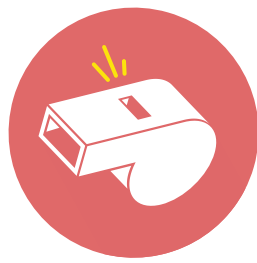




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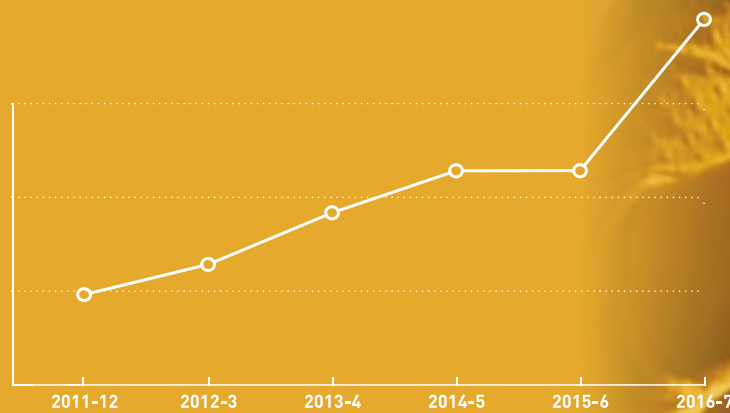


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THE RISE OF HOME EDUCATION

PAGES 8 & 9



Ofsted slate wiped clean for 700 schools

- Rise in rebrokered academies skews trust league tables
- 'Dropping failing academies minimises damage to the brand'

Exclusive

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WHO GOT WHAT BRIEF IN GREENING'S TOP TEAM

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NEWS

Ofsted ratings ‘wiped clean’ in 700 schools

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The Ofsted ratings of more than 700 schools have been wiped clean after becoming an academy or rebrokering, a *Schools Week* analysis reveals.

There are hundreds of thousands of pupils in these sponsored academies, many of which were categorised as underperforming by the education watchdog before having their Ofsted grades removed.

Ofsted classifies failing schools that have become sponsored academies or academies that have been rebrokered to a different trust as “new” – giving them a three-year respite from further inspections.

While the respite has been welcomed for giving trusts more time to drive sustainable improvement, a rapid rise in the number of rebrokered schools appears to be having other consequences, says a major study by the Sutton Trust, published last week.

Its report, *Chain Effects*, flags how multi-academy trusts (MATs) move up performance league tables after their low-achieving schools are rebrokered.

The findings have prompted questions over whether trusts should be given substantial numbers of new schools while some of their current academies are yet to have an Ofsted inspection.

Janet Downs, from the state school campaign group Local Schools Network, said she was “concerned” about MATs “dumping” their failing academies.

“Dropping underperforming academies or those judged less than ‘good’ under a MAT’s watch minimises damage to the MAT’s brand. History is rewritten when references to earlier MATs are wiped.”

Schools Week’s analysis of Ofsted monthly management data, published last month,

found 718 sponsored academies yet to have Ofsted visits after having their past inspection records wiped clean.

The data does not include figures for how many pupils are in each of these schools. But based on average school sizes, we calculate they could be teaching more than 300,000 young people – or about 4 per cent of the 8.67 million pupils in England’s schools.

Schools Week revealed in February that 235 academies had been handed to new trusts in the past two calendar years, up from just 26 in 2014.

Academies can be rebrokered for a number of reasons, but the most common is low performance and it is deemed that the school would perform better under a different trust.

Ofsted says that historical information about a school can be found on the watchdog’s website under a “related providers” tab.

However, when *Schools Week* looked for Ofsted records for ten rebrokered academies, two did not have this tab available.

Becky Francis, the co-author of *Chain Effects*, told *Schools Week* the government needed to “urgently” find ways to “monitor really tightly those schools that have been rebrokered to make sure they are rebrokered with successful MATs”.

She added regional schools commissioners should be “looking very closely” at MATs that have had academies removed before handing more schools to them.

Schools Week revealed last month that the country’s largest academy chain, Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), was preparing to sponsor new schools, despite two of its schools being rebrokered this

year.

Eight of the trust’s schools were rebrokered between December 2014 and April 2015 after government intervention.

Ten academies under the E-ACT trust were rebrokered in 2014 after Ofsted inspectors raised concerns over performance.

