she was revising for her GCSEs, they were moved again into a rundown Brighton hotel.

Despite the end of the month deadline to move Afghan families, Simon Ridley, the Home Office's second permanent secretary, told *Schools Week* on Tuesday "a lot of them as of today don't have housing yet".

"Afghan families...can't possibly live forever in a hotel. So we've got to start progressing this.

"Some families will stay local, for sure...Some



## 'We're stuffed by the Home Office'

might move further away. But...families move around the country."

### Schools have 'little time to prepare'

Sackville School in West Sussex was given "little or no time to prepare" for the arrival of about 20 refugee and asylum-seeking pupils last spring, says headteacher Jo Meloni. The 1,700 pupil school was already at capacity.

While the school "welcomed them with open arms", she questions why the mainly Afghan and Ukrainian children aren't more evenly spread across other areas.

The Home Office decides where to move families, but once they are moved the council then has a responsibility to secure school places.

Kent Council questioned the Home Office's "wider decision-making" during the emergency evacuation from Kabul in August 2021.

While families were "waiting on the runway", Home Office officials were contacting Kent staff to ask about the availability of school places "so their take-off could be authorised", a report to the Schools Adjudicator said.

The Home Office also last year continued placing families in Ashford and Canterbury, despite being warned by Kent and the DfE about "lack of school spaces".

All year 9 places in Canterbury were filled,

resulting in pupils being allocated to schools "at the extent of reasonable journey times" and adding "pressures on [Kent's] already struggling [school] transport network".

Asylum-seeking and refugee children often take priority in admissions – including, for instance, over sibling places – which can cause frictions.

Herefordshire says a 20 per cent rise in in-year admissions in 2021-22, "mainly from out of county and abroad", was "putting strain on our city schools... largely at capacity already".

In Kingston, southwest London, a large rise in in-year applications, 45 per cent from overseas, is adding to a "scarcity" of places in some year groups.

Phil Haigh, chair of governors at Cherry Lane Primary, which is near three asylum hotels in Hillingdon, west London, is seeking to change the admissions criteria at his school to give priority to siblings. Some families pulled their child out when a sibling didn't gain a place.

About 50 of its 600 pupils are currently asylum-seeking children.

### Welcoming schools left out of pocket

Schools receiving asylum-seeking children – those arriving in small boats – are left out of pocket, too.

Schools are only funded for pupils registered with them the following census day, and only then



# Investigation

from the start of the next financial year which is April for multi-academy trusts and September for maintained schools.

But these families have normally been moved on by the Home Office by that point.

Almost 700 asylum applications were made for accompanied children in the 12 months up to May, and 5,000 for unaccompanied children, according to Home Office data.

Council areas with airports and ports have seen a greater influx. But councils across London recently joined forces on an asylum dispersal plan to “hold the Home Office to account” in ensuring families are spread more evenly between them.

Hounslow, home to eight asylum hotels, processed more than 1,800 overseas in-year school applications last academic year.

The support for “trauma, language, clothing [and] meals” places “huge pressure on resources – not just financial”, a report from the area’s school forum says.

But Haigh says “very few” children stay as long as a year, “most a matter of weeks” and some “never turn up” after enrolment. Their places cannot be refilled as the school is unable to trace them.

“We’re stuffed by the Home Office,” he says. “We get no correspondence from them at all. There’s no reason why, if they had their bloody act together, they couldn’t communicate where the child is moving to.

“We’ve had parents turn up at lunchtime to pick up children to go somewhere else [to live], but they don’t yet know where.”

William Byrd Academy, a 550-pupil school run by Middlesex Learning Partnership, has hosted 64 asylum-seeking children since September 2020.

The school ‘requires improvement’, but is tracking towards good. Trust chief executive Tracy Hemming says it tried to use the school’s “fragilities” as “mitigation” for emergency funding, but to no avail.

Its budget surplus to March 2023 dropped from £318,304 to £145,638.

The school’s local authority, Hillingdon, is urging the Home Office for a “fair level



Tracy Hemming

## SCHOOL PLACE APPLICATIONS FOR REFUGEES FROM MAY TO SEPTEMBER 2022

	Total applications in England	Places offered within 15 days	Places offered outside 15 days	Number of children still waiting
Ukrainians	22,100	86%	6%	1,700
Afghans	8,100	83%	14%	200
Hong Kong	14,100	79%	13%	1000
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,300</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>2,900</b>

## ‘They can disappear without warning’

of funding” to cover costs for schools with asylum-seeking children.

In Essex, the council stumped up £1 million contingency within its growth fund for schools admitting a significant number of asylum and refugee children, with £355,000 so far allocated.

Councils receive funding for Afghans of £20 per pupil per day, but this is lagged by a term despite “large volumes” arriving.

One of its schools, St Andrews primary – near Fatima’s hotel – had to accommodate 37 Afghan children at once.

“We would expect schools to take two to three children but when the numbers come up, we need to appoint staff from day one and [face] additional costs,” Essex council said.

### Children failed by broken systems

The complex needs of these children – who have often been through significant trauma – are also butting up against support systems already under strain.

Haigh claims some of the Afghan children at his school lie down in the playground thinking that a fire is going on above their heads.

“It was possibly PTSD, we don’t know as they can’t get a diagnosis because CAMHS is overwhelmed.”

Kingston Council highlighted an “increasing number of children...from overseas” with “highly complex

needs”, “likely to need specialist provision, but requiring an [EHCP] assessment”.

But almost half of children nationally waited beyond the legal deadline for a plan last year.

“Schools are concerned whether they have the appropriate resources to support the child, which makes the final allocation difficult,” the borough said.

Hillingdon’s schools forum adds that “when a class has a significant proportion of children with EAL/trauma with no extra support, the other pupils also suffer”.

The placement of asylum seekers in hotels has also sparked community tensions in Lincolnshire, Brighton and Knowsley, with a protest in Knowsley in February leading to 15 arrests.

Meloni says the children have added a “cultural dimension” to her school that it is “benefiting from”, being in a “predominantly white, middle-class” area.

“The majority are thriving to an extent, because they’re happy to be here.”

But the timing of the bus returning pupils to their hotel means they cannot stay for extra-curricular activities, and makes it difficult for school staff to “form relationships with families”.

### Hunger, abuse and disappearance

Ann finally broke down to the school’s pastoral leader Georgia Neale about her family’s living situation.



# Investigation



Surrey Square Primary School in London



Surrey Square Primary school pupil Joanna enjoys a piano lesson that the school pays for with other children from families with no access to welfare support because of their immigration status

She had been filling up on free school meals and taking school cafeteria leftovers back to her family.

Four days into the family's stay, Neale visited the hotel – despite visitors not being permitted – to ask staff why they had not been fed.

“At first, they denied the family were staying there.”

Then they were finally shown where the washing machine and cafeteria was, although Neale describes the pre-packaged “airplane” food as unappetising.

But Ann was “so scared if they complained they’d get sent back to Tower Hamlets”.

Citizen's UK's Froilan Legaspi claims some asylum hotels are serving “undercooked chicken and expired milk”.

“Many children are losing weight”, partly because a policy change during Covid allowing children with no access to public funds free school meals is being “applied inconsistently”.

There have been reports too of violence and sexual assault against children in hotels.

And as of January, 440 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (separated from their parents or carers) had gone missing. By June, 154 were still unaccounted for.

Haigh says accompanied children are also disappearing. Albanian children living in hotels with their mothers in some cases “just disappear... Their fathers ... pull up at the school gates and whisk them off, nobody knows where.”

There were 5,570 unaccompanied

asylum-seeking children in 2021-22, up from 2,230 in 2012.

Many are in temporary hotels until councils can find them more secure placements. But as of January, more than 4,600 had been in hotels since July 2021. For many their only education is provided by hotel support workers.

A government inspection of such hotels last year found activities limited to art, some sport and “some basic, perfunctory informal English language sessions”.

“By failing to provide any formal education or schooling, young people's basic educational needs were unmet,” it said.

### Schools go above and beyond

Despite the myriad of problems and hostile government environment, schools are making children feel welcome.

At Sackville, families have been invited to its summer school; every pupil has been given a “student buddy”.

Dozens of sixth-formers have been trained in TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) qualifications to support youngsters and the school paid to train two teaching assistants in EAL (English as an additional language). “We're doing what we can,” Meloni says.

William Byrd is providing clothing, English lessons and coffee drop-ins for families.

Cardinal Newman has supported Ann to find witnesses for her asylum case, lodging “mitigating circumstances”



Cardinal Newman schools's pastoral leader Georgia Neale and pupil Ann Bashir from Sudan, on Prom night

with GCSE exam boards over the stress she is under and paying for her to attend the school prom.

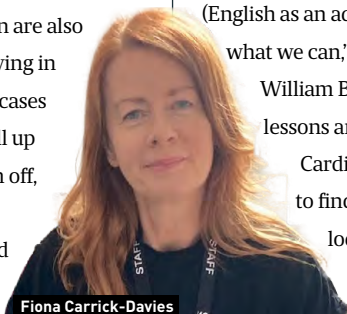
“The support I've received from everyone in school made me feel welcomed and loved,” she says.

At Surrey Square Primary in south London, children get a free weekly extra-curricular club or music lesson, costing £1,100 a term.

“Otherwise they really miss out and it's not an equal playing field,” says Fiona Carrick-Davies, the school's family and community co-ordinator. It also supports families with a food bank and furniture.

Of its 460 pupils, 24 have no resource to public funds because of their immigration status, although some families have lived here for decades.

