

SCHOOLS WEEK

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

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Time to scrap backwards 'coasting' policy

In the post-Covid world where school leaders' jobs are that much harder, it's utterly unwanted.

But what's so perverse about is just how unproductive the measure is (unproductive is probably too tame given it could even end up delivering the opposite of what it is aiming to do).

This week's report from the EDSK think tank became the latest to call out the policy, where schools with two below 'good' Ofsted grades are sent letters warning they could face academisation or rebrokering.

Government thinks this will drive improvement in schools. But the experienced school leaders who actually deliver that improvement say it disincentivises them from taking over challenging schools.

Our investigation on page 4 this week sets out why.

Because of the bizarre decision to count Ofsted grades of schools under their previous owner, we found 77 trusts that have been told their school is coasting – despite it having had just one inspection since joining.

This is likely because the school was deemed failing when the trust took it on under the prior

council or academy trust.

The policy kyboshes the idea of schools getting a "fresh start" when they join a trust.

But we also found more than 20 instances of trusts getting warnings when they had actually improved a school's Ofsted grade in their first two inspections.

Two of these were even issued with formal termination warning notices. One trust, which improved an 'inadequate' school on its first inspection, even got a letter.

Turning around a tough school is hard. It's even harder since the pandemic.

So it's unsurprising leaders are thinking 'what's the point?' when you know government might send you a snotty letter before you've even had a proper chance to improve a school

The Labour party's plan to remove one-word grades provides an opportunity to reassess the adequacy of interventions that hinge on such judgments.

But why wait until a new government?

Schools minister Damian Hinds has already once scrapped a schools coasting measure (back in 2018 when he was education secretary).

There's no reason he can't do it again.

Most read online this week:

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- 2 **Michaela insists it does meet daily worship laws**
- 3 **Hinds admits mentor workload 'too high' as ECF reforms unveiled**
- 4 **Academy trust got £1m indemnity to challenge edtech firm**
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ANALYSIS: COASTING

Schools given 'coasting' warnings despite raising Ofsted grades

JACK DYSON

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INVESTIGATES

Scores of trust leaders have been told they face having "coasting" schools rebrokered despite improving their Ofsted grades – with many others issued warnings despite just having one inspection.

Calls are growing for the Department for Education to ditch its "coasting" intervention powers. Introduced in September 2022, the powers mean schools with two or more consecutive Ofsted ratings below 'good' can be academised or rebrokered.

A Schools Week investigation has found 469 coasting letters – warning schools they face intervention – have been issued so far.

There were 22 instances where a trust was given a warning letter despite improving the school's Ofsted grade in either its first or second inspection. Two were even sent termination warning notices.

A report by the EDSK think tank this week reported "numerous objections" to the policy from trust leaders.

The report's co-author, Tom Richmond, a former Department for Education adviser, said the policy "disincentivises" trusts from taking on challenging schools. It also "incentivises 'quick fixes'" over "giving a school some time... to set it on a course to sustainable improvement".

Schools denied 'fresh starts' with MATs

Meanwhile, our figures reveal that 77 trusts were sent letters for academies with only the one inspection since joining. This is because the Ofsted grades of schools prior to them joining the trust are also counted in the coasting policy.

Confederation of School Trusts deputy chief executive Steve Rollett branded it "unreasonable to hold a trust to account for an inspection that happened before a school joined".

The Valley Leadership Academy, in Lancashire, also received a letter despite an improved Ofsted in its one inspection under the Star Academies Trust. Twelve others were graded 'good' in inspections shortly after they were sent the letters. In all, nine of the 77 schools that improved their Ofsted grade were given termination warning notices.



Guidance states that regional directors invite schools meeting the coasting definition to "make representations", before any decision is made on intervention.

However, Rollett added: "Even where the regional director engages constructively with the trust, it can feel like a very high stakes conversation."

Although Kathy Hardy, chief executive of The de Ferrers Trust, which runs the school, said it "didn't seem quite fair", it meant the regional director has "seen the significant progress that's been made".

The Granville Academy in Derbyshire was sent a letter after its first 'requires improvement' with the chain.

LA schools far more likely to face intervention

Seventy-one per cent (139) of the 197 local authority-maintained schools that received coasting letters were issued with academy orders. Meanwhile, just under a quarter of academies (66) were given termination warning notices.

Geoff Barton, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said this "casts the policy into further disrepute as it creates the perception that it is a lever to achieve the government's objective of more academisation".

However, DfE guidance states "there will be a presumption in favour of issuing the maintained school with an academy order so that it may join a strong multi-academy trust unless exceptional circumstances apply".

The median size of a trust to receive a coasting letter stood at 12 schools. Trusts have, on average,

4.5 academies.

Hugh Greenway, the CEO of the Elliot Foundation, which has had two letters, suspects this "reflects the fact that the larger trusts have taken on more schools with larger challenges than anyone else".

The MAT with the most coasting letters was Academies Enterprise Trust (six), Active Learning Trust (four) and the Shaw Education Trust (four).

An AET spokesperson said two were now rated 'good' – one of which got that rating for the first time in its history.

The others are all rated 'good' for leadership and management, which were "demonstrating [our] ability to turn these schools around", or awaiting a full inspection.

Active Learning Trust CEO Lynsey Holzer said "receiving a coasting letter can be unsettling for the school community, as well as the trust".

'Master-servant relationship'

Meanwhile, interventions are also focused on schools in the 55 education investment areas (EIAs) – "the weakest [places in the country] based on sustained low performance" between 2017 and 2019.

But Steve Chalke, the leader of the Oasis Charitable Trust, said this has contributed to "a growing number of schools in the most challenging areas that no trusts are willing to take on".

"More and more feel they're not in a partnership [with the government] but in a master-servant relationship."

London – which does not have any EIAs – attracted just eight (3.9 per cent) termination warning notices and academy orders. The most was the West Midlands (17.1 per cent), northwest (16.6 per cent) and east Midlands (14.1) per cent. The regions have nearly half of EIAs.

In a paper published last week, CST stated the "problematic" coasting definition... should be redesigned or abandoned".

Barton called for the policy to be "jettisoned" as it "stigmatises schools and makes it harder to secure improvement".

A DfE spokesperson stressed "decisions about whether to intervene in schools are taken on a case-by-case basis, taking account of all the relevant circumstances".

INVESTIGATION: SEND

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Analysis reveals extent of SEND stealth cuts

SAMANTHA BOOTH

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EXCLUSIVE

The scale of stealth SEND funding cuts that hit specialist and inclusive schools the hardest can be revealed today.

The Department for Education said that by April, the high-needs funding given to councils to support pupils with special needs will have increased by 60 per cent – to £10.5 billion – in five years. In 2023–24 the funding rose by £970 million alone.

The cash goes to councils, which then distribute the funding to “top-up” funding for pupils with additional needs where extra support is required.

However, research by Special Needs Jungle shows that the top-up funding levels for schools to deliver provision for children with education, health and care plans (ECHPs) has remained stagnant in a third of councils between 2018 and last year.

Matt Keer, SEND specialist at SNJ, said: “Many schools tell us they’ve seen no benefit from increases to council high-needs funding: it’s been too little and too late. Our research suggests that’s true.”

Further analysis revealed almost half of 136 council areas that provided the data did not increase their top-up bands – different levels of support based on a pupil’s need – between 2022–23 and this year.

However, analysis for this year is complicated somewhat in that special schools are receiving a separate allocation of high-need funding



equivalent to 3.4 per cent of their total income per place. But it reveals a postcode lottery: Bury cut its bands payments by 9.6 per cent on average, compared to a 19.5 per cent hike in Harrow.

‘Extraordinary abdication of fiscal responsibility’

Simon Knight, co-headteacher at Frank Wise special school in Oxfordshire, added the “scale of variability” is an “extraordinary abdication of fiscal responsibility at a national and local governmental level that has to be addressed with urgency”.

Warren Carratt, chief executive of Nexus MAT, explained a child with severe learning difficulties in Rotherham attracts top-up funding of £14,300, compared to just £8,000 in Doncaster.

Marijke Miles, headteacher at Baycroft special school in Hampshire, said the postcode lottery is “yet another injustice to our most vulnerable children and their families to endure”.

“It is totally unreasonable and inequitable that the needs of a child attending a special school should be funded at a higher or lower level simply because of the locality where they live or, in fact, where they go to school.”

Special schools get £10,000 funding per pupil. But this figure has not increased since it was introduced in 2013 – an estimated real-terms cut of £1.3 billion.

Schools Week revealed last year how special schools were staring into budget holes of £1.5 million with heads saying “enough is enough”. Miles estimated that these “hidden cuts” to place funding means she has missed out on about £300,000 of funding – the equivalent of five more teachers.

“My staff team is working flat out to cover this gap and children are losing out as a result,” Miles added. “Yet we are being asked to provide more and more for our students and their families, with ever more complex needs, and yet less and less contribution from partner agencies.”

Cuts putting strain on wider school budgets

The stealth cuts also impact mainstream schools, particularly those with larger numbers of pupils with EHCPs.

Schools must contribute the first £6,000 a year towards the costs of SEN provision. But they can also get top-up funding from councils if this isn’t enough to meet a child’s needs.

Due to the special school capacity crisis, mainstream schools are supporting pupils “who would typically have been placed in a specialist

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Councils on ‘cliff-edge’ of ‘bankruptcy’ over SEND funding

Councils are on the “cliff-edge” of effective bankruptcy notices over huge SEND funding deficits, a cross-party group of MPs has warned.

The Levelling Up, House and Communities committee has urged ministers to agree “realistic” steps and additional cash with councils by April to eliminate high-needs budget deficits. The combined deficits sit at £1.6 billion.

Councils have been allowed to keep deficits off their books as part of a “statutory override”, but this is due to expire in March 2026.

“Without significant additional funding via the

DSG [dedicated schools grant] to match service demand and costs, or a further extension to the statutory override – which would, at most, offer a further period of temporary respite – the sector faces a cliff-edge of section 114 notices,” the report warned.

Seven councils have issued section 114 notices – which mean they are unable to set a balanced budget – since 2020.

The Local Government Association (LGA) warned recently that 17 per cent of authorities think it is likely or very likely they will issue such

a notice in 2024–25.

Government extended the statutory override, which was due to end last year, after it emerged 10 or 11 councils were facing issuing a notice.

Thirty-four councils have been subject to safety valve agreements. Government has offered bailouts totalling nearly £1 billion to the councils in exchange for sweeping reforms.

However, MPs said these were “temporary measures and do not address the underlying mismatch between demand, costs and annual dedicated schools grant funding”.

INVESTIGATION: SEND

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setting and doing so without any additional funding," Alistair Crawford and Alison Ashley of the National Network of Specialist Provision warned.

The number of pupils with an EHCP has also risen since 46 per cent since 2019.

Cllr Alex Dale, chair of f40 group of councils, said councils are "in an impossible position".

"If demand were static, local authorities would increase the bandings, but they have no option but to share the available funding among the higher demand. The lack of funding ultimately impacts on children and young people."

But Micon Metcalfe, chief financial officer at the Diocese of Westminster Academy, said it leaves mainstream schools having to "contribute more to the cost of provision", which "puts additional pressure" on school budgets.

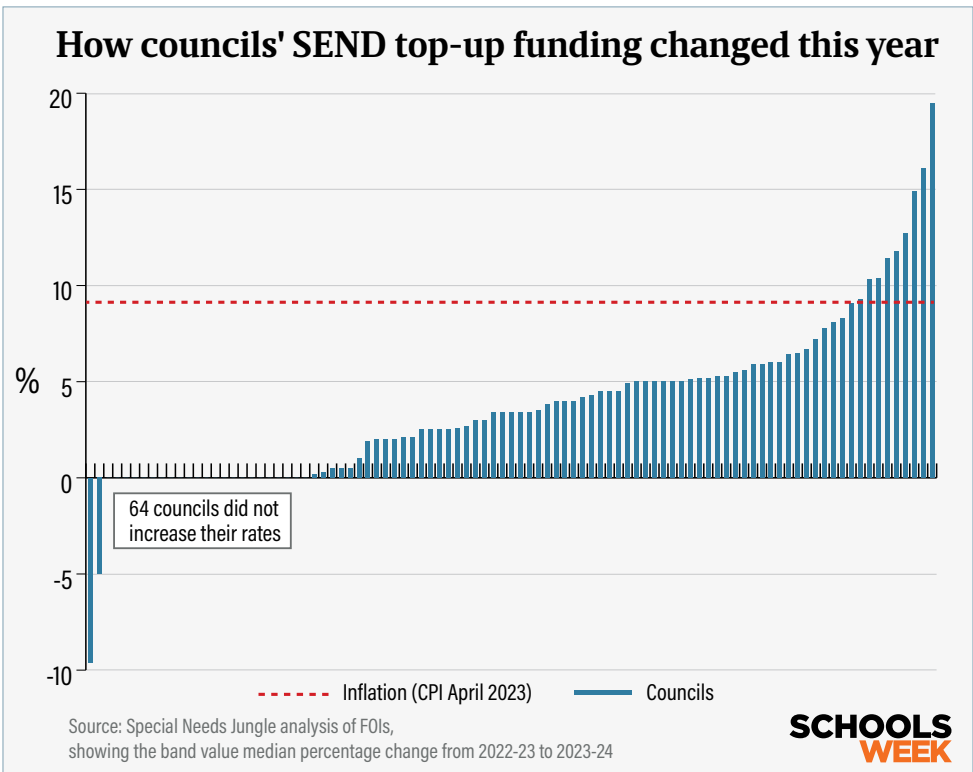
Schools Week has previously revealed how councils have used cash intended for special schools to plug their deficits in their high-needs budget.

'Deficits putting support of children at risk'

As part of its SEND reforms, ministers want to lessen demand for special schools by identifying need earlier and making mainstream schools more inclusive.

But Chris Rossiter, director of governance and compliance at Liberty Academy Trust, said the lack of funding and cuts to other support services "all negatively impact on mainstream's ability to provide the necessary inclusive support".