The Sutton Trust report ranked 48 established trusts based on the results of their disadvantaged pupils. It found E-ACT was ranked ninth, an improvement of nine places from last year. AET was ranked 15th this year, compared with 27th in 2016.

The report only includes trusts that have two sponsored academies, and which have operated at least three academies for at least three years.

But academy leaders have previously said the three-year respite gives a new trust time to put in place foundations for improvement.

Sir Steve Lancashire, chief executive of REAch2, said last year that regional schools commissioners must provide close monitoring of rebrokered schools, with the transferring academy to be “at least good by the time Ofsted inspect at the three-year point”.

An Ofsted spokesperson said the watchdog has the right to inspect a school at any time if it has concerns, regardless of its status.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education added: “When academies are treated as new schools they must be given a realistic amount of time for their new leadership team to make the required improvements.”

They added that regional schools commissioners will “constantly monitor and challenge” performance in rebrokered academies.

Trusts take on Perry Beeches’ schools (at last)

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

The controversial Perry Beeches academy trust in Birmingham is finally set to be disbanded, with its five schools handed to other trusts, 15 months after financial irregularities were first revealed.

Schools Week understands that proposals to close the trust and rebroker its schools have finally been agreed, and are awaiting sign-off from the academies minister Lord Nash.

Four of the schools are set to be handed to the Core Education Trust, which was set up to take over two Birmingham schools caught up in the Trojan Horse affair. Ark will take on the other school.

The move ends a long spell of uncertainty following a critical government investigation in March last year that found the trust had funnelled £1.3 million to a private company without following proper procedures.

The private firm then paid a “second salary” to superhead Liam Nolan, with

payments totalling £160,000 over two years on top of his £120,000 salary.

Nolan resigned in May last year, with the governing body also later standing down.

Talks dragged on for more than a year, but *Schools Week* understands a decision is expected in the next week with the five schools potentially handed to their new sponsors from September 1.

Paul Wheeler, acting chief executive officer at Perry Beeches, said the trust “remains committed to our students receiving the highest standard of education and staff will be continuing to deliver this.

“We will be working hard with the potential sponsors to ensure a smooth handover is achieved.”

The trust’s deficit – believed to stand at more than £2 million – is thought to be the main factor behind the delay.

Schools Week understands the new trusts will not take on any debt run up specifically by the trust, meaning the Department for Education (DfE) could

end up with the bill.

But the decision to rebroker all the schools comes after Perry Beeches’ acting leadership team, parachuted in by the government, appears to be on track for a budget surplus this year.

It has also overseen Perry Beeches III Free School moving to a “good” Ofsted rating in February after it was put in special measures in 2015.

The trust, at the centre of one of highest-profile academy scandals, was once praised by David Cameron and Michael Gove. It is believed that political sensitivities contributed to the decision to close.

Wheeler said that trustees, alongside the area’s regional schools commissioner, Christine Quinn, and the DfE, have “thoroughly examined all the options available for each school”.

“We have concluded that transferring the schools through rebrokerage will give our students and staff the greatest opportunities in the future.”

Core and Ark refused to comment.

NEWS

Gibb gets a bigger brief in DfE shake-up

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The schools minister Nick Gibb has been given an expanded role at the Department for Education (DfE), with the additional responsibility for steering sex and relationships education (SRE) reform.

As well as his schools remit, Gibb will also be the minister for equalities.

His new brief will include responsibilities for SRE and PSHE reforms, which were set in motion earlier this year. These previously fell under Edward Timpson, the former minister for children and families, who lost his seat in the general election.

Gibb, the MP for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton tweeted that he was "proud to be appointed minister for equalities as well as schools minister", and said that although there had been "huge progress made on LGBT & wider equality", there was "more to do".

However, Gibb's suitability to pilot SRE reforms has been questioned by the Labour MP and former schools minister Diana Johnson, who claims he "consistently argued" against imposing curriculum on academies when he was in opposition.

During a debate about the 2010 children and families act, Gibb argued that academies should not be "subject to the national curriculum", which included PSHE and SRE.

"The minister the Tories have tasked with



making SRE statutory in all schools, including academies, consistently argued against exactly this kind of provision in academies seven years ago," Johnson told *Schools Week*.

"In the extremely important discussions over the content of the SRE curriculum to come, it is vital that the government move to reassure students, parents and teachers that they mean what they say when they state they want to make SRE statutory."