Grace Adedeji, a carer from Nigeria who arrived nine months ago and whose two daughters, 10 and 8, attend drama club, says: “Life is so difficult. But I really appreciate the help we get from the school.”



Fiona Carrick-Davies

# Opinion

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



## SIR JON COLES

Chief executive,  
United Learning

### Our accountability is first to our communities - not DfE

**If we can't change ministers' muscular activism, we can certainly control how it plays out in our schools, writes Jon Coles**

One of my more surprising recent experiences was defending the idea of a rich general curriculum against Lord Baker, the father of the national curriculum.

His questioning in a House of Lords committee assumed that the 11-16 school curriculum should make young people "job ready". That is less true than ever: labour market changes and compulsory education to 18 mean we've never had fewer 16 to 18-year-olds in the workforce.

More generally, trying to second-guess the future is a bad way to prepare young people for 40 years of work. A curriculum overly focused on today's skill needs will not prepare them to learn and adapt when demands change.

Instead, children should develop a secure grasp of concepts and skills with wide applicability and the ability to use them in a range of contexts, within a coherent cognitive framework to which they can add new knowledge and understanding. They should do so in schools that attend to their wider growth and development as human beings.

The United Learning curriculum developed over the past decade – and now widely available – is designed to do this. Its development was not motivated by the accountability system, but is part of the success of schools with some of the highest Progress 8 scores in the country.

So I have little sympathy with Lord Baker's suggestion that the P8 measure stands in the way of schools teaching teenagers the right things.

We might, however, share a view that it is undesirable for government to use the accountability system to control schools.

The government of 1988 rightly argued that what children learn is of fundamental importance to society, should be subject to public scrutiny and, if prescribed, determined by parliament. While the national curriculum was an expansion of state power, it also opened up the "secret garden" of the curriculum to democratic accountability.

More recent governments, however, have been less inclined to discuss fundamentals. It has been easier to drive their preferences through the "backwards effect" of performance metrics on qualifications and curriculum.

In the current feverish debate about accountability, we should



**“ We are not accountable to league tables or Ofsted**

remember that we are all better when we're accountable. Effective accountability clarifies and simplifies. If we know what we're accountable for, it removes uncertainty and improves focus.

So if parliament makes clear what society wants from public education and we are measured against that, we cannot reasonably object. But if it says one thing and the measurement system incentivises something different, we have precisely the ambiguity that creates stressed and anxious cultures.

So, how should we respond to the "accountability system" we have?

First, by remembering that we are not accountable to league tables, government or Ofsted. Legally, we are accountable to our boards. Morally, to the children and parents we serve. The "accountability system" is really just a system of measurement and reporting.

Second, we should not confuse the measure with the goal. Our reason for working in education is to do right for children, not to look good. Prioritising the former without exception or excuse is

always our best course.

Third, by building cross-sector institutions. No health minister would try to prescribe detailed medical practices – they would be rebutted by the Royal colleges and other evidence-based institutions. We need to invest in building our own evidence-based college and institutions.

Finally, we should be much more conscious of state power and more determined to remind government of its limits and limitations. In 1988, the DfE abruptly changed from quiescent enabler to muscular activism and has never looked back.

It may be unfair to blame the secretary of state of 1988 for the continued expansion of state control of education. He could no more have predicted the past 35 years of political change than teachers could have done the social and economic changes that have transformed the labour market.

But the one part of the pre-1988 consensus we do need to recapture is the centrality of our intrinsic motivation to serve children rather than the power of government.



# Opinion

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

## Trying to run things from the centre doesn't work, write Robin Wales and Clive Furness

Social democracy has made life better for most people, but it is failing. Public services are in crisis, and none more so than education, with up to 40 per cent of teachers planning to leave the profession by 2027, according to the National Education Union.

In education, as in other public services, central bureaucracies stand in the way of improvement. A reasonable demand for high standards has resulted in an overburdened workforce encumbered by administration. The politicians' solution? More regulation and bureaucracy.

But our experience of running Newham council shows an alternative is possible. We are passionate supporters of the scientific method, so we tested everything we did against the evidence and we have confidence that it works.

To tackle bureaucracy, we created small, nimble and properly incentivised and funded organisations and gave them the power to deliver agreed outcomes in whichever way they saw fit. Over 10 years, during austerity, we were able to freeze the regressive council tax, make no cuts, and initiate a number of services. Set the outcomes, incentivise, devolve power and monitor results, not process.

It's an approach that is perfect for schools – the small nimble organisations that deliver education. Government oversight should be sharply focused on determining desired outcomes, and councils should be empowered to take swift and decisive action to intervene where those outcomes are not being met. As to how things are delivered,

### SIR ROBIN WALES

Former council leader and mayor, Newham and co-author, *Left, Right, Wrong*

### CLIVE FURNESS

Former councillor, Newham and co-author, *Left, Right, Wrong*



## The next government must let schools run things their way

that should be left to the skilled practitioners.

All we politicians should care about is that outcomes are being delivered and young people are thriving. Trying to run things from the centre doesn't work. It increases bureaucracy and

England, it allowed us to deliver huge improvements at all levels for our schools and our community. We were the first council to introduce free school meals for all primary children, saving money for working families on low incomes and improving

“Bureaucrats have created a state that disempowers people

creates additional administrative work for schools, and encourages a fixation on administrative structures rather than educational outcomes.

In Newham, we worked to improve school leadership, encouraging partnership working and the sharing of best practice. In what at the time was the second poorest borough in

results for all our children.

With this came the recognition that bureaucrats have created a state that disempowers people, replacing personal agency with dependency. As we outline in our new book *Left, Right, Wrong*, Newham council determined to focus on developing the skills and abilities that enable



individuals to deal with the problems of life. Politicians seek to increase the wealth of the nation; they should seek also to increase the personal capacity of its citizens.

Education is critical to developing resilience, so we funded initiatives focused on areas that could make a difference. We provided parents with an early years service guarantee, and by 2018 Newham was the only local authority with no attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers at age 5.

We agreed with the very capable (even if Conservative) schools minister, Nick Gibb, to run a phonics pilot. In tandem, we introduced a reading guarantee that any child falling behind would get one-to-one tuition, funded by the council from outside the education budget. As a result, 83 per cent of children caught up and stayed caught up.

And we introduced the “every child programme”, providing free access to sports, theatre, chess and music. Every primary pupil was taught to play a musical instrument to grade 1. Our objective was to develop resilience by building skills for life, and 50,000 children benefited.

So we have a radical suggestion for the next government: let schools run things their way. Agree on outcomes, then monitor those outcomes, and incentivise and support schools to deliver them. They will.

We have the novel idea that reducing bureaucracy (including Ofsted) and freeing teachers to do the job they are paid to do – teach – might well lead to better, richer outcomes.

One thing is certain. We can't afford more of the same.



# 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.

## CAROLINE BARLOW

Headteacher, Heathfield Community College



## RUTH WHYMARK

Senior vice-principal and head of primary, Doha College, Qatar



## Why the Great Debate must now yield a Great Consensus

**Politicians are welcome into the "secret garden" of education, say Caroline Barlow and Ruth Whymark, but could they please tend to it regularly...**

Jim Callaghan's 1976 Ruskin College speech heralded the irreversible entry of politicians into the "secret garden" of education. The speech started a Great Debate that still rages, and since Callaghan's warning that politicians would no longer "keep off the grass", they have not simply strolled upon it, but rolled up their sleeves and rotavated the entire landscape.

Callaghan wasn't wrong about the problems, but what was once a commitment to increase quality, accountability and outcomes now places schools at the mercy of a perennial pendulum of extremes. It may not be possible or even desirable to keep the politicians off the grass, but to ensure sustainable growth we need to stop stomping on it.

For the sake of education, it's time the Great Debate yielded to a Great Consensus. The profession is crying out for long-term vision that aligns talent, encourages retention

and prevents the cycle of wasted funding created by frequently changing focus.

When political leadership and professional praxis align, we see marked improvement for young people. Significant focus on reading and phonics to improve reading has been a policy priority under different governments since 2006, and the results are clear. Whether an equivalent drive on reading for pleasure and fluency could or should have complemented it is up for grabs, but we shouldn't argue against the facts for the sake of politics.

Equally, and rightly, no one is seriously championing a return to the hoop-jumping of national curriculum levels or away from a focus on curriculum quality. The interpretation and implementation of these shifts has led to issues we are still unpicking, but a steady political hand on the tiller could see us iron those out for the better of all schools.

However, it is certainly true that schools have been subject to frequent, politically driven and unnecessary intervention in their pedagogical practices. Improvement here is driven by consistency too. But more than



Jim Callaghan

**“ Children start school with gaps many never close**

that, it's about alignment with values and context. The positive commitment to knowledge-rich has arguably made that harder. For example, the removal of explicit focus on racial and ethnic diversity in new GCSEs means this now often has to be covered in additional modules or extra-curricular experiences.

Assessment shapes practice, and while the move away from modular exams to high-stakes assessment may have reduced gaming, it has created other problems. Year 11s this summer had upwards of 27 exams. Many face repeated resits of the same GCSE maths and English that some argue is a questionable way to prepare them for their futures. Add to these the arbitrary selection of subjects for EBacc that prefers Latin over modern foreign languages and disincentivises creative arts, and a rich curriculum begins to look like a narrow entitlement for an exclusive segment of the population.

All of which adds up to growing disparity between what schools are equipping young people to do and what a broad economy requires of them. This is crucial as we look towards a green and digital future.

At the other end of the educational journey, early years remains a wholly marketised sector that delivers unequal results based on parents' ability to pay. Children start school with gaps many never manage to close. There is surely space for political focus and consensus here.