In its submission to the Treasury ahead of the spring budget, the Confederation of School Trusts said council deficits will "not be recovered through the development of inclusive practice in mainstream schools. It is simply too large."



"Pressure to recover deficits puts the delivery of support to children and young people at risk, reinforcing failure and damaging parental confidence."

The DfE plans to introduce a national approach to delivering funding bands and tariffs for more "consistent funding" across the country after 2025.

However, Keer said while this will help, "it'll be like completely redesigning a nuclear reactor in mid-meltdown".

The government will also review the £6,000 per pupil threshold as national standards are

developed, it added. But the £10,000 funding is "not intended to reflect schools' cost increases", which instead should fall to increased top-up rates.

Special schools received a separate teachers' pay additional grant via their council from September totalling £50 million.

A DfE spokesperson said: "Local authorities are responsible for their high-needs funding and should allocate funds according to local need and reflecting the increases in costs that schools have to meet."



Micon Metcalfe

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Psychologist shortage having 'significant impact'

The shortage of educational psychologists (EP) is having a "significant impact" on councils' ability to meet SEND needs, the council ombudsman has warned.

LGSCO said an investigation into a Surrey family's nine-month education, health and care plan (EHCP) delay exposed a backlog of about 1,000 needs assessments awaiting input from an EP.

EPs play a fundamental role in assessing the needs of children for EHCPs.

LGSCO said the council blamed a national shortage of qualified psychologists and other

key professionals who informed the EHCP process.

Nigel Ellis, ombudsman chief executive, said the situation is "far from unique" and they are "increasingly seeing cases where, despite best efforts, councils do not have the specialist advisors they need to keep on top of caseloads".

In the family's case, there was a 37-week delay to produce an EP report - which should have only taken six. The delay for a plan to be issued overall was nine months.

The girl, diagnosed with autism, was "left distressed" attending taster days at mainstream

schools. The whole family had counselling as a direct result of the delay. The council has agreed to apologise and pay her £1,000 for the injustice caused by its failings.

Surrey told investigators that their core EP staffing level was at just half of what was required. But they had seen a 64 per cent increase in referrals since 2020.

The government is funding training for more EPs, but Ellis said they "cannot be trained overnight and so this situation will not be resolved without significant input on a national scale."

AP in 'desperate need of reform', damning Ofsted report says

LUCAS CUMISKEY

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Alternative provision in England is in "desperate need of reform" amid "systemic issues" that lead to "inconsistent outcomes" for youngsters, two watchdogs have said in a critical report.

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission said absence of national standards and a lack of clarity on responsibilities for AP commissioning and oversight is leading to "inconsistent and ineffective practice".

They found this is often exacerbated by "underdeveloped strategic planning, an insufficiently clear purpose of AP and a lack of monitoring of children's outcomes".

The report, published Thursday, looks at how education, health and care partners commission and oversee AP. It found that key agencies often fail to "strategically collaborate" and decisions on placing kids in AP are "often not rigorous enough" and then "not monitored effectively".

The report notes "too many children have negative experiences in AP" and "the overall picture is of a system in desperate need of reform". It added that "inconsistent and often ineffective" commissioning and strategic planning meant "children's experiences and outcomes varying significantly, within and across local areas". But it also flagged instances of good practice for schools and councils to emulate.

Ofsted 'concerned' over standards

Sir Martyn Oliver, Ofsted's chief inspector, said: "We are concerned that some children's education and care falls below the standard they deserve. We need more clarity about how AP can be used effectively so that children have consistently positive experiences."

Schools or local authorities commission AP for pupils who have been excluded or cannot attend mainstream school.

Ofsted said a mix of registered and unregistered settings means the "quality of oversight for children in AP is highly variable".

The report found "limited specialist provision led to children being placed



inappropriately in provision that was not resourced to meet their needs ... often for long periods of time".

The report was based on Ofsted and CQC visits to six local authority areas and more than 700 survey responses from those within the AP system. The primary purpose of AP in the areas it visited was to prevent children from being permanently excluded.

The watchdogs concluded that "schools' approach to commissioning and oversight is fundamental to the effectiveness of local area AP systems". They should assess the suitability of AP and "regularly review the impact of "individual placements".

"Unfortunately, too often we saw that schools were not keeping a close oversight of the AP in which their pupils were placed", the report stated. "In some cases, schools had not recently visited it or checked on their pupils' progress."

Oliver also said he "remain concerned about the widespread problems with unregistered AP – after 12 years of calling for the mandatory registration for all AP, it is clear that the need for reform is more urgent than ever".

In October, a *Schools Week* investigation revealed thousands of children, some as young as five, are being educated

in unregistered alternative provision where teachers require neither qualifications nor criminal record checks.

'Prioritise early intervention'

However, Oliver added the Department for Education's special educational needs and disabilities improvement plan, published in March three years after the SEND review was first launched, "offers an opportunity to give the AP system a clear purpose".

The report recommends better guidance on the purposes of AP and potential indicators of success; clearer roles and responsibilities for different local area partners; and "improved oversight" of certain groups of children and youngsters in AP. It also calls for "greater consistency and rigour" in decision-making on AP placements and subsequent monitoring and evaluation arrangements. It added that agencies should have "clear, unambiguous roles and responsibilities" in AP commissioning.

The watchdogs said academies and schools should "prioritise early intervention, where possible" as the report highlights "examples of the effective use of AP outreach and the positive impact this can have on suspension and exclusion rates". They noted "in reality, a lack of suitable specialist provision has meant that AP is also used inappropriately as a stopgap to fill deficiencies in local SEND systems".



Sir Martyn Oliver

[READ THE FULL REPORT HERE](#)



Highest-earning academy chief's annual pay nears £500k

JACK DYSON

@JACKDYDS

England's best-paid academy trust boss has been handed a £25,000 pay hike – taking his salary even closer to half a million pounds.

Harris Federation CEO Sir Dan Moynihan's salary has risen by at least 6 per cent from between £455,000 and £460,000 to a minimum of £485,000.

It is higher than the 5 per cent increase most teachers saw in 2022–23 – prompting concerns the disparity could impact “the morale and wellbeing of the lowest paid”.

Schools Week analysis of accounts for the last financial year, which trusts must publish on their websites by the end of January, show 15 chief executives across the 20 largest multi-academy trusts (MATs) have seen their pay packets grow.

Mike Short, UNISON's head of education, said news of Moynihan's pay rise “will be particularly disheartening for support staff who have critical roles working directly with pupils but are paid so little”.

“It's no surprise many are having to rely on second jobs or leave the sector for better-paid jobs. Allowing such a disparity in pay rises can have a profound impact on the morale and wellbeing of the lowest paid. It's crucial that fair rises are given to all staff.”

In November 2022, unions accepted an offer for school support staff, including teaching assistants, to be paid an extra £1,925 this year. The offer meant a 10.5 per cent hike for the lowest-earners and just over 4 per cent for those on high wages covered by the agreement.

It is Moynihan's first pay rise since 2018–19. His salary is also an outlier – he is nearly £200,000 better paid than any other chief executive.

Latest accounts show there were also seven unnamed members of Harris staff earning more than £190,000.

However, its accounts also reveal those at the trust earning less than £35,000 were also given a £250 Christmas bonus to help with



Sir Dan Moynihan

“alleviating the cost-of-living crisis”.

This was funded through £1 million earmarked from “the annual cost savings generated [by the trust] through economies of scale”.

“This was well received,” the documents added, “and we will aim to go further in future years, in recognition of the financial pressures on many households.”

Of CEOs from the 20 largest MATs, three were given salary increases of 10 per cent or more. Bath and Wells Diocesan Academies Trust boss Nikki Edwards received between £165,000 and £170,000 last year, up 13.8 per cent from £145,000 to £150,000.

Meanwhile, Rebecca Boomer-Clark, Academies Enterprise Trust's CEO, moved into the £220,000 to £225,000 pay banding, from £200,000 to £205,000.

Hugh Hegarty, the CEO of the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust, was given the highest percentage rise of the top trust bosses. His salary rose 18.8 per cent from a minimum of £160,000 to £190,000.

A spokesperson for Hegarty's trust said the MAT had grown from 27 to 37 schools in the time period, with a 38th joining last May.

It had also “commissioned an independent benchmarking exercise in respect of a salary

banding for a CEO for a trust of this size” prior to the expansion”.

“This pay band reflected the expanded remit for the new and much enlarged entity. The benchmarking exercise took account of regional and national trusts of similar size in respect of both schools and pupils.”

The other two trusts did not respond.

Our findings suggest 10 of the 15 MATs that paid their CEOs more in the last financial year took on more schools since July 2022. Harris took on four more academies over the period.

Department for Education academy accounts published last year revealed leaders earning significantly more than their peers at similar trusts would face new scrutiny from government.

The document said “executive pay based on 2021–22 data is currently under review to identify” outliers.

At the time, it was understood that no final decisions had been made or signed-off by ministers.

DfE did not respond to requests for an update on its pay crackdown.

Harris did not respond to numerous requests for comment.

Advertorial

Personal effectiveness: tools for learning, work and life

Personal effectiveness is multifaceted. It is our ability to assess information, problem solve, appraise options, find the best outcome and communicate our processes and decisions with others. It is our capacity to work effectively in a team, to recognise our own strengths and areas for development and how we can learn from others. It is also how we equip ourselves with a range of skills and qualities to be the best version of ourselves to succeed in learning, work and life.

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Completing a challenge, such as planning and organising a fundraising event for a local charity, can demonstrate the application of core personal effectiveness skills such as teamworking, decision making and problem solving. These experiences contribute to the learners' personal effectiveness by fostering qualities including resilience, adaptability, and the ability to manage their time and resources efficiently.



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ASDAN's Personal Development Programmes (PDP) have benefitted hundreds of thousands of learners working at Entry level 3 to Level 1. Evolving to reflect world changes, these programmes offer creative methods of developing, recording and certificating young people's personal qualities, abilities and achievements. PDP consists of three programmes; Bronze, Silver and Gold, and certification is awarded on the number of challenges completed. Learners can choose from around 200 challenges across a curriculum made up of 12 modules including Communication, Sport and Leisure, My Environment, Number Handling, Health and Wellbeing, World of Work and Expressive Arts.

By taking ownership of their learning and completing activities that cater to their diverse needs and interests, PDP provides young people with tailored learning experiences designed to enhance their personal effectiveness.

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ASDAN's suite of over 30 Short Courses encompasses an extensive variety of topics including PHSE, careers and work, enterprise, gardening and many more. These flexible, portfolio-based programmes are designed for young people who may benefit from a personalised approach to learning, allowing them to choose subject areas that will interest and engage them. Learners' achievements are certificated by their teacher

or tutor and can be recognised in credits from 10 hours of learning. Credits can be used towards achieving the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness and the Personal Development Programmes.

By engaging in activities focused on areas such as teamwork, leadership, problem solving and communication, learners can develop essential skills to boost their personal effectiveness. Not only can they acquire valuable knowledge, but they can also enhance their confidence by showcasing their new skills. ASDAN Short Courses promote independent thinking and decision making, enabling learners to think critically and make informed choices.

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Ofsted's digital inspection system glitch revealed

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

Ofsted's system for recording inspection evidence has for years suffered glitches that wipe data and force inspectors to re-record their findings, sometimes from memory after a visit has ended.

The watchdog has admitted that on at least one occasion, an inspection was deemed "incomplete" because of technical problems, forcing inspectors to return.

Ofsted's electronic evidence gathering (EEG) system replaced pen and paper in 2019, but has encountered issues, according to multiple current and former inspectors who spoke to Schools Week on condition of anonymity.

Inspectors described situations in which their screen "froze" and evidence "disappeared" in front of their eyes during visits. Others discovered evidence had been wiped upon returning to their hotel room. They said Ofsted was repeatedly warned about the problems, but initially refused to accept there was something wrong and "blame turned back on the individual inspectors".

Ofsted told Schools Week it was "aware that on some occasions inspectors can have issues with the EEG, for example connecting to WiFi due to the provider they are in or to the system itself". But they said these issues were "more frequent when the system was first introduced" and inspectors have been "instructed to use other means to record their evidence in these circumstances".

The watchdog also said it believed there had "only been a very small number of instances since 2019 where we have declared an inspection incomplete as a result of a technical issue". This was said to potentially be as low as one or two.

In those instances, "we have then returned to the school to collect more evidence to ensure the judgement is secure", the watchdog said.

Ofsted issued guidance to inspectors in 2019 on "ensuring the integrity of the evidence base". The guidance, which has since been updated and simplified, said inspectors experiencing "minor issues of misplaced evidence" should "recapture the salient points from memory as soon as possible". Where they were "unable



to record or retrieve evidence electronically", inspectors were told to record it in Microsoft Word or on paper.

On "rare occasions", the quality of the inspection "may be at risk", at which point it "may be necessary to deploy an additional inspector or additional inspectors or extend the timescale of the inspection to avoid it being deemed incomplete".

The guidance also accepted that in "exceptional circumstances", the loss of electronic evidence "may only occur or be discovered after the end of the onsite inspection but before drafting or publication of the inspection report".

One ex-inspector said: "For years it was incredibly unstable. Inspectors would find all their evidence had disappeared."

Another inspector described "difficulties with it since it was put in place", but said it had become "more reliable and user-friendly over time".

There have been "lots of examples of people losing large swathes of typed evidence".

In a recent submission to the Parliamentary education committee, a group of six former inspectors, including former trust leader Frank Norris, warned the EEG's effectiveness was "hindered by a lack of trialling and an unwillingness to accept its flaws and feedback".

"Suffice to report that much

resource was wasted and much evidence was lost or had to be rewritten, and was the cause of great stress to inspectors who had to use this system which is now under review. Better four years late than never."

Ofsted said its "systems and processes are under constant review". They take the "processes we use to come to an inspection judgement very seriously" and said judgments were all "backed up by sufficient evidence from the inspection team and are quality assured by senior staff in Ofsted".

If quality assurance found there was "insufficient evidence on the system to support the judgement, inspectors would be instructed to return to the school to gather and record further evidence".

But Daniel Kebede, general secretary of the National Education Union, accused Ofsted of feeding "botched data" into a "broken system".

"The disservice to the profession and to parents is appalling, and the reluctance to admit the error for years is simply not good enough."

Ofsted's latest guidance, issued in 2022, tells inspectors that can't resolve technical issues to record evidence in Word and then transfer the information into the EEG within 24 hours of the inspection.

It no longer instructs inspectors to re-write evidence from memory.



Daniel Kebede

Top unis criticise new teacher training framework

LUCAS CUMISKEY

@LUCAS_CUMISKEY

Leading universities have criticised the government's new teacher training framework, despite government saying changes "create a more coherent journey" for those joining the profession.

The Department for Education published its review of the initial teacher training core content framework (CCF) and the early career framework (ECF) on Tuesday. From September 2025, they will instead be replaced with the one framework: the initial teacher training and early career framework (ITTECF).

The review found the "similar but separate nature sometimes meant that there was unintentional repetition".

Other changes include improving content to help teachers support pupils with SEND, measures aimed at cutting workload for mentors and providing more subject-specific training (see explainer below).

Writing for Schools Week, schools minister

Damian Hinds said: "These improvements are not just policy changes; they're a pledge to back our teachers for the long term."

However, the University of Cambridge, which runs a teacher training programme, said it "lacks confidence" in ITTECF and the rollout should be delayed by at least a year.

Clare Brooks, professor of education at the university, said the revised framework was "just a tweak on what the current framework is and it's not going to make it any better. It's just a wasted opportunity."

The university's faculty of education claimed the framework "sets unclear and contradictory objectives" for ITT providers and is based on "incomplete and thin" evidence. It wants a "more comprehensive and thorough framework" to be development, led by non-partisan, cross-sector experts.

Dr Katharine Burn, PGCE course director at the University of Oxford, also said the new framework needs more work.

The ITTECF's contents are based on responses to a call for evidence from the sector in spring last year.

Others praised the changes.

Margaret Mulholland, the ASCL leaders' union's inclusion specialist, said a framework with a more "specific focus to developing the knowledge and skills to support pupils that need the most help is welcomed".

Professor Becky Francis, chief executive of the Education Endowment Foundation charity (EEF), added it was an "important step" to realising teaching "deserves to be built upon a core body of knowledge and skills that describe best practice".

The EEF has independently assessed and endorsed the framework to make sure "the claims it makes accurately reflect the evidence from which they were drawn".

Updated training programmes for early career teachers will be procured "later this year". The new framework will be rolled out from September 2025.



Margaret Mulholland

Explainer: the key changes under new ITTECF

1. Single framework to help cut 'unnecessary repetition'

The review found the two frameworks' "similar but separate nature sometimes meant that there was unintentional repetition".

Combining the two "recognises that we now have a three or more year introduction to the core body of knowledge, skills and behaviours that define great teaching".

There will be a new requirement for early career lead providers to create "diagnostic tools" to "appraise teachers' expertise".

Mentors will get "greater flexibility to focus on the aspects of self-study most needed to support" their early career teacher's development, with providers to develop "high-quality resources" to support this.

2. Oak academy to help boost subject-specific training

The DfE said the new framework "does not include increased subject-specific content. The CCF and ECF were designed to work for all teachers, across all phases and subjects – and this is an important principle."

But lead providers will now "develop enhanced subject-specific materials, designed specifically for their programmes".

The Oak National Academy will work with support providers "to enhance their existing provision with more subject-specific content".

3. 'Significantly more' SEND content

Sector feedback revealed a demand for "further support" for teaching pupils with SEND.

The new framework will now have "significantly more content related to adaptive teaching and supporting pupils with SEND".

Changes have also been made to "existing statements to improve inclusivity for SEND throughout the framework".

Other key changes include more content on oracy and early cognitive development.

4. Changes to ease 'too high' mentor workload

The increased workload of mentors – experienced teachers who support their new colleagues – was a key issue reported by the sector. Hinds said mentor workload was "too high".

To support ITT, a new "lead mentor role" has been introduced with "up to £25 million" funding available to schools and providers in 2024–25 academic year to allow mentors time off timetable to access "high-quality" training.

ECF mentors will see their training shortened from two to one year under a new provider-led programme aimed at combining the "elements mentors found most valuable" while also removing "unnecessary workload".

From 2025, providers will support mentors with "more detailed resources for use in preparing and delivering one-to-one sessions" with new teachers.

DfE quietly drops Gibb's EBacc accountability plan

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

Leaders have welcomed a government decision to pause plans announced just five months ago to shake up the EBacc accountability measure to "incentivise" take-up.

Last September, the Department for Education said it would "explore making changes to the headline EBacc attainment measure" – which is an "average point score" for EBacc subjects. The measure gives schools a score across the five pillars of the EBacc, which are English, maths, science, a language and history or geography.

The DfE said it wanted to "move to a headline EBacc attainment measure that incentivises full EBacc" for this September.

However, buried in a guidance update on Thursday, the department said it was "pausing this work and the current EBacc APS will remain the headline EBacc attainment measure". *Schools Week* had to compare the 91-page guidance document with the previous version to find the change, because the DfE did not stipulate what revisions had been made.



Nick Gibb

It is understood Nick Gibb, the former schools minister and architect of the EBacc performance measure, was driving the proposed changes. He left government in November.

The DfE has not said why it has paused the work.

Tom Middlehurst, curriculum, assessment and inspection specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders union, said his organisation was "delighted that the government has rowed back on plans to change the Ebacc APS measure from 2025, as originally stated".

"School leaders were alarmed about this change to a headline measure affecting current exam cohorts, who have already made GCSE and VTQ

choices."

Duncan Baldwin, a consultant and education data expert, told *Schools Week* it was the "right thing not to make any changes so I'm pleased they reached that decision", adding it was the "wrong lever to pull".

The announcement last year that the DfE was exploring changes to the EBacc prompted warnings it may have broken its own workload protocol. Guidance at the time stated that the government planned to engage with the sector in the autumn "with a view to confirming the approach in early 2024. The change would be introduced for 2024/25 measures, to be published in autumn 2025."

However, the DfE's own workload protocol demands a "lead in time of at least a year for any accountability, curriculum or qualifications initiative coming from the department [that] requires schools to make significant changes which will have an impact on staff workload".

Middlehurst called on the DfE to reconsider its plans to change triple science and language entries into "headline measures" from September.

EXCLUSIVE

LUCAS CUMISKEY | @LUCAS_CUMISKEY

New round of redundancies hit graduate recruitment charity

Teach First is consulting on a second round of redundancies, *Schools Week* understands.

The charity, which holds a government contract for recruiting and training high-flying graduates, said it was "proposing changes to how we operate" to "prepare for the future".

In June, *Schools Week* revealed the organisation had made half of its eight-strong executive team redundant.

The charity said it attracted 1,335 recruits this year. That means it missed its target of 1,750 by more than a fifth.

Overall recruitment figures published last year showed the government missed its total target by 38 per cent amid a wider recruitment and retention crisis.

A Teach First spokesperson said its new strategy "builds on existing work to support teachers and leaders so that more children growing up in poverty can fulfil their potential".

"In recent years, Teach First has grown rapidly

– for example, expanding to deliver the early career framework and national professional qualifications. To consolidate this growth, and prepare for the future, we are proposing changes to how we operate."

The charity said it had "started a consultation process with our staff and, therefore, at this time it would not be appropriate for us to comment further". It did not respond when asked to clarify what the proposed changes are to how it operates.

The charity has a £113 million government contract to recruit the "best and brightest" graduates and career changers who could be "highly skilled teachers and leaders".

Its contract was extended in April by two years to run to October 2027, taking the overall grants it will have received since 2021 to £169 million.

But it must still recruit 1,750 trainees each year in 2024 and 2025 for its two-year course.

Teach First recruited 1,394 graduates in 2022,



then the smallest cohort since 2018 when 1,234 were recruited, missing its target and losing £2 million in bonuses. But it was rated as 'good' against three other government targets and at the time said it was "proud" of its 2022 numbers, "given the significant recruitment challenges the whole sector is facing".

The DfE is consulting with the market on the procurement approach for the future delivery of the programme.

Teach First's annual report and account for 2021/2022, published on Companies House in April, said it had 821 employees.

Schools install toilet sensors that 'actively listen' to pupils

JESSICA HILL

@JESSJANEHILL

EXCLUSIVE

Schools are installing "spying" software that "actively listens" to pupils, to crack down on vaping, bullying and rowdiness in toilets.

The sensors can be programmed to listen for certain keywords through machine learning algorithms, which trigger alerts to chosen staff members.

One firm selling the sensors says they can "monitor staff so you can deal with incidents such as bullying by colleagues".

But Big Brother Watch's senior advocacy officer Madeleine Stone said that "secretly monitoring school bathrooms is a gross violation of children's privacy and would make pupils and parents deeply uncomfortable.

"No school should consider spying on children's private conversations and doing so is highly likely to be unlawful. This misguided surveillance poses a clear safeguarding risk and should be allowed nowhere near UK schools."

However, a spokesperson for Triton, which makes the 3D Sense pro sensor, said its aim is to "provide an additional layer of security against threats like bullying or sexual assault in these areas, reinforcing a safe school environment ... to enhance safety, not monitor everyday conversations."

The sensor has 10 built-in keywords, such as 'help me' and 'stop it'. School leaders can also add 10 "customisable" keywords to listen for.

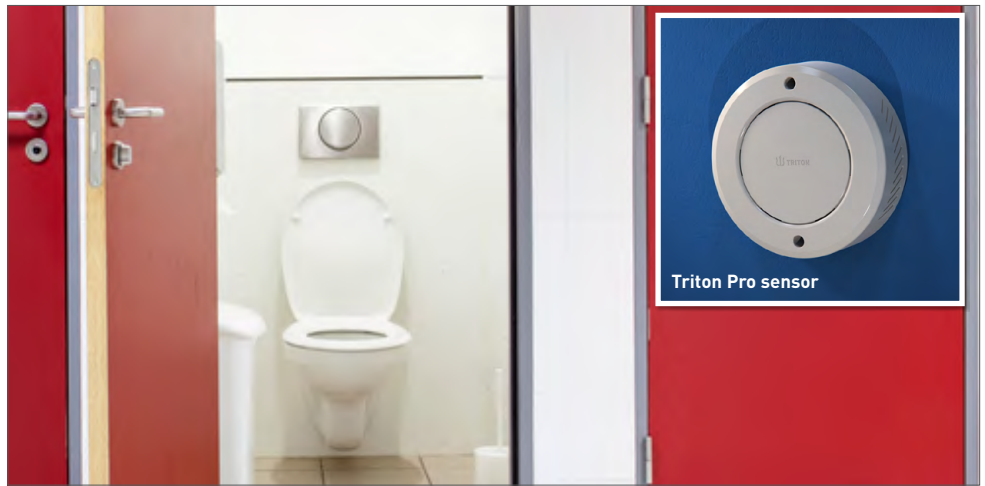
One company selling the sensor, Emergency Protection, described on its website how keywords and phrases were "constantly added through OTA [over-the-air] updates".

Schoolwatch, another seller, said nine UK schools use it, which retails for £999. The company describes the sensor's algorithm as "actively listening" to pupils.

When asked about the spying concern, its managing director Andrew Jenkins said he'd had "many conversations" about the issue at the BETT edtech show last week.

The main worry from prospective school buyers was whether conversations are either live monitored or recorded.

"The answer is no... when triggered, staff will receive an alert via SMS, push via their app and email," Jenkins said. Nothing is saved or recorded,



he added.

More than 1,500 US school districts are using Halo Smart Sensors, made by US company IPVideo, owned by Motorola Solutions.

Between 30 and 40 have been sold in the UK primary and secondary schools and colleges, said Jon Glover, a manager at Halo sensor seller Millgate.

Some schools, including Baxter College in Kidderminster, are pairing the sensors with surveillance cameras, so when activated by a vaping sensor they capture students leaving bathrooms. It has four of the sensors, which connect to a cloud and can retain data for a year.

The 3C-PC version of the sensor can also count how many people are in a room and issue alert if it gets too noisy or they detect gunshots.

IPVideo's website suggests schools can install sensors in locker rooms, classrooms and dormitories, as well as bathrooms.

Ecl-ips, another seller of Halo sensors, describes on its website how they can be "used to monitor staff so you can deal with incidents such as bullying by colleagues".

Cheaper fire alarm-type vape detectors are more widely used by schools.

Two thirds of teachers said they had found pupils vaping or with vaping equipment when surveyed by Teacher Tapp last year. One in five said the youngest pupil caught was under 12.

This week, the government announced a ban on disposable vapes and measures to prevent vapes being marketed at children.

Unruly school bathroom behaviour has long been an issue. Almost three-quarters of secondaries built since 2010 do not include a

door to the corridor, with many removing it for monitoring purposes.

St Joseph's College, in Stoke-on-Trent, placed Halo Sensors in two toilet blocks in September. After they became "very active in the first few weeks", it installed five others elsewhere.

Deputy headteacher Charlotte Slattery said they were "more interested" in the vaping alert than the sensor's keyword and noise detection features, although they use those too.

The school had not sought parental consent, but parent feedback around their vaping strategy was "very positive".

Kay Firth-Butterfield, chief executive of the Center for Trustworthy Technology, said parents should be asked for consent first. However, a Schoolwatch representative said schools did not need parental permission because personal information was not being stored.

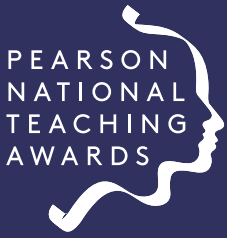
St Joseph's RC High School, in Horwich, installed Halo sensors in toilets in September following three instances of pupils collapsing after using THC vapes. They were activated 112 times in a day at first, but cases have dropped.

Headteacher Tony McCabe was "not aware" the sensors detect keywords, and "if they do, we haven't monitored this".