We have successfully established common ground over the value of research-informed practice. We are blessed with innovative, principled leaders who have proven their credibility in times of national emergency. If we are not careful, political micro-management will have caused great swathes of them to give up.

Our young people don't need adults shouting pedagogical principles at each other. They need grown-ups to agree a common basis for what the reception class of 2023 will need over the next 13 years, what they can afford to resource, and how they will hold schools accountable for results.

Politicians are welcome in the garden. It would be nice if they watered it and pushed the lawnmower from time to time instead of routinely digging up the flowerbeds.

Alamy

# Opinion

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



## HELEN JOYCE

Author, Trans: *When ideology meets reality* and director of advocacy, Sex Matters

### Gender guidance delays are letting schools and pupils down

**The DfE's long delay in publishing guidance for schools on sex and gender leaves schools teaching fiction as fact, argues Helen Joyce**

Many Schools Week readers have probably listened to the recording of a teacher at Rye College arguing with two pupils about sex and gender identity. In it, she says there are three sexes, male, female and "intersex"; that thinking that a female body makes you a girl and a male body makes you a boy is "despicable"; that she is reporting the girls for these views and they should consider moving school.

Much of the commentary has focused on the pupils' *reductio ad absurdum*: if a child can identify as the opposite sex or as no sex ("non-binary"), why not as an animal? It's a good question – and telling that the teacher is unable to answer without bluster and threats – but the resulting partisan media storm, including in these pages last week, is a distraction.

Obviously, the teacher's response fell below expected professional standards. Even so, I feel sorry for her. She sounds like she is trying to regurgitate half-understood nonsense from an INSET while avoiding saying anything that might get her denounced as a bigot.

And that's the result of a bigger, more systemic failure: the DfE's years-long delay in publishing guidance for schools on sex and gender. Expected this week, it has been delayed again.

What precisely are schools supposed to teach children about the contested notion of "gender identity"? And how are they to accommodate pupils who do not identify as their biological sex?

Leaders and teachers are left to make decisions on questions so polarising that they risk ending up in a social-media storm. Meanwhile, LGBT lobby groups have stepped in with proprietary lesson plans that in many cases play fast and loose with biological fact and UK law.

Some make outlandish assertions. One is that biological sex is a social construct; in fact, it evolved 1.2 billion years ago, predating humans. Another is that sex is "assigned at birth"; in fact, it's fixed at conception and medical professionals merely record it at birth.

Some children are taught that there are more than two sexes or that sex is a spectrum. The Rye College teacher seems to be repeating a common claim that "intersex" conditions – an umbrella term for about 40 disorders of sex development (DSDs) – constitute a third sex. In fact, DSDs are



### Lesson plans play fast and loose with biological fact

sex-specific. Sex is a reproductive category, and since humans produce precisely two types of gamete, there are precisely two sexes.

Among the legal misapprehensions promoted by some of these groups is that "sex" in law means "gender identity" – that is, whichever sex you identify with, independent of your biology. In fact, the well-established common-law meaning of sex is that it is male or female, determined by your body type.

Another is that the protected characteristic of "gender reassignment" in the Equality Act means schools must allow pupils to use whichever single-sex facilities match their stated identity. But gender reassignment is a separate characteristic from sex, intended to protect trans-identified people from discrimination. It does not change a person's sex for any legal purpose.

Influenced by all this misrepresentation, many schools present non-belief in "gender

identity" as bigotry, despite such non-belief being expressly protected in anti-discrimination law.

About half do not inform parents if their child expresses a cross-sex identification at school. More than a quarter have replaced single-sex toilets with mixed-sex, and more still have made the facilities de facto mixed-sex by telling trans-identified pupils to use facilities intended for the sex they identify as.

If press leaks are to be believed, the DfE's draft guidance will tell schools that they must not allow children of one sex to use facilities designated for the other, and that they must inform parents if their child identifies as transgender unless they have good evidence that this would put the child at risk.

But until the DfE publishes it, education professionals are teaching lessons and enforcing rules that contradict UK law – and scientific fact.

# Opinion

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

**Tom Rees and Ben Newmark set out how they would articulate what a good life is – and should be – for all children**

Education does not work well enough for children who find learning difficult. This isn't new. Since the beginning of mass schooling, it has struggled with the challenge of including all children in a positive and meaningful way.

Previous efforts to address today seem shocking. Even in the past 50 years, children were sometimes put in asylums or institutions instead of schools.

Over time, through changes to law and inclusion, the right of all children to a high-quality education until at least the age of 16 has been established. Things should now be better than ever.

Notwithstanding this progress, our special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system is in crisis. There is no alternative way to describe a part of our education system that, despite unprecedented funding, is not working for children, families or schools.

We must accept that our schools are not supportive enough to those who find learning hardest, and that the status quo is neither effective nor sustainable.

Increased debate on SEND provision has followed the publication of the DfE's green paper last year and its national improvement plan in March. These were refreshing in their honesty about the level of dissatisfaction with the current system.

But there is a more fundamental challenge to address: SEND remains framed within a deficit narrative, and conceptualises greater difficulty in learning as something broken that needs to be fixed.

If we are to take this opportunity as society to think again about the place

**BEN  
NEWMARK**

Teacher, school leader and parent



**TOM  
REES**

Executive director of programmes, Ambition Institute



## Five principles to transform our broken SEND system

for those who find learning harder, we have to be able to make a fuller and more inclusive articulation of what a good life is, and what it could be.

Since publishing a paper on this topic last year, with the support of the Confederation of School Trusts and Ambition Institute, we've worked with specialists, schools and trusts to develop five principles we hope can underpin better inclusion in schools.

We chose principles over policy

experiences.

But we can all start, even in small ways, by being the change we want to see.

### Dignity, not deficit

Difference and disability are normal aspects of humanity. Children who find learning difficult should have an education characterised by dignity and high expectation, not deficit and medicalisation.

“ **Success does not look the same for all children** ”

suggestions because top-down changes can take years to decide and – as those familiar with the law around SEND will know – they do not guarantee improvements to children's

### Different, but not apart

Encountering difference builds an inclusive society. Children with different learning needs should grow up together.



### Success in all its forms

Success does not look the same for all children. We should value and celebrate a wide range of achievements and experiences, including different ways of participating in society.

### Rights, not charity

Education is a right, not just an act of kindness. All children deserve a high-quality education from expert professionals trained to meet their needs.

### Action at all levels

Change isn't only the responsibility of government or system leaders. Everyone has the agency and a responsibility to act.

We've spent the past year seeking out places of high standards and hope, where it is good to be a child who finds learning harder. We will be publishing a second paper sharing examples of what these principles look like in practice.

This work aims to give leaders who want their schools to be more inclusive somewhere to start, to help teachers better support pupils for whom learning can often feel a battle, and lead to more children and families feeling positive about education and their lives beyond school.

None of this is easy; there are tensions within the system that can incentivise exclusionary practice. League tables, accountability and lack of funding can make it feel hard for schools to be the organisations they really want to be. But these principles, and those who exemplify them, show us that better is already happening.

If it's possible for some, then it's possible for more. Maybe even possible for all.



# Opinion

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



## ADAM SELDON

Head of history  
at a London school

### Behaviour management is essential - but insufficient

**A fixation on behaviour management can be a distraction from embedding our values in a way that would make the biggest sustainable difference, says Adam Seldon**

Kurt Lewin, considered the founder of social psychology, ran an experiment involving two classrooms of teenagers run under different teaching philosophies. The “democratic” style was co-operative and less aggressive; the “authoritarian” style achieved more work, but chaos ensued when the teacher left the room.

During a temporary stint in the private sector following my formative years in the secondary state sector, I was struck by pupils left alone in classrooms. “Are they allowed to be in there?” I asked. “Of course,” my manager replied. How many state schools would do the same?

I expect most state teachers would not leave pupils, at least not for very long. This reflects the dominant behaviour management paradigm in schools. While not authoritarian, it is very contingent on the authority of the teacher.

Whether behaviour has declined since Covid is contested. Common chatter claims it has. But Teacher Tapp analysis shows behaviour

issues were no worse in 2022 than 2018. Regardless, a persistent finding is that behaviour is an issue nationally. One report shows half of teachers in poorer areas expect behaviour to affect learning, as do a third in wealthier areas.

Meanwhile, attendance is an unambiguous post-Covid issue. The average pre-Covid was 5 per cent of classroom time missed. Now it’s closer to 9 per cent.

So what policy context could a new government set for schools beyond endorsing “no excuses” and “silent corridors”?

The problem may be an over-reliance on behaviour management. These techniques cannot foster a whole-school community identity in which pupils feel they belong. By contrast, a strong school culture that develops resilience among pupils is more likely to support attendance and foster a sense of community.

Behaviour management principles such as routines, consistent systems, sanctions and rewards play an essential role in ensuring order. But they are not enough. The tyranny of techniques that behaviour management relies on means it is a fragile tool where pupils are cajoled into behaviours almost unthinkingly.

Where problems occur, the focus is on how teachers can



“ Its techniques offer little to develop peer culture

improve or how systems can be tweaked. Behaviour management can maintain order, but doesn’t necessarily develop characters sustainably. A change – such as a cover teacher or a new teacher – can precipitate a system collapse.

We should be unapologetically ambitious for pupils, not just for their academic outcomes but who they are as people. A common refrain among teachers is how levels of disrespect have increased. Sometimes schools can be bereft of basic civility. Rather than constantly reacting to behaviour, more could be done to upstream the issue, to consider how to get pupils to behave in the long term, to nurture virtues as citizens beyond the school gates.