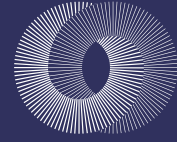
A recent LA Times report found vape sensors aren't always effective. They went off "so frequently, administrators felt it was useless to review security footage each time", said Michael Allman, a board member for California's San Dieguito Union High School District.



Halo Smart Sensor



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 **Lorna Cannon**, Margaretting CofE Primary School
Gold Winner of Teaching Assistant of the Year

EXPLAINER: MATS

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System reset? Think tank calls for school boards, new regulator and CEO pay cap

A new report by the EDSK think tank has called for a “reset” on the school system, with proposals to “replace the centralisation and political interference”. Here’s what you need to know...

1. ‘School boards’ instead of MATs and LA schools

The report, 20 years of muddling through: Why it is time to set a new course for the state school system in England, said all state-funded schools should be run by one of three types of “school board”, which would add “coherence and simplicity” to the current system.

Single school boards (SSBs) would only run one school, akin to the current single-academy trusts. Local school boards (LSBs) would effectively be council-run trusts. Independent school boards (ISBs) would be collections of schools that operate outside council control, essentially the current multi-academy trusts (MATs).

Each would act as the “legal entity” of the school, but would represent “the biggest change from the current system”.

Boards “should initially only be permitted to accept schools within their existing geographical boundaries”, the report added.

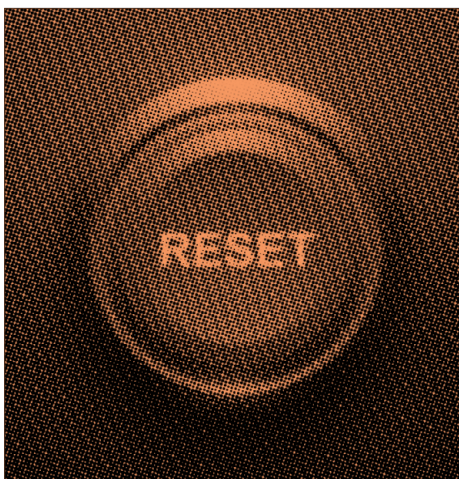
Schools in SSBs and ISBs “would then be able to ‘return’ to the LSB should they need to be rebrokered to a new operator due to poor performance, while schools in the LSB will continue to be handed to new operators should they underperform”.

2. New schools regulator ‘OFCOE’

Authors Tom Richmond and Eleanor Regan called for a new independent regulator, called the Office for Capability and Oversight in Education (OFCOE).

It would have intervention powers, oversight of finance and governance arrangements, and the ability to close and open schools – essentially the regulatory functions of the current regional directors and the Education and Skills Funding Agency. It would also be handed additional powers, such as determining which school boards “are the most appropriate and efficient operators” in each area.

OFCOE would work in regional hubs, operating



across areas with between 600 and 700 schools. Regional directors are said to have responsibility for as many as 2,500. Meetings would be held in public and local consultations on all major decisions.

Regional directors currently hold meetings on important academy decisions with their advisory boards behind closed doors.

3. Pay scales to combat excessive CEO wages

Some trusts “appear unable to show restraint when it comes to setting executive pay”, the report warned. Currently, academies have freedom to set their own pay.

The Department for Education should legislate to force schools boards to follow a “newly expanded version of the existing headteacher pay scales”. This would apply to the heads of single schools or those in charge of groups of schools, such as trust chief executives.

The model would cap the maximum salary for all senior leaders based on pupil numbers. The suggested cap was £263,000, with “severe financial penalties” to those not following the pay scales.

4. Hard funding formula and ‘GAG pooling’ ban

The report identified “significant weaknesses in terms of financial transparency due to the inability of government, Parliament or parents to monitor how funding is calculated and distributed within MATs”. At the same time, trusts and local authorities can “both override (or simply ignore) the DfE’s national funding

formula when they distribute” cash.

Instead, the report suggested school boards should be made to pass the total allocation received for each school on to headteachers “without amending” it.

LSBs and ISBs would still be entitled to “top slice” funding for central services. However, general annual grant (GAG) pooling – where trusts collect schools’ total budgets and dish out funding based on their own formula – would be banned.

5. Councils in charge of all admissions

With academies able to act as their own admissions authorities, some “appear to use their freedoms ... as a way of selecting which pupils to admit, with vulnerable learners most at risk” of not being picked, the report claimed.

Richmond and Regan believe councils “should be granted full responsibility for admissions once more”.

“Every state school would have the right to propose an admissions policy that identifies their over-subscription criteria [and] that supports the character of their school, whether religious or otherwise. The LA will then translate the wishes of individual schools into a formal set of arrangements.”

The Office of the Schools Adjudicator would continue to police the admissions system, but have the power to alter arrangements directly.

[Sub-head 6] 6. All schools should publish annual accounts

Under the plans, all state schools would also be required to publish annually a “full financial breakdown on their website”.

This will show the school’s income, expenditure and balance for the year, as well as staffing levels. The names and job titles “of any member of staff receiving a total remuneration package worth more than £60,000” would also be displayed.



NEWS

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DfE to research school impact of DNA performance testing

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

EXCLUSIVE

Government-commissioned researchers will investigate how parents testing their children's DNA for educational performance could create further disparities in schools.

Ipsos MORI is to look at the implications of future genomics technologies on the education sector, under a three-month £50,000 Department for Education and Government Office for Science contract. The move follows a government research report that said there are more than a thousand genes that relate to educational and cognitive outcomes.

However, the *Genomics Beyond Health* report said it is "very difficult" to accurately predict a pupil's educational performance using the available estimates, called polygenic scoring.

Despite that, "direct-to-consumer" testing companies were expanding into education fields and marking the tests to parents, the report from 2022 added.

Three providers were offering "genetics-informed IQ tests from a saliva sample" in 2018,



but it was not clear how much traction these would gather or what support teachers would need in response to their use.

Researchers said that if they are used effectively, genomic data can be measured at birth – so before children start school – meaning it could "enable earlier interventions to improve educational outcomes".

"This could include identifying students in need of academic support, designing learning approaches, or helping pupils with learning disabilities."

But the researchers warned there were no regulations around this and their use "could lead to stigmatisation of pupils".

The DfE said the research would help them

"to better understand the risks, opportunities and challenges that the application of genomics to the education sector may bring".

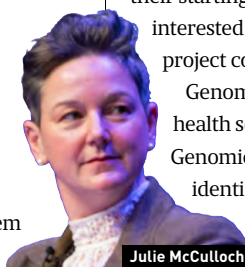
"It will help us to foresee the possible impacts on children, learners and educators."

A 2020 research report by the University of Bristol found predictions of educational outcomes from polygenic scores were "inferior" to those from parental socioeconomic factors.

Julie McCulloch, director of policy at the Association of School and College Leaders, said: "There are chilling implications about the idea of scientifically testing children to determine their ability to learn and the potential for this to be deeply stigmatising and divisive.

"Teachers are obviously going to have no truck with anyone presenting such test results as evidence of cognitive ability as their entire *raison d'être* is to do their best for all pupils whatever their starting point or circumstances. We will be interested to see the results of the research project commissioned by the DfE."

Genomic testing is mainly used in the health service. The government launched the Genomics Medicine Service in 2018 to help identify genetic causes of rare diseases and cancer to help with treatment.



Julie McCulloch

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER | @SCHOOLSWEEK

EEF launches ChatGPT trial on cutting workload

The Education Endowment Foundation will trial whether ChatGPT can help teachers cut workload in one of the first such research projects.

Secondary schools are wanted to take part in the trial, which will investigate whether 'Teaching with ChatGPT', an online toolkit that explains how to use the technology, can reduce staff's working hours.

Fifty-eight schools will be randomly assigned to either a ChatGPT group or a control group. Those in the former will use ChatGPT in their key stage 3 science lesson and resource preparation, aided by the toolkit.

Produced by the social impact arm of global consultancy Bain & Company alongside The Hg Foundation, the tool supports teachers generate activity ideas, tailor lesson plans and create assessment material. Alongside online diary entries and surveys, participants will be asked to submit lesson plans to an



independent panel of teachers who will compare the quality of those generated by AI.

Professor Becky Francis, the EEF's chief executive, said the "extraordinarily exciting project" will help fill a gap in the "limited" research into whether the technology can transform teachers' roles.

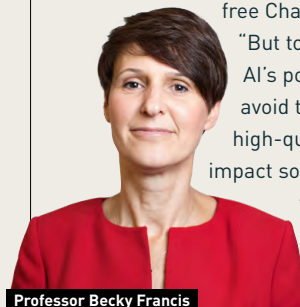
"The findings from this trial will be an important contribution to the evidence base,

bringing us closer to understanding how teachers can use AI to their advantage in their classrooms."

Schools can sign up at educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects-recruiting. They will also get a 'thank you' payment for contributing.

James Turner, Chief Executive of the Hg Foundation, said: "Generative AI could be a game-changer for social mobility and equity, which is why we were so keen to develop the free ChatGPT toolkit.

"But to realise generative AI's potential, and to avoid the pitfalls, we need high-quality evidence on its impact so teachers can make the most effective decisions."



Professor Becky Francis

Reports of data breach on platform used by 180,000 teachers

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

The information watchdog is investigating reports of a data breach on a behaviour management platform used by tens of thousands of teachers.

Some parents logging on to Class Charts last week were reportedly shown data relating to other children. The Information Commissioner's Office told Schools Week it had "received a data breach report in relation to Class Charts and are assessing the information provided."

"Anyone who is concerned about how their data has been handled can get in touch with the ICO or check our website for advice and support," said an ICO spokesperson.

Class Charts is used by more than 180,000 teachers, its website states. The company says it can "save teachers time and reduce workload with our data rich seating plans" and "improve pupil behaviour with our fast and effective behaviour management".

Class Charts, owned by Tes Global Limited, did not respond to requests for comment.

Posts on school IT professionals forum Edugeek claimed some parents logging on to the system were shown information relating to other people's



children. A thread on the issue has more than 100 posts.

One post stated that "we had a parent report seeing totally different pupils from totally different schools". Another said they had "two other schools ring us to say their parents had seen data of our students/pupils as they recognised the school logo and contacted us to make us aware".

A banner on the Class Charts platform, shared on Edugeek, initially stated that "we regret to inform you that a data breach has occurred on Class Charts".

"Rest assured, we are actively addressing the issue, you do not need to take any actions but we will be in contact with affected users to ensure

their data security."

However, forum users reported the banner was subsequently taken down. And in a reply to one school shared on Edugeek, the company reportedly tried to play down reports of a data breach: "We took immediate action to resolve the issue, but there was a very short period yesterday morning when a small number of parent or teacher users could be served up with the incorrect information."

"Once resolved, we started investigations to understand how this could happen, who had been affected, and safeguard against anything similar in the future. There is no evidence of a malicious attack or data breach."

According to ICO guidance, personal data breaches can include "sending personal data to an incorrect recipient".

One forum user said they "asked for explicit confirmation that they were not treating the issue as a data breach".

They said Class Charts told them that "despite very early actions to notify all our customers through in-product messaging, we removed that message as our investigations revealed it was inaccurate".

"The issue was caused by a product update, which was then swiftly removed."

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

Watchdog launches campaign for responsible data sharing

A new myth-busting campaign aims to help schools understand how and when to share pupils' data.

The Information Commissioner's Office has announced a partnership with education sector organisations, including the Confederation of School Trusts, to "raise awareness about responsible data sharing to protect children from harm".

The watchdog has launched a campaign called "Think. Check. Share." It seeks to demonstrate "how data protection law can help organisations to share personal information when required to safeguard children and young people".

The ICO has also created a toolkit of free resources to promote "responsible data sharing". They include posters, videos,

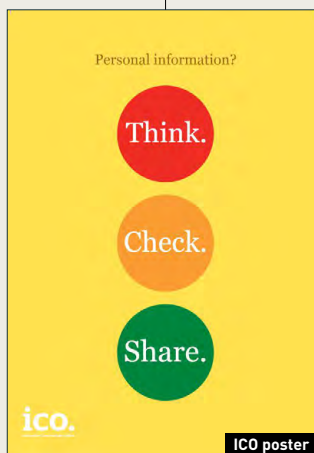
infographics and content for social media,

Partner organisations will distribute the resources and "ensure the information reaches their frontline staff working closely with children every day".

John Edwards, the information commissioner, said safeguarding children "is everyone's responsibility".

"We understand that frontline workers in the education sector are sometimes nervous about sharing personal data and the potential consequences this may have.

"However, if there are concerns that a child



is at risk, organisations and their staff need to know they can share personal data to protect that child without falling foul of data protection law."

The ICO is inviting education organisations to get involved and help distribute resources. Those interested should email datasharingcode@ico.org.uk.

The campaign follows the publication last September of a 10-step practical guide, which outlines how organisations

can "safely and lawfully share information to safeguard children from physical, emotional or mental harm".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Capital's pupil intake crisis hits secondary schools

The number of primary pupils across England has been falling for several years, as a population bulge caused by the 2000s baby boom makes its way through the school system.

But London has faced more severe demographic change, exacerbated by emigration of families from the capital in response to housing costs, Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.

This has prompted councils to announce plans to close and merge schools, and demand powers to direct academies to reduce their rolls.

Ian Edwards, London Councils' children lead, said the changing demographics had "major implications" leaving schools in the capital facing "extremely difficult decisions over how to balance their budgets".

London Councils analysed the 2023 school capacity survey (SCAP) returns for



mainstream schools in all 32 boroughs. Its research shows the drop in primary numbers is slowing.

[Full story here](#)

Bursary plan could help non-white teachers become heads

Bursaries to help non-white teachers get on the leadership ladder and a specific teacher training route for those without required qualifications could be considered to boost workforce diversity, a new report has suggested.

The Ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce: evidence review found about 60 per cent of schools in England had all-white teaching staff in 2021-22, with 86 per cent having an all-white senior leadership team.

Katherine Aston, research manager at the National Foundation for Educational Research, which produced the report, said the "message from the research was clear. Teachers of colour report being socially excluded, stereotyped, rejected for promotions or professional development, and experience overt racism."

She added that four times as many teachers of colour would need to be promoted to headteacher positions – about 2,500 more – for the role to become representative of the wider population.

Meanwhile, non-white teachers are less likely to be accepted on to teacher training than their white counterparts, NFER research published in 2022 found

NFER called for an investigation into the disparity and strategies to combat this, with all teacher trainers to implement equality, diversity and inclusion policies and include anti-racism content in their curriculum. Another proposal is to offer an "alternative pathway" for non-white people without the required qualifications to enter training.

Meanwhile, in school leadership, the academics called for school "selection panels for senior posts to include people of colour".

There "may be a need for bursaries to enable teachers of colour, especially those from socio-economically deprived backgrounds, to undertake leadership development".

The report was funded by Mission 44, a charitable foundation launched by Sir Lewis Hamilton.

A Department for Education spokesperson said the proportion of "teachers as well as leaders who identify as belonging to an ethnic minority group have both increased by around four percentage points since 2010".

[Full story here](#)

Scrapped T-levels will leave many 'in limbo'

Ministers have scrapped plans to introduce T-levels in hairdressing and barbering after two years of development – with proposals for a beauty therapy qualification pushed back to at least 2025.

The courses were originally due to be taught from September 2023 but were delayed to September 2024 after education secretary Gillian Keegan flagged quality concerns. The qualifications have been in development since 2021.

Kevin Gilmartin, post-16 specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders union, said the decision will leave many schools and colleges "in limbo, who have spent time and money getting ready for teaching these qualifications this year, and will have offered places to students as a result".

"This will mean considerable disruption and disappointment for many. It begs the question as to why there is such a rush to dispense with so many BTECs and similar qualifications before T-levels have been properly embedded.



In a statement, skills minister Robert Halfon said the government believes the best routes for students in the hairdressing and barbering sector are existing level 2 and 3 apprenticeships and level 2 classroom qualifications.

The government is "exploring" a standalone T-level in beauty and aesthetics that could be introduced "after 2025".

The news comes as the Department for Education published a provisional list of 71 qualifications at risk of losing their funding because they overlap with wave four T-levels.

[Full story here](#)

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Implementation and Evaluation
Anne-Marie Duguid



Inner Learner

Coping in Good Times and Bad: Developing fortitude
Prof Erica Frydenberg

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James Low



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Feature

JESSICA HILL | @JESSJANEHILL
JACK DYSON | @JACKYDYS

AI marking: the answer to poor recruitment or 'pure snake oil'

Bot exam markers, robot tutors and AI-written reports are all now being used in schools as they look to ride the tech revolution to slash workload and boost outcomes for pupils. *Schools Week* speaks to the founders behind some of the products being rolled out in schools...

An AI developer is trialling new software that could mark batches of pupils' work after being sent images of their exercise books.

Mark Unwin, the chief executive of four-school MAT the Create Partnership Trust, toiled away during the summer to help create online platform askKira.

The CEO, one of the website's three founders, said it has been used to plan lessons, digest leaders' emails and even pen resignation letters since its launch in October.

But over the past two weeks, the team has been testing early versions of an update that could see it mark and provide feedback for up to 30 pieces of work at a time.

"Kira is like Jarvis from Iron Man, [but] for teachers," Unwin said. "Teaching used to be a profession you could fit around your life, [but now] recruitment and retention is unbelievably poor. I think AI offers a route back to something more manageable if done correctly."

As with ChatGPT, subscribers can send messages to the AI through a prompt box online – but beforehand they need to "wake it up" with the

words: "Hi Kira."

More than 2,000 people have signed up so far. Figures for December show about 14 per cent of users asked it "for help with maths", while a similar proportion engaged it for lesson planning.

Unwin said it can also "read" CEO newsletters to pull out the most salient points and write social media updates or internal messages to staff.

Trials of the marking software – which will work for subjects including maths and English – started in January.

It is being tested by 100 school workers, including trust leaders, headteachers, classroom assistants and sencos.

Unwin described this as a "breakthrough" in his bid to slash workload.

"It will work with [up to] 30 photos so that by the end of the day you can make a pile of your books, take pictures of them, and drag and drop them into Kira. It will read each one and give them three 'stars' and a 'wish'."

It will be used for "any written" subject, like English, history and geography.

Unwin added that it would also judge the reading age of the child,

provide individual feedback and suggest areas for teachers to address the following day.

"AskKira is programmed to only do formative marking at the moment for all students' bookwork," he said. "It will look at the work and how it could be improved – it's not programmed to look at a piece of work and say, 'this is GCSE grade 4'."

Unwin stressed the website will always remain "free in part". But since February 1, those wanting unlimited usage of the programme must pay £4.99 a month.

The marking software is expected to launch towards the end of this month, costing £24.99 per month.

'We could mark the nation's exams in hours'

Meanwhile, the makers of another AI tool claim it can deliver exam results to the country's pupils in just a few hours.

Vision Marker is the brainchild of father-son duo Barry Lambert, a chief examiner who has written more than 50 GCSE papers, and Dr James Lambert, a machine-learning expert who previously

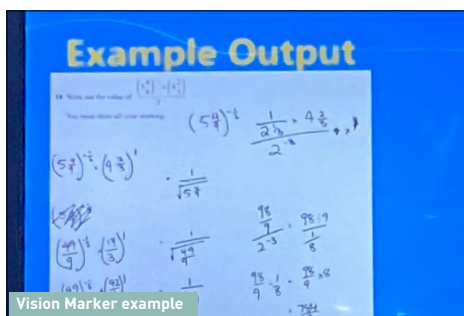


Mark Unwin

Feature: AI



Dr James Lambert and Barry Lambert



Vision Marker example

ran an algorithmic hedge fund.

Dr Lambert has previously led science teams on projects including modelling gut micro bacteria, while his dad has designed assessments for GCSE and A-levels.

Vision Marker can mark handwritten exams, Dr Lambert claims, even considering where words have been scribbled out and provide feedback to learners to help them improve.


Manual marking takes weeks to complete, which Dr Lambert claims “delays results to students and hinders their outcomes”.

He claims his company could deliver exam results “in a couple of hours out to the entire nation, while also giving a detailed, auditable pathway of how the marks are awarded”.

Dr Lambert claims their tool has proven itself to be “more accurate than [human] markers”, who are “prone to error making in these highly repetitive tasks”.

Exam regulator Ofqual told Schools Week using AI as a sole exam marker was “not allowed”. Dr Lambert said he was unaware of this. However, they are marketing the tool as a “co-pilot” for marking, rather than a complete solution.

Vision Marker is used in 25 schools on practice papers. The Lamberts are also working with exam boards, as well as some multi-academy trusts and higher education institutions, around using their



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askKira is an AI-powered Education Coach that offers real-time support for a wide range of tasks. It's accessible on your desktop, laptop, tablet, or mobile device, so you can use it anytime and anywhere.

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Screenshot of askKira website

‘It’s like Jarvis from Iron Man, but for teachers’

services in the future. However, they won’t reveal which ones.

Ofqual’s pilot innovation service is helping awarding organisations to navigate the regulatory framework around AI.

AQA’s chief executive Colin Hughes said in November that his organisation was interested in the potential for AI to mark exams, describing it as being “very easy” to have “machines marking human markers”. But “public confidence” was stopping them from doing so.

Exam marking is also a popular way for teachers to top up their wages each summer.

But Dr Lambert claims examiners are “paid below minimum wage for what they do” and that his tool “turns markers into moderators”.

“They evaluate the marks that we give and use the [learner] feedback to agree or disagree with our system. It’s the regulator’s dream rather than their nightmare, because we have a fully auditable process of how and why marks are awarded.”

But, speaking more generally, edtech investor Richard Taylor, who is managing director of MediaTaylor, cautioned: “People in both edtech and education are prone to making stupid predictions.”

He pointed to the example of Pearson, saying

in 2009 they had an automated exam marking system that replicated the accuracy of human markers.

“While hype may be seen as part of edtech’s DNA, buyers and users should always be very sceptical about claims that range from terminological inexactitude to pure snake oil. In my 20-plus years of looking at thousands of pieces of edtech, perhaps 5 per cent were either investable/likely to succeed, or worthwhile, educationally. It’s the 95 per cent you have to avoid.”

Speaking at the BETT edtech show last week, education secretary Gillian Keegan said: “We should have the same expectations for robust evidence in edtech as we do elsewhere in education.”

“Ed tech business should be leading the way – being transparent with buyers and promoting products based on great evidence of what works.”

‘We’re not trying to take teachers out the loop’

Developers have also warned of AI’s limitations. SchoolOnline has recently launched an auto-marking function. Through this, English assignments between key stages 2 and 4 can be assessed against UK national curriculum and

Feature: AI

exam board criteria.

“Traditionally it took two hours to mark a key stage 2 essay, but we’re turning that into two minutes,” SchoolOnline CEO Lucien Bowater explained. “You are radically reducing the teacher workload.”

The software will offer feedback on a per-student and whole-class basis, and “recommend to the teacher a next step”. It can also create a subsequent lesson plan.

Despite this, Bowater stressed marked assignments aren’t sent straight back to pupils as “we believe the teacher has a really important role in reviewing and editing it”.

“The AI won’t always get it right. The vast majority of the time it’s right, but we’re not trying to take teachers out of the loop.”

Peter Gravell, of Real First Reports, which helps formulate school reports and UCAS references, also noted that early forms of AI were “inherently quite biased” in terms of gender and race.

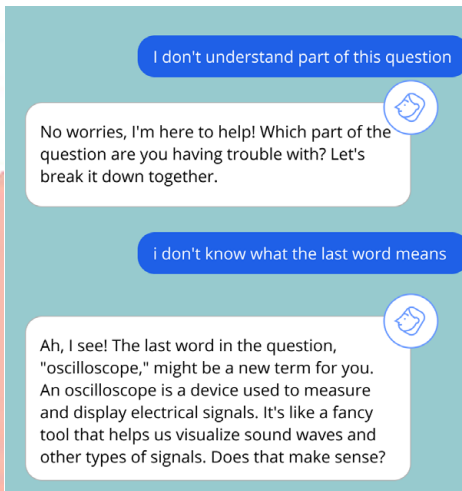
Those using his paid-for service – which has 15,000 subscribers – plug in bullet points of information they want to include in each of their pupils’ reports. To eliminate the risk of these biases, Real First Reports changes the names of children to those in a pre-set list “of western standard names” and categorises all of them under the same gender.

“Another problem they [AI] have is they never know when they’re right or wrong... so they won’t flag when it be might wrong – it always gives the best answer it can give,” Gravell continued.

“No system’s perfect, so once the report’s written, teachers are encouraged to proofread it and make changes where necessary.”

Here come the robot tutors

But it’s not just marking and workload reduction being targeted. The learning platform Tassomai claims it’s new virtual tutor, Mai, can do almost anything that a human tutor does, but for a fraction of the cost. Its founder, Murray Morrison,



‘People in both edtech and education are prone to making stupid predictions’

believes that one day AI like his will do away with the need for tutors altogether – levelling the education playing field in the process.

Mai uses a trained version of OpenAI’s GPT3.5 to chat to learners, in the same way that an on-demand human tutor would guide them with their homework. Since January, it has been made available to all the 600 secondary schools in England that use Tassomai’s assessment platform, on which more than two-million pupil questions are answered every day.

It was while Morrison was propping up his teacher salary by tutoring for members of the British royal family and celebrities – including Elle Macpherson’s kids – that he realised how unfair it was that “people who can pay for it” get “amazing tutoring”, but “everyone else is missing out”.

Tassomai, which Morrison founded in 2013, helps plan and mark kids’ homework. With the addition

of Mai, learners get help when they don’t understand something and instant feedback, without giving away the homework answers.

Morrison

believes parental permission is not required for them to use Mai. The app does contain an opt-out function for parents, but Morrison is unaware of any parents having used it.

He points out that “our contract is with the school and the school owns the data”.

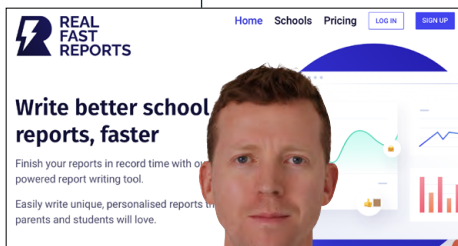
However, one school with a Conservative Christian ethos insisted upon Mai not being able to teach some aspects of biology. Morrison describes such instances as causing a “real dilemma” for companies such as his.

“What if we were asked to write content for the Florida School Board and they don’t want us to say that evolution is true? That’s a whole other conversation.”

He also admits there have been “lots of hiccups” in teaching Mai how to tutor, as large language models are “not as clever as you want them to be... the art comes in training it to do the right thing. It’s certainly not just a plug in and play process.”

But he believes AI is rapidly becoming more sophisticated, saying it is “not beyond its reach” to replace tutors altogether within the next two years.

“When tutoring is as expensive and inconvenient as it is, there’s an opening there.”



Peter Gravell



Murray Morrison

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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Better teaching for pupils with additional needs now permeates the new framework, explain Margaret Mulholland and Simon Knight

Last year the DfE published the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan.

One of the commitments made in this plan was that the content of the core content framework (CCF) and early career framework (ECF) would be reviewed to build teacher expertise and increase their competence to meet the needs of children and young people identified with SEND.

Having collectively had the opportunity to contribute to its development, it is pleasing to see that it starts strongly with a new section in the framework introduction. 'Supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities' lays out the importance of high-quality teaching for all pupils, especially those with additional needs.

What feels like a real step towards true inclusivity in this section is its emphasis on the value of understanding individual pupils' development needs rather than their generic labels. Labels can only go so far in helping a teacher understand the child in front of them; relationship-building is key to knowing which adaptations will best support that pupil to progress.

It's positive to see an acknowledgement of the nuance involved in supporting pupils with complex needs. The previous frameworks emphasised the need for mentors and other experienced colleagues to support early-career teachers to understand how to apply the statements within the framework appropriately.