State schools often have worthwhile values plastered on the school or website, but behaviour management distracts from thinking about how such values can be meaningfully embedded in daily experience. They should be leaned into so pupils become part of a powerful school culture in which they choose to behave primarily because it is the right

thing to do, rather than for fear of punishment.

Graham Nuttall observed that “when there is a clash between the peer culture and the teacher’s management procedures, the peer culture wins every time”. Behaviour management offers little to develop peer culture. Schools could think more strategically on how to use pupils to positively influence their peers.

Recently, my school ran a week focused on gratitude during which pupils gave speeches in assemblies. One pupil, who struggles behaviourally, thanked a teacher she clashes with for their care. This expression of thanks, in front of peers, generated a special moment with lasting impact beyond the hall.

Schools have a responsibility to cultivate citizens of good character. Ideally, we want to be able to trust pupils to be alone in the classroom because of what it says about them as people and their relationship to their community. It prepares them for their future without a teacher to correct them when they get things wrong.

# THE REVIEW

## WHAT DO NEW TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW?

**Author:** Peter Foster

**Publisher:** Routledge

**Publication date:** April 2023

**ISBN:** 1032250488

**Reviewer:** Robbie Burns, assistant vice-principal, Bede Academy

Teaching is hard no matter how long you've been doing it. We perpetually remain perplexed by the mistakes pupils make, the answers they give, or their ability to consistently misunderstand a lesson.

It is also decision-dense. Thirty young minds, all with varying levels of attention, prior knowledge and motivation, are responding to a question. You may have streamlined the way you check their understanding, but you can never be fully certain. Essentially, we are teaching in the dark: we will never truly know the minds of our pupils in any sort of depth. And yet we try.

But cast your mind back to when you started. Remember for a moment how it felt to stand before a struggling set of year 7s or a rambunctious group of year 3s with deep dread as you tried to recall something, anything, that would help you.

That feeling doesn't happen often any more, but I wish there had been resources to help me feel more prepared. Equally, I wish there were resources now to help me understand my progress, and help me streamline my personal reflection and learning. In lieu of the latter, I'm pleased new teachers at least will be able to draw on Peter Foster's attempt to fill that gap.

*What Do New Teachers Need to Know?* is pitched as a roadmap to growing in knowledge as a teacher, and in turn to develop expertise. But while you wouldn't expect a principle-led book based on the title, you don't find a tips-and-tricks compilation of strategies either. Rather, it is squarely focused on providing a

cohesive overarching structure to the sorts of knowledge teachers need and what they are made up of.

It's a far-sighted glimpse through the fog of knowledge that surrounds teacher development. The programmes that have taken hold of the discourse of initial teacher training emphasise technique over curriculum and subject learning. If not guided well, this can lead new teachers to struggle in the absence of structures. It also can lead to patchy, uncertain growth in important areas rather than the thoughtful development we should want for them.

With this in mind, the six sections of this book outline the scope and sequence of knowledge every teacher needs, among them pedagogical knowledge, subject knowledge and knowledge of pupils. Each chapter in each section asks a pertinent question each of us ought to have a good answer to. From there, Foster offers actions, reflective tasks and further reading.

I can see this as a useful framework and resource for new teachers, mentors and teacher developers alike. Some of the recent, hotly contested debates around curriculum and use of research are well synthesised and balanced, alongside perceptive comments on the most important things to focus on as a new teacher.

Foster brings a humility and wisdom to the way he writes as he laces the narrative with stories from his own career, such as his interview for an assistant headteacher post, or when his pupils in the corridor used a 3, 2, 1

BOOK

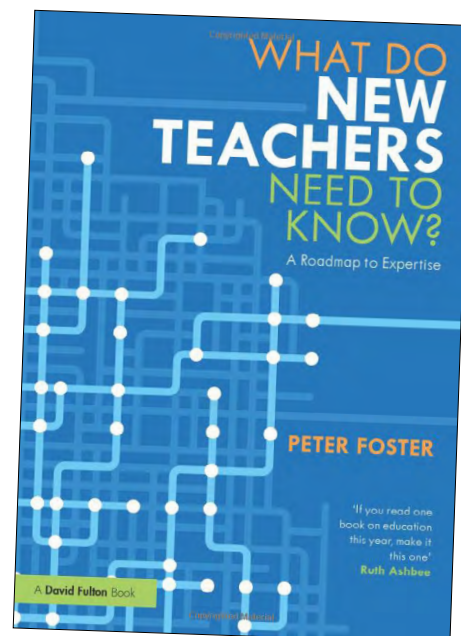
TV

FILM

RADIO

EVENT

RESOURCE



countdown with him. He also draws on case studies from other teachers across the ages and phases, and their own reflections.

It would be easy to criticise *What Do New Teachers Need to Know?* for omissions of contemporary issues or specific situations, theories or policies. But as Foster notes in his conclusion, the point of the book is not to be an exhaustive compendium of content. Rather, it is to identify the key areas of knowledge that will "set new teachers down the path where no mentor can't join them".

By parting the fog and pointing down the right road to take us towards expertise, he has achieved just that. And the result can only be to help more teachers weather those first months and years, at least until they realise some things don't get easier – and that's OK.



Rating



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



**Sarah Gallagher**  
Headteacher,  
Snape Primary  
School and PGCE  
tutor, University of  
Cambridge



**GLOBAL**  
**ED**  
**LEADERS**  
with Shane Leaning



**SENDcast**  
THE  
**SPECIAL**  
**NEEDS**  
PODCAST

### LISTENING BOOKS

I have to confess: we don't use listening books in our school. Having heard Louise Baring from Listening Books discuss the charity with the hosts of *The IncludED Conversation* podcast, we will from now on. What a world of reading opportunities this can open up to children who may not find it easy to pick up a book and read to themselves.

The inclusive opportunities are wide-ranging. What struck me was to what extent children who are not able to read with ease and who are not growing up hearing stories, miss out on being children.

Here, Baring explains that the charity is always adding to the range of fiction and non-fiction texts on offer and how easy it is to give children logins to listen at home without comprising GDPR. Sign me up!



**The IncludED**®  
**Conversation**  
Expert insights on inclusive practice for all

### LEANING INTO WELLBEING

This is a pertinent podcast from Shane Leaning, talking about his own mental health and stresses in his teaching life. Leaning teaches abroad and discusses the stresses inherent in that work, including cultural nuances, parental expectations and language barriers. But it wasn't this context that struck me the most; rather, it was his way of dealing with his own need to take a break.

He makes an interesting point worthy of consideration as we approach the summer: that it's an opportunity to work on what we love most instead of stopping altogether. Our identities are tightly intertwined with our roles in education, and I took heart from his suggestion of not giving up on a "passion project", whether you've signed off for the holidays or have been signed off from stress.

Doing the thing he loves most, Leaning says, is helping him to manage his feelings and helping him to recover and heal. It is also reigniting his passion for education, breaking the association of teaching with stress. I love the idea of pursuing passion projects, resting, and reigniting our fire for September.

### WEATHER WITH YOU

Another protective measure for wellbeing is to try to mitigate the stress of the lead-in to the holidays. The summer term is a time when energy levels ebb and tempers can flare. In that context, it's easy to forget how powerful our interactions with children and young people are. Meaningful, warm interactions can change the weather for a young person, so it's all the more important that we are not unintentionally sharp with them.

In this podcast, SENCO Ginny Bootman chats with Dale Pickles about the power of those seemingly incidental conversations. It's a powerful reminder of the important role we play in children's lives. I always tell my trainees in September that we might be the only adult who "sees" that child when they come into school and we must make it count. Come July, it's harder to sustain being the sunny weather in their lives, but sustain it we must, especially for those whose lives are otherwise cloudy.


### EQUALITY. DIVERSITY. LEGALITY?

And finally, this blog from Carole Green is a timely intervention as we make our plans for the next academic year. Here, she makes the point that, although all schools are required to publish an equality statement, it doesn't mean they are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in practical terms.

Given time pressures on our roles, it's easy to make meeting legal requirements the goal in itself. The act of even gathering enough survey responses alone can seem a Herculean task, which means the insightful part that comes from truly listening to our school communities can get lost. It's all well and good issuing questionnaires and surveys, but worth little if we don't follow up by making time to feed back on the results and make changes accordingly.

Green makes the point that, in order to drive improvement, it is imperative that we truly value people's input. She also reminds us of the importance of involving young people to ensure genuine engagement.

Perhaps that should be the passion project for this summer.

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



# The Knowledge

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



## Supporting pupils with symptomatic hypermobility

**Jane Green MBE, chair, SEDSConnective**

The idea that something physical is in particular affecting neurodivergent children and young people seems strange. Yet the evidence is growing. We know that neurodivergent people are more than twice as likely than the general population to be joint hypermobile, with serious consequences.

Models, approaches and interventions with neurodivergent young people traditionally tend to be emotional, sensory and mental health-focused. Yet their outcomes are staying the same or worsening, particularly with regards to attendance.

### Diagnosis issues and/or symptom disbelief

Neurodivergent young people are at greater risk of symptomatic hypermobility (SH) issues and pain-related conditions. Sadly, many health care professionals lack awareness, and this leads to diagnostic overshadowing (the assumption that a patient's complaint is due to their other diagnoses rather than fully investigating the symptoms). This can result in misdiagnosis or underdiagnosis, and not being believed can lead to further trauma.

Symptoms of SH include joint pain, gastrointestinal and stomach pain, reflux, bowel and bladder issues, and extreme tiredness. Often these symptoms, including migraines and "anxiety", are attributed to neurodivergence, overlooking co-occurring physical health challenges.