It's helpful to see that this need for professional judgment and reflexivity even more explicitly acknowledged in the new framework. This should hopefully negate misconceptions that it

MARGARET MULHOLLAND

SEND and inclusion policy specialist, ASCL

SIMON KNIGHT

Joint headteacher, Frank Wise School



ITTECF: Another step forward for inclusive teaching

promotes rigid and inflexible practices.

There are also some new statements in the framework content itself which have the potential to strengthen inclusive practice.

For example, we know that building strong relationships between pupils and teachers and fomenting an authentic sense of belonging are core tenets of inclusive teaching. So, it's great to see this new statement in the first section, 'High Expectations': "High quality teaching is underpinned by positive interactions between pupils, their teachers and their peers".

Section two, 'How Pupils Learn' very clearly acknowledges the natural

variations in our working memory capacity. It reads: "Pupils have different working memory capacities; some pupils with SEND may have more limited working memory capacity than their peers without SEND".

Working memory capacity is associated with multiple SEND needs and recognising this diversity will help new teachers to plan anticipatory support to help all pupils access and progress in their learning.

There are also statements that have been adjusted to acknowledge that flexibility may be required in how they are applied depending on a pupil's

developmental trajectory.

However, it's simply in the nature of broad statements covering multiple contexts that they won't always be able to reflect the entirety of the pupil population. As acknowledged in the framework introduction, it will be vital for those working with children whose needs are different to contextualise delivery to meet the needs of their staff and pupils.

Some of the changes reflect the content of the new NPQ SENCo framework. Indeed, this statement in section 5, 'Adaptive Teaching', is replicated from that framework: "High quality teaching for pupils with SEND is based on strategies which are often already practised by teachers, and which can be developed through training and support".

This helps to strengthen the consistency that runs through the professional learning frameworks and creates a foundation from which inclusive leaders can grow.

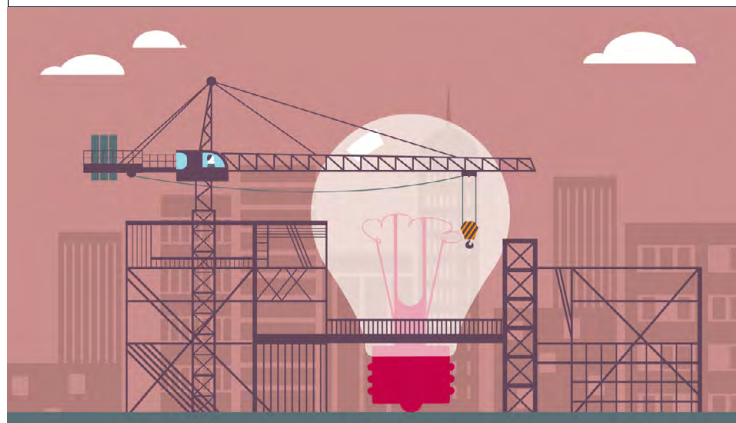
Close readers might notice that the examples pulled out here come from across the framework, not just the 'Adaptive Teaching' section. This demonstrates a desire to build inclusive content throughout the whole framework and not to simply situate inclusive practice as somehow in addition to core practice.

The framework is just the beginning. The adjustments that have been made create the space for better opportunities to explore SEND practice and develop greater understanding.

But that will only happen if those involved in the delivery of the framework make best use of these opportunities and recognise that we need to support all teachers to be effective for all children.

This article was co-authored with Anne Heavey, Director of Insights, Ambition Institute

“The framework is just the beginning”



Opinion

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TIM OATES

Group director of assessment research and development, Cambridge University Press & Assessment

Let's end the fruitless knowledge v skills debate

Calls for the next government to rebalance knowledge and skills are not wrong – but they are aimed at the wrong target, says Tim Oates

I find current polarities distressing. Some educators and commentators forget that in the first half of the 20th Century, it was key thinkers of the Left who argued for access to 'powerful' and 'privileged' knowledge. Recalling this important fact may encourage a truce in an unnecessary conflict.

Those thinkers knew that writing and calculating were essential skills and that schooling should naturally be a complex mix of knowledge and skill. They also knew that knowledge is always hard-won.

Many children acquire rich knowledge through the cultural context of their families. Others do not or cannot do this, and schooling is their only chance to acquire it. Closing gaps between young children from different social backgrounds depends on us closing this knowledge gap.

So, I challenge some of the assumptions made about the school curriculum.

Knowledge is boring

The first is about boredom. Yes, school should be exciting, motivating and engaging. And yes, acquiring knowledge is hard. But being hard does not mean it need be boring.

And yet the two are constantly equated, leading people to argue that we can make education more engaging by moving away from a focus on knowledge. In truth, all the evidence from international comparisons says that we should ensure the school curriculum is knowledge-rich and engaging.

Knowledge is passé

The second is an inference from the technology-led idea that knowledge is growing faster than ever before. True. This means that acquiring knowledge is an antiquated aim because any such knowledge is quickly redundant. False.

The particulate theory of matter is difficult to grasp, but is invaluable to advanced understanding. So are 'pitch' and 'interval' in music, the history of creative writing, and tectonic plates and glacial action. You can make any of these boring or exciting, but none are going out of date tomorrow.

Knowledge is failing

Those who laud Estonia's 'competence-based' curriculum as superior to our 'knowledge-rich' model clearly have not read the Estonian national curriculum. The two are uncannily similar.

The most persistent false opposition in our educational discourse remains in our educational discourse remains knowledge versus skills. It's a position which risks crystallising social



“ This false opposition is a threat to social justice

differences, not reducing them.

But it represents a significant threat to social justice not only in academic general education but in vocational education too. The latter consistently under-represents the role of technical and procedural knowledge.

Knowledge is academic

All sophisticated contemporary analyses emphasise the fact that effective professional practice is a complex amalgam of knowledge and skills.

The 'competence-based' movement of the early 1990s rightly argued that vocational and technical qualifications should be based on the practical content of work.

But it went wrong when rhetoric and guidance argued that practical outcomes were all-important and any focus on knowledge irrelevant. Among serious negative consequences, this has opened up a gulf between higher- and lower-level professional qualifications.

Some occupational areas such as health have begun closing this gulf. But this has not occurred through the recognition of a progressive ladder of combined knowledge and skill (which would be evidenced by high levels of traffic up the professional ladder from basic roles

to higher ones).

Rather, it has occurred through the irresistible practical pressures of escalating workloads and labour shortages.

In many of the labour market we see poor ladders of progression from lower technical roles to higher professional roles. A major factor is the emphasis on 'practical outcomes' driving the content of lower-level qualifications while higher-level qualifications are knowledge-rich with practice-based elements.

It is a credit to recent policymakers that higher-level apprenticeships are beginning to break these divisions. But failing to mirror this model for lower-level apprenticeships denies young people the foundational knowledge to move up the progression ladder. It is the missing rung of that ladder.

This is what the next government should focus on: not bringing more competence and skill back into academic learning, but establishing knowledge firmly in vocational learning.

Learning programmes in all tracks should be motivating and engaging and result in empowered, confident and capable young people – and knowledge intertwined with competence is at the heart of that endeavour.

Opinion

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AARON MEREDITH
CEO, The Inspire Multi Academy Trust (South West)

The Plymouth Playbook: Piloting people through improvement

Aaron Meredith tries to bottle the strategy that has driven his southwest schools to Ofsted success with people, not pressure, at its core

Imagine taking a school from Inadequate to Outstanding within five years. Imagine doing it not twice, but three times. It can be done and has been done and I'm extremely grateful to the inspiring teams of colleagues who worked alongside me to get those results.

Of course, it brings an immense sense of pride, but primarily we aim for improvement because we believe we can give our pupils the very best chances and opportunities to shine and thrive.

As all of us in education reevaluate the process of inspections and the toll they take personally on all of us, I wanted to see if we could focus on how we can get the best results from inspections without losing sight of the human factor in the process.

I've tried to bottle what we have done with our schools in Plymouth.

I wanted to see if we could produce what I'm calling the Plymouth Playbook and share it with anyone wanting to raise their Ofsted rating while keeping people and community at the heart of those efforts.

A bit of background: our Inspire South West schools are in the wonderful city of Plymouth, a city with a proud heritage and a strong

sense of community. It's a naval and maritime port city, and we have always had areas of poverty. Our schools are in communities often described as deprived but, as we all know, talent and optimism are everywhere even if opportunity often isn't.

Despite some of the challenges, we have a proven track record of success. At Tor Bridge Primary School last November, we celebrated a meteoric rise from 'Inadequate' in 2018 straight to 'Outstanding', a feat only achieved three times in the southwest region over the past decade. Two other schools I've led we have seen similar trajectories.

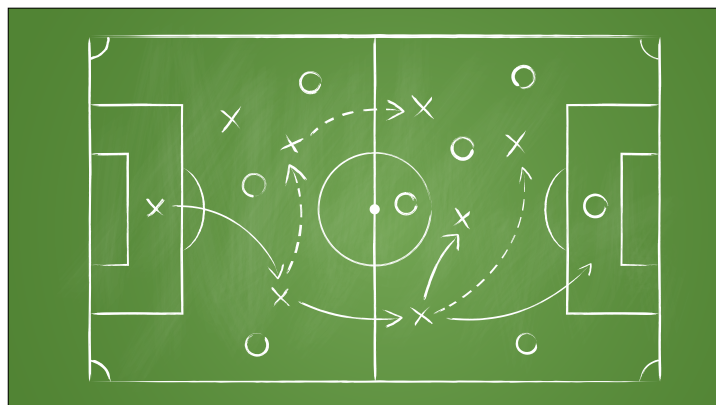
The Plymouth Playbook isn't and can't be a one-size-fits-all solution. It's a guide which outlines a series of principles and strategies that have driven exceptional results, and I believe that this fits with the current shift in Ofsted thinking on inspections.

The process must be about people, not pressure, and we hope the new training and ethos for inspectors will reflect that.

The key ingredients for the Plymouth Playbook are:

Identify and amplify strengths

Even struggling schools have hidden gems. The playbook emphasises acknowledging and celebrating existing strengths, fostering a sense of positivity and potential within the school.



“ This isn't and can't be a one-size-fits-all solution ”

Celebrate quick wins

No matter how small, early victories are crucial. The playbook encourages recognising and celebrating these wins as a team, building momentum and confidence.

Share your vision

A clear, inspiring vision is essential. The playbook calls for over-communicating this vision, ensuring everyone understands the light at the end of the tunnel and feels motivated to reach it.

Lead by example

Leaders set the tone. The playbook emphasises modelling the expected work ethic and behaviour at all times, inspiring others through action.

Cultivate appreciation

Recognition is key. The playbook encourages expressing gratitude frequently, creating a culture where staff feel valued and motivated. This ought to be applied to a new inspection culture as well.

Build relationships

Strong team dynamics are crucial. The playbook promotes building relationships with staff on both professional and personal levels, fostering a sense of belonging and commitment.

Navigate change

Change can be challenging. The playbook provides guidance for handling difficult conversations with staff, prioritising honesty, respect, and dignity while maintaining high expectations.

Breed success

The playbook encourages celebrating successes as they snowball, fostering a culture of positive reinforcement and high expectations.

Be purposeful

Remind everyone why they're there. The playbook emphasises consistently connecting individual efforts to the lives of children and their communities, providing a sense of purpose and motivation.

I hope our Plymouth Playbook can empower schools across the country. I believe that by sharing our experiences and providing a roadmap for improvement, we can show that even struggling schools can achieve remarkable transformations.

To find out more or get a copy of the Plymouth Playbook, contact Inspire MAT SW on timat@timat.org.uk

Solutions

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



MEL
LANE

Head of education, Pop'n'Olly

Two strategies for cross-curricular LGBT+ inclusion

Marking the start of LGBT history month, Mel Lane sets out some easy wins to build a year-round inclusive environment in every classroom and corridor

We were learning about possessive apostrophes in a Year 6 English lesson and I tentatively wrote the following on the board:

Where should we put the apostrophe?

- The girls cloakroom
- The childrens playground
- Davids boyfriend

I stepped back, held my breath and waited for the silly comments, the sniggers and the inevitable disruption, but they never came. Nothing happened. I couldn't believe it.

At that time, I was new to inclusion work. I had nothing LGBT+ inclusive displayed in the classroom, there had been no inclusive assemblies and we'd only had one PSHE lesson on anything LGBT+. "Surely, they'd never handle this?" I thought.

Much to my surprise, after discussing where the apostrophes should go, the class simply got on with their work. It was fantastic to witness.

For some teachers, cross-curricular LGBT+ inclusion can sound like a

daunting prospect. But as is often the case, success lies in many small inclusive acts rather than one big one. Below are two little approaches that can have a big impact: drop-ins, and visibility.

Drop-in References

Like my example of a question in the English class, 'drop-ins' are a great and easy way to spread diverse representation throughout the curriculum and it can be applied to pretty much every subject.

Here are some other examples we can all use across different subjects:

History

One of the people who really influenced Martin Luther King Jr was Bayard Rustin. He was a black, gay man, inspired by Gandhi to believe in the power of non-violence. Do you think non-violence is a good way to get your point of view across?

Physical Education

Professional Canadian footballer, Quinn said having the support of their teammates was crucial for them when coming out as non-binary. Why do you think this support mattered so much?

Modern Foreign Languages

Marie vit à Paris avec ses deux papas.

Visibility

It is extremely hard to be what you



Bayard Rustin, 1964

“ Success lies in many small inclusive acts

can't see. Children spend a long time in school and their environment shapes how they view themselves. By including LGBT+ lives in displays and showing our allyship around school, we show that being LGBT+ is just another way to be a human.

Displays

Think beyond a display for Pride or LGBT+ history month. How about other displays? Can you include LGBT+ people in a display about a historical topic (e.g. Alan Turing when talking about the history of computer science)? Can you include LGBT+ sportspeople and their achievements in a sports display (e.g. Jake Daniels, an openly gay footballer)?

Visible allyship

A simple act of wearing rainbow lanyards, supportive pin badges or even raising LGBT+ flags around the school (year round) tells everyone in your school community that you and your classroom/school are an LGBT+ safe and inclusive space.

When we include positive references to LGBT+ lives in all aspects of our teaching, we indicate to children that LGBT+ people are a

welcome part of society – that LGBT+ lives are just as diverse and varied as everyone else's.

We also know that representation has a significant mental health impact, not only on LGBT+ children but on all children. For more on the positive mental health impact of visible allyship, see Growing up LGBT+, a 2021 report from LGBT+ young people's charity Just Like Us.

The short version: visibly demonstrating that there are all sorts of different ways to be human and that they are all equally valid makes children feel part of a welcoming and inclusive community.

So, this LGBT+ History Month, go ahead and use the time as a launchpad to do some specific LGBT+ lessons and put up some new displays.

But don't stop there. Remember that by scattering references to LGBT+ lives across the curriculum and throughout the year, we can create a more sustained and therefore more effective culture of inclusion and diversity in our schools.

And if you do get the odd snigger, well that's just a teachable moment. Don't forget that it's the small acts that add up to a big win.

SCHOOLS WEEK



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THE REVIEW

SMASHING GLASS CEILINGS

Author: Kate Jones

Publisher: Routledge

Publication date: 12 December 2023

ISBN: 1032461969

Reviewer: Emma Cate Stokes, Key stage one phase lead, East Sussex

Smashing Glass Ceilings isn't the first book by Jones I've read, and it won't be the last. Still, it diverges from her usual narrative style, which is typically more focused on educational research and pedagogy.

Here, she extends a heartfelt tribute to the female education community, a group she has both supported and drawn support from over the years.

The book is a mosaic of Jones' personal achievements interwoven with anecdotes, pragmatic tips and enlightening spotlights on distinguished teachers. But the real gems are her interviews with successful women in various education sectors.

Moving beyond the conventional focus on teaching roles to showcase women from all facets of education, from leadership to curriculum design to consultancy, they are full of invaluable insights and highlight that the journey in education is not monolithic.

Jones' interviews with women in non-teaching roles are particularly revealing. They offer a window into how one can impact the educational landscape beyond the classroom. These narratives underscore that achieving a headship, while a noble goal, is not the sole path to breaking through educational glass ceilings.

These women's stories serve as a testament to the fact that the educational sector offers many opportunities for those willing to venture beyond traditional roles.

The broad effect is not just informative but deeply empowering. It encourages readers to explore and embrace paths that align with their skills, passions and visions for change. As a result, *Smashing Glass Ceilings* becomes more than a compilation of success stories; it is a

reminder that every role, whether in the forefront or behind the scenes, is instrumental in shaping educational experiences and breaking down barriers. In doing so, it inspires and challenges us to rethink and expand our understanding of what it means to be a woman in education today.

One of the book's strengths lies in its practicality. Jones doesn't just inspire; she equips her readers with tangible tools and strategies to navigate the often-tumultuous waters of educational careers. From leveraging social media for professional growth to fostering meaningful connections in the industry, her advice is both actionable and insightful.

Jones does an excellent job covering a broad spectrum of topics, but it's important to acknowledge that some of the advice might feel a bit basic for some. For instance, the sections on using social media effectively or navigating Zoom meetings were quite familiar. Many of us, especially in the digital age, have already honed these skills.

However, it's precisely this foundational approach that amplifies the value of the book for a broader audience. These elements offer a clear, step-by-step guide for women just embarking on their next steps. Jones breaks down even seemingly simple tasks into manageable parts, which can be incredibly useful for those less familiar with these tools.

This fundamental level of guidance is, in many ways, the brilliance of Jones' work. It ensures that *Smashing Glass Ceilings* is a comprehensive 101 on kickstarting the next stage in your career, offering valuable insights into basics that are often overlooked in more advanced texts.

While seasoned professionals might skim over these more basic sections, they lay the

BOOK

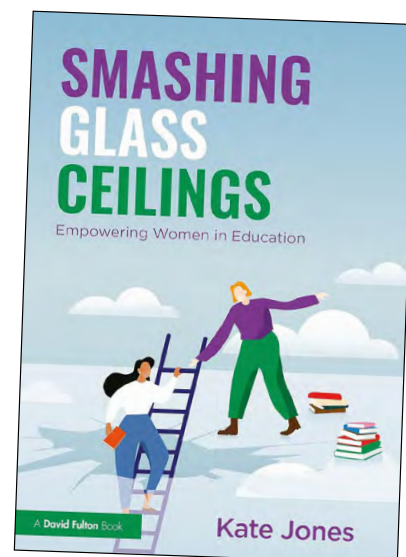
TV

FILM

RADIO

EVENT

RESOURCE



groundwork for the more complex concepts discussed later – a thoughtful structure that makes the book a versatile resource for a wide range of readers.

Jones's writing style is inviting, almost as if she's having a one-on-one with you. This approach makes the book immediately accessible and the reading experience enjoyable. Her tone is consistently encouraging, yet doesn't shy away from the challenges and setbacks she and others have faced, an honesty that only adds to the book's authenticity.

Smashing Glass Ceilings also shines in its celebration of achievements both big and small. Jones understands the importance of recognising and valuing every step forward, and not only encourages us to pursue our dreams but to pause and appreciate the milestones along the way.

All in all, this book is a powerful message of hope and solidarity. Its call for women to support each other is at once timely and timeless, and its vision of a more inclusive and equitable sector is not only inspiring but, as it shows, ultimately achievable.



Rating



THE CONVERSATION
LISTENING IN ON
THE DIGITAL STAFFROOM



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

PARDON, M. CUISENAIRE

This week I took solace in reminding myself of how I started in schools, as a teacher. As a teaching head, my greatest privilege is to still teach and learn with children. So being able to refresh my own practice to make maths more meaningful is always welcome.



Until reading this blog, I hadn't even considered why Cuisenaire rods were so named. Every day's a school day, and I also now know that they are wondrous for developing mathematical understanding of complex concepts such as algebra.

I'm very old, so I remember these in second year infants (what we used to call year 1). They were brand new and beautiful and we used to love the shiny orange sticks.

I don't think we used them in maths though, just as building materials during wet play. Apologies, Monsieur Cuisenaire. Thanks to this blog, I've seen the light and started putting them to use for their intended purpose.

If you have them hidden away, I encourage you to do the same.

THE START OF A JOURNEY

In this informative early years podcast, Andy Burt talks to Emma Hudson, early years lead at Willerby Carr Lane Primary School. Listening to the expert pair discussing Emma's continuous provision journey, the biggest chord that chimed was the section around process and outcomes.

"Doing it is more valuable than the final product," says Emma. "It is the making of the learning story, not the end, which is important – something I feel we miss again and again." Amen to that.



DEAR ENGLAND

Which leads me nicely into this blog by Mike Murray about four very different cultural reference points and what they teach us about education. Among the four is Dear England, a National Theatre play that is also being shown in cinemas as part of the National Theatre Live programme.

If you can catch a showing, please do. I went to see this at the cinema this week, having already seen it on stage with my football-playing daughter.

The play is about Gareth Southgate's journey from player to coach and his attempt to redefine the psychology of the game, away from career-making and -ending cliff-edge moments and towards growth. For me, it resonated immediately with leadership in schools and I'm delighted that Murray felt the same.



The idea that it's the journey that matters is a powerful antithesis to our current model. It puts a strong onus on how we enable others

on that journey (in this case our school teams) to flourish and find their own voice and write their own story, and it truly 'brings home' how ill-suited the current inspection framework is to our collective mission.

WE'VE LOST THE PLOT

In this pertinently titled episode of the Rethinking Education podcast, secondary headteacher Ben Davis discusses with host James Mannion "where on Earth we are going wrong" with regards to children's attendance and our worsening recruitment and retention crisis.


Davis's view is that if we continue on this trajectory heads will not be the only ones burning out. So will staff, children and young people and the communities schools serve.



The pair discuss various options for change which are vital if we wish to see schools improve. Among those is the illogical one-word judgement, as well as the equally wasteful effort that goes into trying to guess what inspectors are looking for.

They lampoon both perfectly with a game of 'good or RI', trying to guess inspection judgements from segments of reports, with laughable and tragic results. That the vast majority of inspectors are honourable isn't even the question. The simple fact is that even inspections that feel true and fair are divisive and far too simplistic. Worse, they incapacitate whole schools with exhaustion, jeopardising any potential improvements.

Living in this culture of fear does nothing for outcomes or indeed 'cultural capital'. And all of this when, as Davis points out, we have our work cut out to create environments young people and adults want to spend time in. It does indeed feel like we've lost the plot.

Click the links to access the blogs and podcasts 

The Knowledge

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



Can combining language and movement improve both?

Dr Anna Cunningham, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Nottingham Trent University

Basic movement skills such as throwing, catching, and jumping are key factors in creating more active children, with health, social and academic benefits. Similarly, good language skills such as vocabulary and understanding narrative, are an essential foundation to academic achievement.

Despite this, both motor and language skills are poor in British five-year-olds compared to other European countries, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Our research explored the use of a movement and storytelling programme (MAST) as a fun and easy-to-implement way of closing this gap. The programme shows the benefits of using PE lessons as an opportunity to improve both physical and linguistic development in a more effective way.

What is MAST?

MAST is a 12-week programme delivered for two 35-minute sessions per week based on popular children's books, *The Gruffalo* and *Stick Man*, delivered during PE lessons to the whole class. Each lesson follows the unique MAST structure of five minutes' language work followed by 25 minutes' movement work, followed by a final five minutes' language work.

The final language section targets a time when the brain is primed for learning due to increased blood flow following exercise.

The first six weeks focus on locomotor skills such as running, skipping, jumping, while the second six weeks focus on object skills like throwing, catching and kicking. Language work covers key vocabulary and comprehension skills relating to the stories.

What did we study?

Our pilot work showed that combining movement and storytelling was more effective than a movement-only or language-only version of MAST when delivered by us to preschool children. For the current study, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, we wanted to see if MAST could be delivered on a wider scale by teachers to Reception classes in primary schools.



Nine schools with average and below average numbers of premium-eligible children took part. They were randomly chosen to either deliver MAST, or continue with their usual PE curriculum.

Five Reception teachers across five schools were trained to deliver MAST during a one-day training event at Nottingham Trent University and given ongoing support from the research team.

They were interviewed half-way through on their experiences and observed twice. Some 214 children aged 4 and 5 across all nine schools were tested for their language and movement skills before and after doing MAST.

What did we find out?

Interviews showed that teachers found MAST a positive and enjoyable experience with three key factors for success being its utility value, being well-equipped and understanding why MAST works.

Barriers to implementation were behaviour management, struggles with engagement, not making MAST a school priority, and the need for practical support.

Observations showed that implementation fidelity was good, with four out of five settings consistently delivering all key components of MAST and all settings delivering the full 12-week programme.

Regarding effectiveness, children in the MAST group experienced a significant positive effect

on their standardised language skills and basic movement skills compared to the 'PE-as-usual' group.

MAST children showed the greatest improvements in sentence repetition and expressive vocabulary, and in their locomotor skills.

What are the implications?

Ofsted noted in its recent review of PE provision that there were 'significant gaps' in children's competence in fundamental movement skills. The motor activities that MAST helps to develop are explicitly linked to those skills that teachers are expected to work on within statutory PE in key stage 1.

However, the holistic approach of integrating PE with another key developmental area such as language work and delivering it as a whole-class activity offers a time- and resource-efficient way of addressing these concerns about physical development, while also supporting children's expressive language abilities.

The vocabulary work similarly benefits from being delivered immediately post-physical activity, which seems to boost its learning and retention.

MAST has also been effective in supporting teachers with less experience of PE to understand how to support children's development in this area using fun activities and stories that the children enjoy sharing.

Week in

Westminster

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



FRIDAY

The only thing that got us through January was the BBC's Traitors show, where several contestants convince their teammates they are "faithfuls" when actually they are "traitors". If they make the final, they win thousands of pounds.

Clearly one super fan was school leaders' union ASCL general secretary Geoff Barton. He opened his video weekly briefing with "hello there, faithfuls." (SPOILER ALERT: Let's hope teachers don't have the same luck as poor faithful Mollie, who walked away with nothing.)

Barton's ASCL tenure is up in a few months' time ... maybe coming to a screen near us soon?

TUESDAY

Exams regulator Ofqual is looking to outsource a sound-proof communications studio with lighting, good natural light and sound-proof walls. It will pay up to £60,000. Bit odd?

They told us it would be used to create content for students, teachers and exam officers to support its objective of "promoting public confidence" in qualifications.

We can see Ofqual chief regulator Sir Ian Bauckham sitting on a fancy sofa, surrounded by cameras, microphones and make-up artists as he presents 2024 exam results to the masses.

Watch out, Good Morning Britain.

Barton made us chuckle again in one



of his videos to the sector. A group of cyclists flew by as he stood in front of the Ofsted building.

Pointing to the watchdog HQ, he said: "This is Ofsted actually. Those are not the inspectors running off to their next inspection," he said.

It's probably not the first time inspectors have been told "on ya bike".

Children's minister David Johnston has declared in a written answer that "insufficient attention was paid" to the implementation of the 2014 SEND reforms.

YOU DON'T SAY!

THURSDAY

DfE quietly updated its secondary accountability measures today.

Normally when such documents are published they are accompanied by updates which state clearly the elements that have been changed.

Sometimes, if the DfE is feeling

nice, it even adds a nice summary at the start of documents about important updates.

Alas, this update had nothing of the sort. Just a 91-page document that had been republished.

We had to use a special programme that compares documents and flags changes to pick up what had been updated.

This might have been fine if the updates were minimal.

For instance, one of the (stranger) changes was removing names from case study examples of how to calculate attainment 8.

DfE has decided to rename fake pupil "Gillian" to "pupil A". LOL.

But it turned out the government had quietly all-but ditched a new policy around EBacc accountability measures that it only dreamt up a few months ago!