At best, this results in support and interventions with no effect on their pain. At worst, it can exacerbate prior psychiatric conditions (depression/anxiety) or cause trauma. Indeed, anxiety itself can be directly and physically linked to SH because of laxity in connective tissues.

### Educational impact

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Bethany Donaghy, David Moore and I found in our topical review that neurodivergent young people's experience of pain is likely to affect their ability to engage in their education. Not only can the pain result in missed days at school, but fatigue and "brain fog" can lead to poorer concentration when they do attend.

Their pain is often attributed to growing



## 'Instead of pain, they may express sadness'

pains, particularly in secondary school. This undermines a young person's agency and self-belief, and can have lasting effects through adulthood. Pupils learn to mask their pain, which increases the likelihood that co-occurring psychiatric conditions will arise. Instead of pain, they may express sadness. As pain turns to fatigue, they may display anger. Treating the sadness doesn't help, and sanctions for anger make things worse.

And because their needs aren't recognised, their absences tend not to be authorised. This alienates the family too, who spend their time between outpatient appointments and school attendance meetings.

Meanwhile, the documented symptoms relating to emotional-based school avoidance (EBSA), particularly for autistic young people, are stomach ache, poor digestion, racing heart, tiredness, headaches and anxiety.

Communication issues, including differences in interoception, an inner sense, verbal and non-verbal communication – as well as emotional and behavioural displays as "masking" – mean these pupils are often misunderstood. As a result, too many do not receive the help and support they need for their physical health problems, affecting their attendance and ultimately their attainment in mainstream schools, as well as their social lives.

### Recommendations

Neurodivergent young people with hypermobility can excel in certain areas of learning or sport. Pacing is key. While a pupil may be running in the playground or in PE, they may very well need a lift pass or a wheelchair on the same day.

To uncover their talents and to support them to thrive, our paper offers a range of recommendations. These include being flexible with recording attendance (particularly with regards to requesting medical evidence for absence), making use of blended learning capabilities for continuity of learning, and flexibility of timetabling around any return to school.

We also make recommendations for pain management, learning environments, staff training, and diagnostic and treatment pathways. Underpinning all of them is the need to include the voices of children and young people in applying them in your setting.

And finally, health care has yet to catch up, let alone education. Therefore, any opportunity to advocate for dual screening for hypermobility with neurodivergence can only lead to greater awareness and understanding, and ultimately to better support.

# OFFERING YOU MORE

## BTEC Tech Awards

**W**e've heard you. You want more time to prepare and deliver the BTEC Tech Awards 2022 series. That's why we delivered extensions with you in mind, ensuring your learners get their results on time and hold onto their retake opportunities.

At Pearson BTEC, we understand with as with any transition, there are bound to be some growing pains, and we recognize that the BTEC Tech Awards 2022 series has brought changes compared to the Legacy BTEC Tech Awards.

### More time to teach

One key concern that we heard from our customers was the need for more time to effectively mark learner work. We understand the pressures you and your learners have been under in adopting new qualifications this year, the ongoing importance of thorough evaluation and the impact it can have on learner success.

In response to your feedback, we extended the marking submission deadline for the May assessments. This extension provided you with more time to deliver accurate assessments, while ensuring your learners will get their results on time and hold onto their retake opportunities in the next assessment series.

We also recognise that teachers require ample time to prepare and deliver the BTEC Tech Awards effectively. To maintain this additional time to prepare, deliver and mark going forward, we will be releasing all Pearson Set Assignments one month earlier from September\*.

*\* This does not apply to Art and Design Practice or Performing Arts.*

### Early Moderator Feedback – Giving you a heads up that you won't find anywhere else

We are the only provider that gives you moderator feedback reports well in advance of results, and the opportunity to submit mark adjustments if you wish to.

Early feedback gives you a valuable indication of what's to come on Results Day so you can



avoid any surprises and allows you take the feedback onboard during the series, when it is most relevant to you and your learners. This can help you to improve the accuracy of marking immediately and sets you up better for the next assessment.

### Getting results on time

Our ultimate goal is to ensure that your learners receive their results on time and can hold onto their retake opportunities. We know that timely results are critical as they allow students to confidently progress and understand how to improve. With our carefully considered extensions and support measures, we are dedicated to helping you maintain the highest quality standards and fairness for your learners regardless of when they sit the assessments.

We encourage you to reach out to our support team with any questions, concerns, or suggestions you may have.

### Wales, we have you covered

We have previously provided Welsh language versions of the Specifications and Sample Assessment Materials for each of our 9 Tech Award subjects offered in Wales.

From this December/January series, learners will be able to sit and respond to the live Component 1 assessments in Welsh\*. We will

offer Component 2 assessments in Welsh from May/June 2024 and the first Welsh external assessments in January 2025.

*\* For Art and Design Practice, Component 1 will be available in Welsh from May/June 2024 series as there is no December/January series.*

### Supporting you as you teach

Our Subject Advisors are by your side, every step of the way. You can book an informal appointment, call or email directly, or follow them on social media.

You can also lighten the load with Training from Pearson and get expert guidance and practical support from training events which count towards CPD.

Discover how we are offering you more

#OfferingYouMore

 **Pearson**  
**BTEC**



# Research

The last word of every *Schools Week* edition is often the first you'll hear of new educational research that goes on to make a big impact. Here are five of this year's must-reads

## Five research findings that improved our knowledge this year

JL Dutaut, commissioning editor, *Schools Week*

### The ECF requires improvement

The year started with a report from Teacher Tapp and the Gatsby Foundation looking into how the early career framework is panning out. Pouring cold water on the government's hopes that the ECF would offer a solution to the profession's perpetual (and worsening) retention crisis, Becky Allen said: "Our survey responses suggest that it isn't having much of an effect so far in that respect".

Her suggestions for improving the ECF included reducing the amount of repetition in the content with initial teacher training and adapting it to the needs of specific phases and subjects.

But it wasn't all bad news, and Allen had a word of caution for the Labour party as they draw up their manifesto: "Just one-in-ten say they would entirely scrap the reforms."

While there may not be much policy makers can ultimately do to make the first years of teaching more survivable, she adds, policy makers should continue to "make them the best they can".

### Teacher-mums worst impacted by Covid

In November, a report from UCL's institute of education revealed the impact of the pandemic on teachers' and schools leaders' mental health. A key finding set out by John Jerrim was that anxiety was not evenly distributed among the profession, with differences seen across roles, school types, gender and parental status.

From a pre-pandemic baseline of 25 per cent, the proportion of headteachers' reporting high levels of anxiety reached a peak of 65 per cent in January 2021. No guesses why. Meanwhile, the percentage of assistants and deputies who aspired to headship dropped from 56 per cent to 48 per cent – a concern amid leadership retention woes.

As is so often the case, it was women who suffered the worst of the impact, and mothers of young children worst of all. From a similar pre-pandemic baseline, "women with under-fives



became much more anxious about work than male teachers with under-fives". Proof if needed that gender disparity isn't just about pay.

### Pay drives recruitment and retention (Duh!)

"The government faces difficult choices in the weeks ahead. In January," concluded NFER's Jack Worth in January. Six months on – as we still await publication of the STRB report, a new wave of strikes rolls over the sector, and Rishi Sunak ponders ignoring the STRB's recommendations anyway – the evidence presented here bears revisiting.

The key factor for pay to affect recruitment and retention, Worth explains, is the increase in teacher pay relative to the 'outside option'. This means whether better remuneration is available elsewhere or the differential gap between teaching and other options shrinks, making a stressful job less appealing.

At the time, OBR was forecasting a 4.2 per cent increase in average earnings. Since then, the bottom has dropped out of recruitment and retention at all levels.

### Appetite for collaboration

In April, University of Manchester's Mel Ainscow and Manchester Institute of Education's Paul Armstrong revealed their new research into how local area partnerships were overcoming the unhelpful barriers caused by competition in the

school system.

With encouraging signs that "there remains a strong appetite in the field to engage in collaboration", they set out recommendations including better use of richer data at a local level to interpret and contextualise school performance.

As Amanda Spielman was announcing that Ofsted would be making changes in response to the sector's outcry after the death of Ruth Perry, Ainscow and Armstrong suggested fundamental reform in favour of place-based accountability.

### Hubs help isolated schools

The changes announced since haven't delivered what the Mancunian researchers hoped for, but there were signs of positive action within our existing frameworks as the theme of local partnerships returned to The Knowledge in June.

Plymouth Marjon University's Tanya Ovenden-Hope set out the results of research into a MAT using a hub model to support and empower educationally isolated schools. The small, geographical groups resulted in "non-judgmental, local peer support" which was seen to improve staff development and resource sharing, including teachers.

With lessons from what didn't work so well, Ovenden-Hope's research shows that the MAT model can offer a better deal for isolated communities who highly prize these schools.





# Diversity count

## Why we must do more than reflect the profession as it is

**JL DUTAUT**  
@DUTAUT

Schools Week's opinion pages have grown. A sign that we are a trusted source of views as well as news, readers have come to expect a broad range of the best-informed and hottest takes on educational issues.

That's fantastic news all round and means we can cover a much wider set of issues, from the classroom to the boardroom, but it makes it all the more important that we also represent the diversity of people who make up the education sector.

### Racial representation

This year, the proportion of contributing authors in our back pages from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds has held up to the high levels achieved last year when, from 260 contributors, 55 were BAME (21.2 per cent). This year, it's 61 from 282 (21.6 per cent).

Three editions have had no BAME expert contributors this year, and one has had more BAME writers than white ones. I would be over the moon to feature an all-BAME line-up soon.

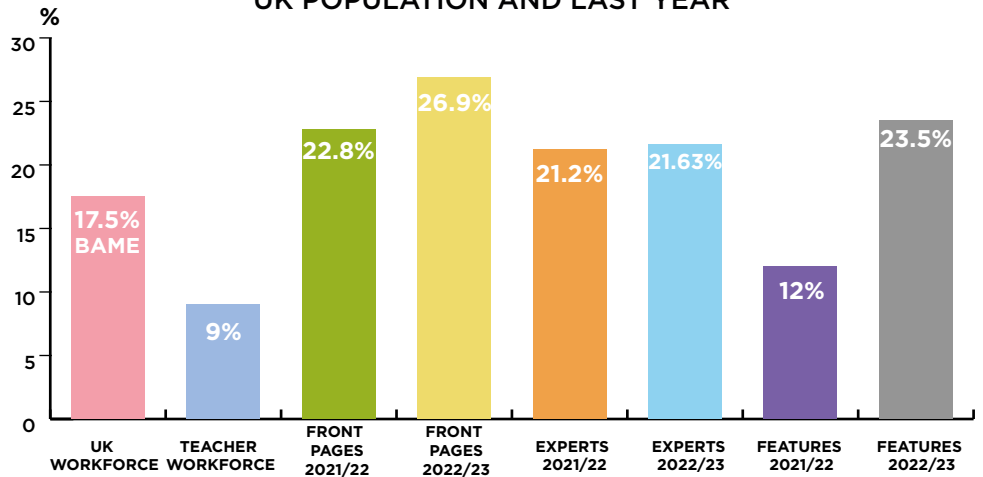
Racial disparities in the teacher workforce remain a driving factor to ensure we play our full part in normalising and celebrating the contribution of BAME staff to the sector. That means it's about more than numbers, and I'm pleased to say that minority ethnic contributors are writing for us on a broader range of topics, too.

This is reflected in our front pages, where only the most relevant and newsworthy stories make a splash. This year, of 104 faces that appeared on our front page, 28 were of people from BAME backgrounds, or 26.9 per cent (up from 22.8 per cent last year).

It's good news for our lead features too. We've re-structured our roles to provide more of the in-depth, ground-breaking investigations you expect from us. We've featured twice as many people as when our lead features were dominated by individual profiles (85 this year against 43 last year), and the proportion of BAME contributors has very nearly doubled (from 12 per cent to 23.5).

We won't rest until these numbers are reflective

**BAME REPRESENTATION IN SCHOOLS WEEK COMPARED TO UK POPULATION AND LAST YEAR**



of the teaching profession as it should be – inclusive and recruiting, retaining and promoting BAME teachers in line with or above the national workforce. Even then, the argument for over-representation will remain a compelling one.

### Gender representation

Where we must redouble our efforts is in the representation of women. While our front pages have featured a larger proportion of women (58.5 per cent, up from 43.9), the same has not been true either among our expert contributors or our lead features.

Last year, our opinion writers were 59 per cent female. This year, that's down to 53 per cent. Of our 35 editions, 15 have had more female contributors than men, one of which had an all-female roster. That leaves 20 editions where men outnumbered women.

In part, this may be down to an unrepresentative new tranche of the workforce in the form of MAT leadership teams, where women fill only 32 per

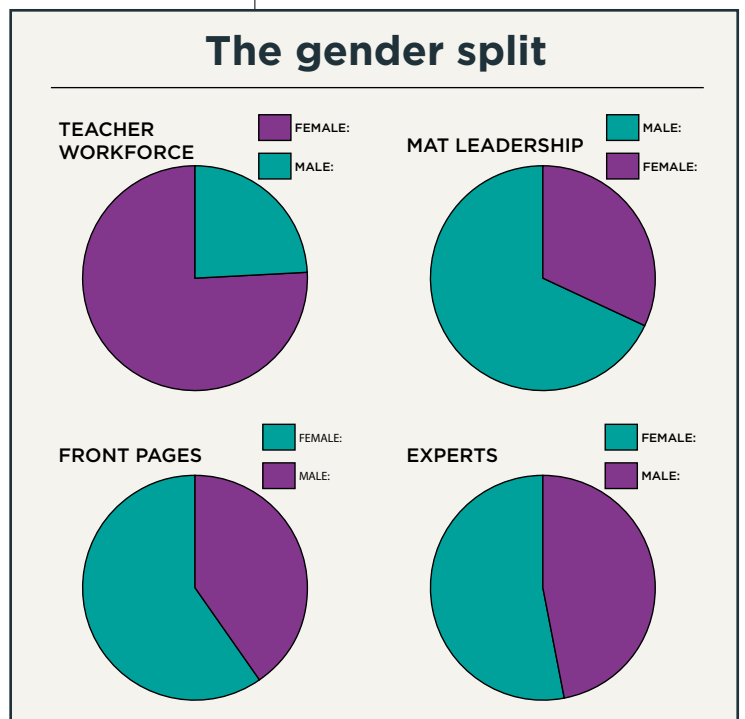
cent of the top jobs.

Nowhere does this apply more than our lead features, where the proportion of women has also fallen – from 53 per cent to 43.5 per cent.

Diversity also covers other protected characteristics, and this year we have published gay and lesbian writers, a transgender expert and people with disabilities.

As ever, we aim to hold ourselves more accountable, and part of the solution is to better record diversity in our pages ongoingly. I commit to doing so.

### The gender split



# 10 things

## you probably wouldn't know if *Schools Week* hadn't told you

### 1 THE GREAT SEND SCHOOL ROBBERY

Scores of cash-strapped councils were not handing on millions of pounds in school funding uplifts to special schools. Our investigation led to government cracking down to fix the loophole.

### 2 OFSTED ADMITS ITS COMPLAINTS POLICY 'ISN'T WORKING'

Back in January we revealed Ofsted was overhauling its under-fire complaints process, which became a key policy as part of its promise to change after the death of headteacher Ruth Perry.

### 3 SCHOOL WORKLOAD CRISIS EXPOSED IN LEAKED DFE REPORT

Ministers tried their best to hide their own damning survey on just how bad workload was amid the teacher strikes. But we managed to get a leaked copy, showing two in five school leaders worked 60-hour weeks.



### 4 THE BROKEN LINK BETWEEN EXAM RESULTS AND OFSTED RATINGS

Our investigation, for the first time, showed how good exam results no longer guaranteed a top Ofsted score as curriculums took centre stage in inspections.

### 5 HOME EDUCATION SOARS IN WAKE OF PANDEMIC

We put freedom of information requests to all 153 councils across the country to reveal how home education had soared since Covid. Ministers are still dawdling on the promised home education register.

### 6 SCHOOLS CAN'T KEEP THEIR HEADS

Teacher retention has become a key issue for schools and government. Working alongside SchoolDash, we revealed back in October that headteacher turnover had risen by more than a third since before the pandemic.

### 7 OFSTED WAS AWARE OF 'GAMING' SCHOOL INSPECTION ALERTS

A months-long investigation revealed how schools have been able to predict when Ofsted will visit for years by tracking website traffic. Ofsted knew, but did nothing. Government later told schools to stop.

### 8 POLICE PROBE STOLEN EXAM PAPERS

Three exam boards had been hit by cyber attacks, with police investigating. It is thought a hacker posed as a school to access exam papers over email and then sell them online.

### 9 REJECT FEWER TEACHER APPLICANTS, DFE TELLS TRAINERS

With analysis showing woeful teacher recruitment looks set to worsen, we found out the DfE was telling training providers to just reject fewer pupils as a way to keep numbers up.

### 10 COUNCIL-RUN TRUSTS PLAN AXED

As part of our 'White paper policy tracker', we revealed plans for council-led academy trusts had been ditched by Gillian Keegan. We also first reported the pledge of all-MATs by 2030 was gone, too.

CLICK ON THE SUBHEADINGS TO READ THE STORY





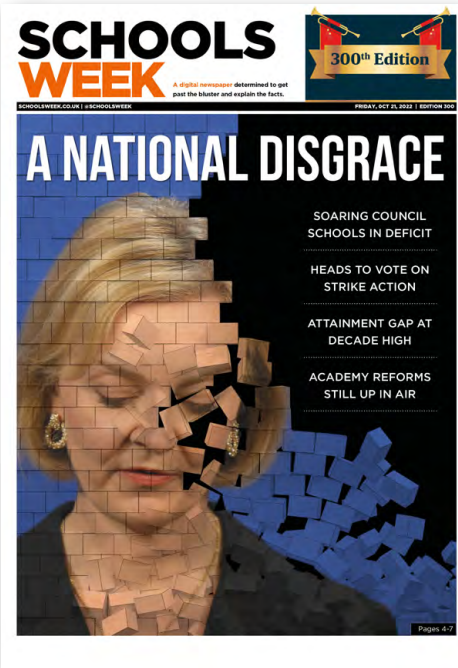
# Favourite front pages of the year

EDITION 294: SEPTEMBER 9, 2022



A genuine Hold the Front Page moment for our first edition back, when the Queen's death announced on Thursday evening caused us to run a commemorative front page.

EDITION 300: OCTOBER 21, 2022



While the ill-fated reign of Liz Truss came crashing down, school reforms were up in the air, deficits ballooning, heads considering strike action and the attainment gap at a 10-year high.

EDITION 304: NOVEMBER 25, 2022



An impactful front page for our investigations revealing how SEND pupils were being short-changed. Our Great SEND School Robbery campaign soon delivered change.

EDITION 311: FEBRUARY 3, 2023



As we predicted, the first strike of the year was 'just the start' with government talks breaking down and all unions again rebalancing for more industrial action.