It's not as if school leaders need to know about potential accountability changes that were due to be introduced in just a couple of months!

BEFORE

EBacc headline attainment measure

We want to move to a headline EBacc attainment measure that incentivises full EBacc entry. We will explore making changes to the headline EBacc attainment measure (EBacc Average Point Score). We plan to engage with the sector on this during the autumn, with a view to confirming the approach in early 2024. The change would be introduced for 2024/25 measures, to be published in autumn 2025.

AFTER

EBacc headline attainment measure

As stated in the October guidance, we have explored making changes to the headline EBacc attainment measure (EBacc Average Point Score). We are pausing this work and the current EBacc APS will remain the headline EBacc attainment measure.



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Bexleyheath Academy is part of Academies Enterprise Trust, one of five schools in the London region serving over 5000 pupils. We have a well-established reputation and are proud to be a non-selective school in the grammar heartland of Kent. We have excellent attainment and progress outcomes and will stop at nothing to ensure our students have the very best opportunities.

Our core mission has always been to close the educational gap between young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers. Our ambition is one where every student in the academy, no matter their background, has equal access to high quality education, giving them the same opportunities and potential to succeed.

For a full list
of vacancies,
[click here.](#)



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JULY 2021



About the Trust

Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) is a national family of schools comprising 57 primary, secondary and special schools in England supporting each other to deliver our mission of providing an **excellent education to every child, in every classroom, every day.**

We employ over 4,000 people across the country, each committed to ensuring that every child receives their entitlement to a high level education. We have a dedicated recruitment team to place teachers and support staff within schools they will thrive in and encourage career development opportunities.

Every decision we make is with students' learning and interests at the forefront of our minds. Our schools dedicate focused time on formal academic learning with plenty of support for students' wellbeing - as well as making sure there is time for some fun, too!

Benefits

- Career development and training
- Great pension
- Healthcare cashback and helpline
- Employee assistance programme
- Free financial advice
- Salary advances
- Affordable loan scheme
- Electric car and bike schemes
- Lifestyle savings
- Discounted gym membership
- Travel and leisure scheme

For a full list of benefits, please visit our website.

Headteacher

L21 - L27 (£77,195 - £83,081)

Due to the retirement of our longstanding Headteacher, the governors seek to appoint a talented and exceptional individual who can lead our school into the future.



This is the start of a new era for the school, and you will be pivotal in our path to continuous improvement and outcomes, as we continue to drive a strong education for our children.

Blakesley Hall Primary School is a thriving, inclusive primary school in east Birmingham, with two forms of entry in Reception and Key stage 1 and three forms of entry in Key Stage 2.

Our vision is to enable every child to be: Safe, Secure and Successful. We are dedicated to ensuring our children feel fully supported in all that they do and learning radiates well beyond the classroom, with a vast array of extra-curricular activities, trips and educational visits taking place each term.

The incoming Headteacher will benefit from the support of drb Ignite Multi Academy Trust, collaborating closely with our experienced central team and the working relationships with Trust colleagues.

The successful applicant will:

- drive the school vision forwards and ensure all pupils achieve the highest standard of educational outcomes, regardless of circumstance or background
- approach the role with resilience and flexibility, using a creative and solution driven approach to improving our school
- inspire, lead and support a highly committed team of teaching and associate staff
- build positive relationships with the school's pupils, staff, parents, governors and the wider community
- engage all our pupils in a broad, balanced, creative and challenging curriculum so that they are happy and achieve their potential within a caring and inclusive community
- work closely and openly to collaborate with other schools in the Trust

[Click here to apply](#)



Headteacher

£71,729.00 - £83,081.00 Annually (FTE)

***Would you like to lead a school where every child is nurtured and supported to achieve in a creative way?
Are you dynamic and looking to develop your career in a school that supports professional development?***

We believe Tower Hill is that school.

We are a single form entry primary school in the thriving market town of Witney

This is a unique opportunity for an ambitious, creative, determined leader to champion the needs of our school. We do not underestimate the challenge of improving pupil outcomes against a backdrop of significant disadvantage. Our pupils deserve the very best in school leadership and we have reflected our commitment in the higher than usual salary for a school of this size.

Why don't you arrange to come and visit us?



Executive Director of People and Culture

Salary from £75,000

Mowbray Education Trust is a successful and growing MAT which is expected to be at least three clusters of schools within Leicestershire. Across the Trust, we have 535 staff in total, 201 of whom are teachers, and over 3300 pupils.

We're seeking to appoint an Executive Lead for People and Culture to lead our recruitment and retention strategy, striving to achieve our ambition of first class in every class. The role is crucial in embedding strategies to support our people to be well and work well. You will be responsible for nurturing a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that all staff have access to appropriate development opportunities of the highest standard. The successful applicant will ensure our Headteachers and Leaders have access to HR support that guides and supports them to deliver first-class education.

Closing date: 5th February 2024, 9:00 am



Executive Principal

Salary £110,000 - £120,000 depending upon experience

We are seeking an **Executive Principal** to join Turner Schools, a growing multi-academy trust which currently comprises six schools, a trust sixth form and 5 specialist resource provisions in the Folkestone and Dover district with future expansion planned for September 24. You will be joining the Trust at an exciting time as we move through a period of growth and development.

The Executive Principal will work across our secondary phase (11-19) in Folkestone and should be able to demonstrate a proven track record of rapid school improvement and improved outcomes for pupils. We are looking for someone who is already an established and successful educational leader, with the drive and ambition to ensure continued success and the vision and skills to deliver change in the years ahead. Due to our planned growth and development, there are excellent progression opportunities within the Trust and for the right candidate, there could be an opportunity to progress to a Director of Secondary Improvement role in the future as the Trust expands.

The role will focus on school improvement initially across our secondary schools and our sixth form in Folkestone and will involve working with our CEO, Principals and other senior and middle leaders to effectively self-evaluate and deliver high-quality education provision through robust and ambitious teaching and improvement work. The successful candidate will have the motivation and desire to develop pupils' achievements within a Trust who are focused and determined to ensure that all pupils make exceptional progress. The right candidate will be an excellent communicator who understands the power of collaboration and shares our vision to transform children's futures, empower families and strengthen communities.

Benefits of Working for Turner Schools:

Our staff tell us that the Trust is a supportive and motivational place to work, with real attention paid to staff wellbeing, workload and professional development. We care about our staff's personal and professional wellbeing and are pleased to offer the following benefits:

- Fully funded access to Benenden Healthcare
- Outstanding professional development through our Turner Institute
- Membership for all ECT, teaching and leadership staff to the Chartered College of Teaching
- Regular wellbeing and social activities
- Counselling and mental wellbeing support
- Access to Mental Health First Aiders
- Electric car scheme
- Cycle to work scheme
- Innovation Awards that encourage staff to put forward innovative ideas to make a difference to children's experiences
- Trust Vision and Values awards to recognise staff contribution
- Free parking on all our sites with access to E chargers

Interview

There is an opportunity to meet the CEO and have a tour of our schools w/c January 29th and 5th February. Please email HR@turnerschools.com to arrange a visit.

If you are shortlisted, the CEO will also wish to arrange to visit you in your home school if appropriate on the w/c 26th February.

The closing date for applications is 5pm on 18th February 2024 and shortlisting will take place w/c 19th February 2024.

Interviews will take place on the 4th and 5th March 2024.



Director of People

Salary: £71,050 - £81,154 | (Trust Director Grade 2: Points 54 to 58)
Contract: Full-time (37 hours per week) plus employee pension (LGPS)

Our workforce is fundamental to our success and growth. Attracting and retaining staff who align with our vision and goals for pupils is a top priority for leaders and Trustees.

As we embark on the next phase of our Trust's growth and development, we are seeking a Director of People who can build on our existing strengths and lead us forward. This role will be instrumental in shaping our culture, directly impacting on the life chances of our pupils, working environment and wellbeing of our people.

The successful candidate will have responsibility for the strategic leadership and delivery of the Trust's People Strategy, aligning it with the overall goals of the Trust and solidifying our position as an employer of choice.

We believe that this is an exceptional opportunity, and we hope this information inspires you to consider joining us in shaping our future.

To apply for this position, please complete the Application Form below.

Once completed, application forms can be emailed to:
recruitment@drbignitemat.org

All shortlisted candidates will be subject to online searches.

Closing date: Friday 23rd February 2024

Start date: June 2024 or sooner if available.



Head Teacher

Wreake Valley Academy

Permanent | Full Time (100%)

Leadership L32 – L38, £101,064 to £117,065

27th August 2024



BRADGATE
Education Partnership

An exciting opportunity has arisen for someone to join Bradgate Education Partnership as the Headteacher at Wreake Valley Academy. We are seeking someone who is ambitious, collaborative and ethical, someone who has passion to take the school into the next stages of its development working as part of the team at the Trust. The school provides 11-18 education with Bradgate Sixth Form and the Bradgate Inclusion Centre being important aspects of Wreake Valley Academy.

The role of Headteacher is a rewarding one. The role at Wreake Valley provides opportunity for growth, with our student numbers increasing year on year, leading on the development of the Sixth Form and shaping the staff team for the future.

We offer the following benefits:

- Opportunity to work within a highly skilled and supportive team
- Opportunities for career development with access to professional development, apprenticeships and training schemes
- A commitment to continue with national pay, terms and conditions

- Access to the generous Teachers Pension Scheme
- Employee Support Service (counselling) for employees and close family members (24/7 support)
- Employee Discount and Benefit Scheme
- Cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme
- Highly supportive Executive Leadership Team
- Access to a professional service with the Trust's Central Services for school improvement, HR, finance, estates, governance and IT

If you would like to apply for this role:

If you would like to discuss this post or arrange a visit to the school to meet the Director of Education, prior to applying please contact:

Email: info@bepschools.org

Telephone: 0116 478 3426

Please apply via Eteach here - Headteacher - Wreake Valley Academy (eteach.com)



Head of Humanities

£30,000 - £46,525 per annum
Birmingham, West Midlands

Now is the perfect time to join Greenwood Academy as our Head of Humanities. We are seeking an enthusiastic leader with vision and determination to lead our Humanities department to brilliance. The Humanities team at Greenwood Academy are a team of dedicated and passionate practitioners, committed to providing a high-quality education for students of all abilities and at KS3 and KS4.

Start Date: April/September 2024

Closing date: Monday 12th February 2024

Interviews are scheduled to take place on the 20th February 2024



A creative, aspirational headteacher is required to lead the happy and successful Preston Primary School

Key dates: Closing date Monday 19th February 2024, September start.

Contract: Full time, permanent

Salary: L16-L21 depending on skills, experience and performance.

A brief context of the school

Preston is a popular primary school, with an integrated provision for children with ASC, overlooking the sea in Torbay. Following a routine inspection in July 2023, Ofsted wrote a very positive report, maintaining the Good judgement. The website has further details about everything they do.

Key Requirements & Duties

- To provide high quality strategic leadership in all aspects of leading a school and inspire skilled and committed staff to deliver excellent outcomes for children
- Excellent leadership, people and teaching skills, using your knowledge of evidence-based research and current successful education strategies
- A good knowledge of SEND, commitment to inclusive education for children of all abilities and backgrounds.

www.preston.torbay.sch.uk



Senior Leadership opportunity at Ark

Ark is a network of 39 schools, reaching 30,000 students in our primary, secondary and all-throughs in Birmingham, Hastings, London & Portsmouth. Our schools are fully comprehensive and we are proud of our diversity, with over 40% of our students eligible for FSMs. Our 2023 results saw our KS2 students achieve 16 percentage points above the national average and at GCSE, 64% of students achieved grades 9-4 in English and Maths.

As we continue to strengthen the Ark network at every level, we are interested in hearing from strong existing or aspiring Assistant & Vice Principals who want to learn more about our opportunities and organisation.

We understand the importance of developing our leaders and know that our schools are only as good as our staff. Our Assistant and Vice Principals work with some of the best Principals and leaders nationally and have access to exceptional training, including qualifications such as NPQSL & NPQH.



By joining Ark, you can expect:

- Salaries 2.5% higher than main the pay scale & a generous pension scheme
- Double the amount of training time and additional INSET days for bespoke training
- Full access to an Employee Assistance Programme which provides free, confidential counselling, financial and legal advice
- Gym discounts of up to 40% off
- Access to Ark Rewards – a scheme offering savings from over 3,000 major retailers
- Interest-free loans of up to £5,000 for season tickets or to buy a bicycle.

We are committed to building a diverse workforce where everyone can deliver their best work and achieve their full potential. We want our SLTs to reflect the diverse perspectives of our students because we know that in doing so, we will be stronger and more effective.

To learn more about senior leadership opportunities at Ark, please **register your interest**



Ark Alexandra
Academy



Join us to make a lasting difference to our coastal community

Looking for teachers and leaders in subject areas including
English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, science and sociology

Located in the heart of Hastings, Ark Alexandra Academy is a large, two-campus secondary school and sixth form. Our aim is to provide students with academic excellence and life skills. Under bold new leadership already having rapid impact, now is an exciting time for dedicated teachers to join our close-knit team on the next stage of our journey.

Ark Alexandra is part of Ark, one of the country's most successful academy trusts. We are committed to investing in our teachers' professional development through collaboration across our extensive school network. By prioritising staff support and progression, we open doors for impactful careers focused on student growth.

We are currently looking for teachers and leaders in subject areas including English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, science and sociology.

We offer salaries that are 2.5% higher than main pay scale, twice as many training days, weekly staff training tailored to school needs, coaching for every teacher, protected co-planning time and access to high-quality professional development and qualifications like NPQML and NPQSL. As part of the Ark network, you will also benefit from opportunities to collaborate across our 39 schools and network-wide events with leading minds in education.

Interested in a new challenge? Hastings boasts a thriving cultural scene, an extensive seafront and excellent transport links to London and Brighton. We can offer relocation packages up to £5,000 to support you with the process.

We're looking for great teachers to join us and make a difference where it matters most.

Please click here to view all roles at Ark Alexandra Academy.

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