EDITION 312: FEBRUARY 10, 2023



Symptomatic of the year that has been – lots of work spent on new policy was ditched after Gillian Keegan took an axe to the white paper and schools bill.

EDITION 317: MARCH 24, 2023



Three words that sum up a potentially defining year for the schools inspectorate. With a new government likely, could this be the start of wider accountability reform?



# Books to look forward to this summer and beyond

Twelve books set to make a splash in the coming months. Sit back, relax and be inspired – and contact [jl@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:jl@schoolsweek.co.uk) if you'd like to review one

## ACCOUNTABILITY

### Rethinking School Inspection – Is there a better way?

Tracey O'Brien  
John Catt  
July

An unprecedented range of voices are calling for school accountability reform. But what could a new system actually look like? Tracey O'Brien explores possible alternatives.

Informed by a wide range of sources on how school inspections are perceived

and portrayed, Rethinking School Inspection sets out how the model could be improved beyond the changes announced this term. A new HMCI and government are in the offing. This promises to be a timely intervention.



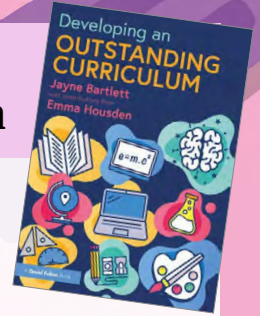
## ACCOUNTABILITY

### Developing an Outstanding Curriculum

Jayne Bartlett and Emma Housden  
Routledge  
August

Schools haven't been short of advice for developing their curriculum in response to Ofsted's new focus since 2019. And regardless of change at the top, curriculum will remain fundamental to the work of schools.

With practical strategies and examples to facilitate curriculum conversations within subject and senior leadership teams, Bartlett and Housden's book could be just the thing to read before the start of the autumn term.



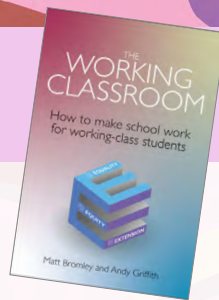
## CURRICULUM

### The Working Classroom

Matt Bromley and Andy Griffith  
Crown House  
October

The disadvantage gap continues to grow despite the government's investment in tuition as its main tool for post-Covid recovery and 'levelling up'. Teachers report worsening behaviour and attendance is languishing. Do we need to ask more fundamental questions about

curriculum? Bromley and Griffith join forces to offer practical strategies and tools to help secondary schools address the needs of working-class students.



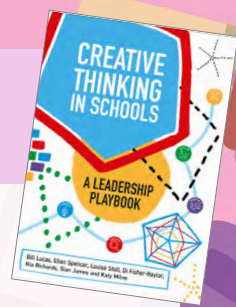
## CURRICULUM

### Creative Thinking in Schools

Bill Lucas and others  
Crown House  
OUT NOW

Timed to coincide with the publication of PISA's first ever test results on creativity, Lucas returns with an assembled cast of leading lights on creativity in education to focus on leadership that cultivates creative thinking in all aspects of school life and promotes creative learning habits in the classroom.

With forewords by Alison Peacock and Andreas Schleicher, and underpinned by research and analysis of practice in schools here and globally, the book promises a range of accessible resources, planning tools and practical examples to transform school cultures and practices.



## THE CHALKFACE

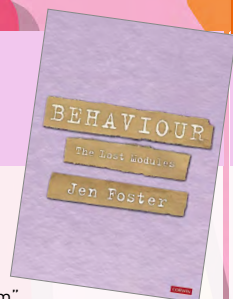
### Behaviour: The Lost Modules

Jen Foster  
SAGE  
October

Leaning in to her large following, edu-Instagram guru Foster came to the conclusion that the problem with behaviour isn't just the disruption, but teachers' lack of knowledge and training on how to manage it effectively.

This is her response, "the book you wish you had read before stepping

into a classroom". Designed by a primary teacher for primary teachers, it aims to bring together common sense, personal experiences and current research to support teachers to fill that gap in their professional knowledge.



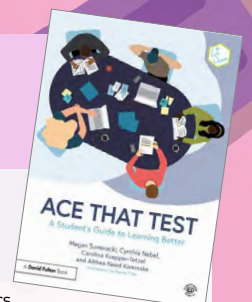
## THE CHALKFACE

### Ace That Test: A Student's Guide to Learning Better

Megan Sumeracki and others  
Routledge  
July

What students do outside of class can be just as important as how they are taught in ensuring their learning is ultimately reflected in their grades. But do students really know how to study? Do we explicitly teach them to?

*Ace That Test* offers evidence-based learning strategies they can use to boost the impact of their study, with concrete examples for each strategy, illustrations to leverage dual coding principles of learning, questions and activities for retrieval practice, and QR codes for supplemental material.



# Books to look forward to this summer and beyond

Twelve books set to make a splash in the coming months. Sit back, relax and be inspired – and contact [jl@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:jl@schoolsweek.co.uk) if you'd like to review one

## MIDDLE LEADERSHIP

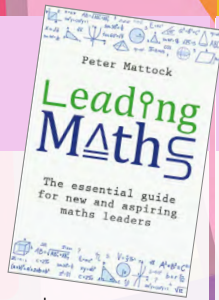
### Leading Maths

**Peter Mattock**  
Crown House  
October

As recruitment and retention flounder, more and more maths classrooms are being led by non-specialist teachers. Maths is rightly a political and economic priority for the country, but what is a maths leader to do?

With contributions from experienced maths practitioners, Mattock's *Leading*

*Maths* offers practical guidance and advice on how to approach maths leadership and how to deal with issues ranging from the day-to-day to results and accountability and from managing an inspection to developing improvement plans.



## MIDDLE LEADERSHIP

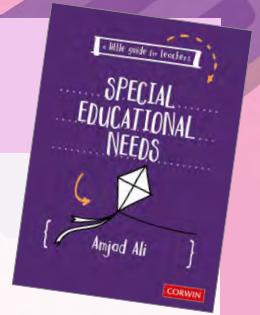
### A Little Guide for Teachers: SEND in School

**Amjad Ali**  
SAGE  
November

We now have a SEND and AP improvement plan, but the size of the crisis facing specialist and mainstream schools alike in the face of a rise in EHCPs and a chronic shortage of appropriate school places mean teachers need help now.

Teacher, trainer, senior leader, SENDCo and TedX speaker, Amjad Ali has a

long history of supporting schools with their SEND policies and practices. This, his first book, is aimed at providing that help. A primer on SEND and all of its attendant acronyms and a signpost to further reading and research, it's a book you can read in an afternoon, or come back to for activities and guidance.



## SENIOR LEADERSHIP

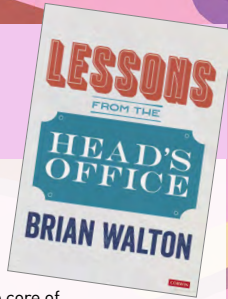
### Lessons from the Head's Office

**Brian Walton**  
SAGE  
Out now

Walton's book for headteachers by a headteacher promises to be a heart-warming summer read at the end of another challenging year.

As many have said in our pages this year, headship has changed fundamentally in the post-Covid age. Here, Walton sets

out to get to the core of what it means and takes to be a leader in schools today. Drawing on over two decades of experience, he explores how to face the challenges of leadership head on and succeed without sacrificing your principles – or your wellbeing.



## SENIOR LEADERSHIP

### What Makes Teachers Unhappy, and What Can You Do About It?

**Fran Abrams and Mark Solomons**  
Routledge  
September

The term ends on strike action, with more expected in the new academic year. Recruitment and retention are in disarray. Morale is at an ebb and vast swaths of the profession are considering leaving the classroom.

The answers are perhaps political and

systemic, but school and trust leaders aren't without some tools to prioritise staff wellbeing in their organisations. Abrams and Solomons gather research and real-life examples into a roadmap to recovery for struggling schools to manage workloads and improve wellbeing.



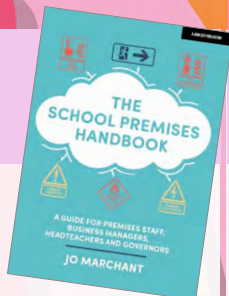
## NEW FRONTIERS

### The School Premises Handbook

**Jo Marchant**  
**John Catt**  
June

If what you're after is something novel, then this one touches on one of the few aspects of school life left broadly untouched by edu-publishing. This glaring omission is laid bare in the current panic about the safety of our school buildings.

This political and funding crisis can only be improved by premises staff, business managers, headteachers and governors knowing their legal responsibilities in the complex area of buildings compliance. Perhaps not a riveting beach read, but Marchant's handbook could be vital.



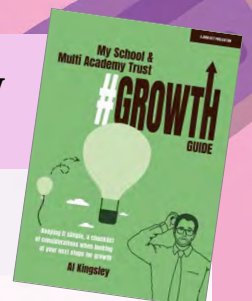
## NEW FRONTIERS

### My School & Multi Academy Trust Growth Guide

**Al Kingsley**  
**John Catt**  
July

Another aspect of school life lesser explored in edu-publishing is the growth of the MAT-led system. Witness community complaints of a lack of transparency and the increasingly concerning situation of small, isolated and 'orphaned' schools.

Informed by Kingsley's nearly two decades of school governance experience across a broad range of schools and academies, this guide aims to support discussions and key considerations for any trust or school looking at their next steps for growth.





Week in

# Westminster

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

## TUESDAY

\*\*\*Expert panel alert\*\*\*

We've had at least five 'expert panels' this year to help ministers formulate policies from music to sex education.

We were treated to another this week – 22 experts will help draw up the government's cultural education plan, as promised in the erstwhile March 2022 schools white paper. Not that we would know where the plan came from based on the DfE's press release this week – which neglected to mention it.

Can someone put the poor thing out of its misery, please?

\*\*\*

A couple of weeks ago, we revealed how ministers had abandoned hope of reaching Boris Johnson's six-million tutoring target.

However, Nick Gibb was happy to keep spinning the yarn this week in a written parliamentary question that six million courses will be delivered by 2024.

As government subsidies for tutoring tail off, ministers hope this type of catch-up will form a permanent staple of schools' offer.

Er, not so according to the government's own evaluators, the NFER, which found the National Tutoring Programme has failed so far to create a "sustainable" tutor market.

\*\*\*

Changing the curriculum is the flavour of the month in policy land. First Labour and now an Atomic (sorry) suggestion by no less than Blondie drummer Clem Burke to make drumming part of the national curriculum to help autistic children.

One Way or Another (sorry, again), we know some change is coming.

## WEDNESDAY

Children's minister Claire Coutinho reassured us all when she told a Policy Exchange event on free speech that she "wouldn't like to see Andrew Tate speak on" a university campus. Phew.

Regarding the controversial social media personality, she did add: "That being said, when I go and talk to schools, I think them being able to debate the kinds of things that Andrew Tate has talked about – it has been the best way to counter some of those views because, after all, sunlight is the best disinfectant."

We'll remember that last bit when the DfE is refusing Freedom of Information requests or failing to answer basic questions. Thanks!

## THURSDAY

Demob happy Amanda Spielman arrived in style at the Festival of Education today – on her famed, Brompton fold-up bike.

But Spielman isn't taking a brake (sorry, it's been a long year) just yet. She was giving her last festival speech ahead of leaving her post in December.

She said: "It's always a pleasure to attend and speak here. And I'm not the only Ofsted speaker. I will point you to our sessions on subject reports, on curriculum in further education, and on safeguarding. You can find them all in the Sir Christopher Lee Theatre. Insert your own joke here."

(Reader: Lee often portrayed villains. He played Count Dracula in seven films and Saruman in *The Lord of the Rings* movies)

\*\*\*

While Spielman was cracking jokes in Berkshire, Labour leader Keir Starmer was getting ambushed

in Gillingham.

A group of youngsters stood behind Starmer while he was detailing the ins and outs of his 'superhero teacher, crack team hit squads', some youngsters unfurled banners in protest at his watered-down green commitments.

A much-needed popcorn moment in an otherwise lacklustre speech, tbh.

\*\*\*

Meanwhile, back at Education Fest, Ofqual chief regulator Jo Saxton, when asked about her role, said "in many ways

it is a terrible job". She had to do a "huge amount of reform" in the vocational world, had "endless" board meetings, and had to explain their work to ministers to make sure they understand "whether or not to worry".

She also told the audience more people clicked on Ofqual's regulatory pages than looked at the sex education consultation, which we are absolutely taking as Saxton saying sex is better than exams!

\*\*\*

We will miss Twitter when it inevitably gets put out of its misery. Schools minister Nick Gibb was so enraged by anyone else – in particular Labour – having views on his precious, beautiful work he took to Twitter at 8.10am.

His 11-part tweet (a Twitter thread, from the Gibbster! Scenes!) included a picture of a quote from Jean-Jacques Rousseau: "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains."

"Today is a big day for the country. Will Labour have the answers to the key questions?" Sounds like Gibbo is resigned to Labour already winning the election.



Sir Christopher Lee as Saruman







Bradford Diocesan  
Academies Trust



## DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

**(£74,283 - £86,040) per annum, depending on experience**

**This post is located within Bradford, West Yorkshire**

We are looking for an inspirational Education leader to support the rapid improvement and development of the secondary phase of Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust. BDAT is a large multi-academy Trust based in Bradford supporting 19 unique and vibrant academies. We are made up of a mix of primary and secondary academies, faith and non faith academies and inner city and rural academies.

BDAT is looking to appoint a Deputy Director of Secondary Education to support our central team to inspire, challenge, support and develop the five academies within our secondary phase. The successful candidate will work across all areas of educational provision and will have a specific focus on supporting improvements in behaviour and attitudes in the early months of appointment.



### EXECUTIVE LEADER OF SCHOOL

Leading Edge Academies Partnership are looking for an inspirational Executive Leader of School Improvement with Secondary expertise. The successful candidate will have delegated strategic responsibility for the leadership, development, and implementation of our School Improvement Strategy in-line with our Trust values, mission and vision. Building on the success of our current school improvement model, they will ensure that all schools provide the highest quality education for all pupils through the efficient and effective use of resources, people, and partnerships.

The Executive Leader of School Improvement will have delegated strategic responsibility for the leadership, development and implementation of our School Improvement Strategy in-line with our Trust values, mission and vision. Building on the success of our current school improvement model and strategic school improvement objectives, they will ensure that all schools provide the highest quality education for all pupils through the efficient and effective use of resources, people and partnerships.



### KS1 / KS2 TEACHER

Are you a class teacher looking for a fulfilling job supporting local children with social, emotional and mental health needs? Do you want to join a dedicated team of skilled and compassionate staff? Apply to join Aspire Academy now.

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.



### Head of Early Teacher Development

**£64,423.00 - £74,641.00 Annually (Actual) L15 - L21**

**This Post will lead the Huddersfield Horizon SCITT and SPA ECT offer.**

This is an exciting opportunity to join a thriving Academy Trust of eleven academies and a SCITT. The role will be part of the Trust's Leadership Team, and will be based in Elland.

The Trust's mission is to improve the life chance of children and young people, as well as being an employer of choice.

**The purpose of the role is to build on the success of Huddersfield Horizons SCITT, forging new partnerships and attracting graduates to train as teachers.**

[Click here  
for more information](#)



# Haberdashers' Academies Trust South



## Director of People

**Contract type: Permanent**

**Salary: L24 (£86,609) – L26 (£90,417)**

**School/ Service: Central Trust Team**

**Location: Hatcham College, Jerningham Road,  
London SE14 5NY**

**Hours per week: Full time (flexible working considered)**

**Accountable to: Reporting to the CEO**

We are looking to appoint a Director of People to join our Trust. Reporting to the CEO, you will work closely with other members of the Executive in bringing to life our ambitious People Strategy.

This role is crucial to us and presents an opportunity to make a significant difference to our culture and climate, and directly impact on the life chances of our children and young people and the working environment of our staff. There is nothing more important to us than our people and one of our key objectives is to be a 'great employer'.

To support us in driving this ambition, we are seeking an experienced professional to join our Executive team, working in partnership with other members of the Executive in ensuring we bring our People Strategy to life.

As Director, you will oversee our People function across the Trust, providing expertise and advice, and leading the HR team. This function has recently been centralised which presents an opportunity for the new Director to embed the structure.

Haberdashers' Academies Trust South is a multi-academy trust with five primary and four secondary schools in and around south-east London. Our mission is for all our children and young people to flourish in their lives. We will only be able

to achieve this ambition if we are a great employer who can attract, retain and develop great staff.

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

**Join Haberdashers' Academies Trust South and belong to something more:**

- An extensive support network, opening doors to countless growth opportunities.
- An established name, which you can be proud to work for.
- An unrivalled legacy, born out of a vision to reach young people through education

**How to apply:**

To apply, please send your CV and cover letter to [centralhr@habstrustsouth.org.uk](mailto:centralhr@habstrustsouth.org.uk) by 12pm on **Monday 10th July 2023**.

Shortlisted candidates will then be invited to complete our application form.

### **Recruitment Process:**

**Shortlisting and screening:**

**Week commencing Monday 10th July 2023**

**First stage interview: Friday 14th July 2023**

**Final interview: Tuesday 18th July 2023**



Penwortham Girls'  
High School



## Headteacher

The Governors wish to appoint an energetic Headteacher to lead this forward-thinking school into a new chapter, planning and developing a brand-new building with recently secured funding from the Schools Rebuilding Programme. This is an exciting time for the right candidate to influence the new school building whilst retaining the school's strong values and consistently high standards.

You will be joining an outstanding school with a committed and ambitious staff and students who relish learning. Outcomes are consistently high in all areas, whilst the school remains a non-fee paying and non-selective community school at the heart of

Penwortham. It retains a strong reputation locally and beyond and consistently positive parental support.

You will have a highly successful evidenced track record in educational leadership. Able to think strategically, analytically, and creatively about learning and teaching, you will have the vision, drive and resilience to take on the new build. You are highly motivated and passionate about making a difference to the lives of young people with the natural ability to inspire and motivate. As a natural collaborator committed to developing partnerships, you are open to new ideas, you are aspirational, solution-focussed and committed to upholding high

standards. You are an Equality, Inclusion and Diversity champion, leading by example. Penwortham Girls' High School is highly committed to the continual improvement of the quality of education and ultimately excellent outcomes, both academically and more widely, for all our young people. The new Headteacher will be at the heart of this school improvement work, working closely with our senior leadership team, other school leaders, colleagues, families and most importantly with the young people themselves.

**Closing date:**

**12 noon on 1st September 2023**

[Click here for more information](#)

education  
week jobs

In association with

**SCHOOLS FE WEEK**  
**WEEK**

# DID YOU KNOW?

“

As a recruiter for an MAT of 34 Academies, I have been very impressed with the professional support we have received from Schools Week and the quick turnaround time they provide for our advertised vacancies.

David Ross Education Trust

As a Schools Week subscriber, your organisation receives a **20% DISCOUNT** on recruitment advertising.

Online listings, classified advertising, and package options available.

[Click here](#) to contact our team