Meanwhile, Robert Goodwill takes on

the early years portfolio and will also be responsible for SEND policy, free school meals, the pupil premium, school sports and the 12 opportunity areas announced by the government earlier this year. There had been questions about his suitability to preside over any SRE changes after *Schools Week* reported that he had voted against the legalisation of same-sex marriage.

Justine Greening, the education secretary, retains overall responsibility for the DfE,

GREENING'S FRONT BENCH

1. Justine Greening, education secretary
Early years, teachers' pay, curriculum, school improvement, the establishment of academies and free schools, further and higher education

2. Nick Gibb, minister for school standards
Recruitment and retention, ITT, CPD, the NCTL, admissions, school transport, school funding, curriculum, assessment and qualifications (Ofqual), school accountability (Ofsted), PSHE and SRE reform, mental health and bullying

3. Lord Nash, minister for the school system
Free schools, academies, multi-academy trusts, university technical colleges, studio schools, faith schools, independent schools, home education, supplementary schools, governance, capital investment, extremism, behaviour, attendance, exclusions, and alternative provision

4. Robert Goodwill, minister for children and families
Childcare and early years policy, pupil premium, free school meals, SEND, school sports and healthy pupils, cadets and military ethos in the education system, improving social mobility in the 12 opportunity areas

5. Anne Milton, minister for skills and apprenticeships
Apprenticeships, T-levels, careers education, sixth form funding, sixth-form colleges

6. Jo Johnson, minister for universities, science, research and innovation

while Lord Nash will continue in his role as minister for the school system.

Anne Milton, already minister for apprenticeships and skills with responsibility for sixth-form colleges and other post-16 provision, will also be minister for women.

Former ministers tussle for committee chair

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Former education ministers Robert Halfon, Tim Loughton and Nick Boles are vying to stand for election to chair of the House of Commons education committee.

Halfon, the former skills minister who was sacked by Theresa May last month, Loughton, who served as children and families minister between 2012 and 2014, and Boles who also served as skills minister between 2014 and 2016 are three of the Conservative MPs in the running for the influential job.

The former chair Neil Carmichael, who had intended to run again for a role he held for just two years, lost his seat at the general election.

During his time at the helm, he presided over inquiries into academy finances, the work of multi-academy trusts, regional schools commissioners and pupil mental health, among other issues.

Following a vote in parliament on Tuesday, it was confirmed that stewardship will once

again go to a Conservative.

Whoever takes on the job will play a key role in holding the government to account over its education policies at a time of great uncertainty for the schools community.

The rest of the committee will have a political make-up that broadly reflects the make-up of the Commons.

Tory MPs have until 5pm today to canvass support and to get their nominations in, ahead of a vote next week.

Others thought to be in the running include the former health minister, Dan Poulter, and Stephen McPartland, who has served on the science and technology committee.

It is the second time that Loughton has put his name forward for the job. In 2015, he ran against Carmichael and fellow Conservative Caroline Nokes, but was defeated by Carmichael in the second round.

Loughton tweeted that he was "delighted" to announce he had put his name forward for the role, and that he would "look to put together broad cross-party of support".



Robert Halfon



Tim Loughton

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FREE SCHOOL MEALS: TAKE-UP DROPS TO RECORD LOW

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Investigates

Figures released last week reveal that registration for means-tested free school meals – which is linked to pupil premium funding – is at its lowest since records began. Freddie Whittaker delves into local authority data to see how rates vary across the country and how councils are encouraging parents to sign up

Schools across England are in a postcode lottery when it comes to free school meals (FSM) with analysis of local authority data showing large variations in take-up.

Take-up has fallen to the lowest level since records began, with experts unable to explain either the overall drop or the local discrepancies.

The data is also inconclusive about the impact of the introduction of universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) in 2014.

The introduction of UIFSM for all pupils in reception and years 1 and 2 prompted concerns that parents of eligible pupils might forget or refuse to sign up for means-tested free meals, thus depriving their schools of pupil premium funding.

Schools lose money when the number of claimants goes down because their pupil premium payments are based on their FSM take-up.

This has led to some councils encouraging parents to sign up, through offers of free milk and other incentives.

In some areas, take-up at primary level has decreased more than at secondary, especially in London boroughs such as Islington and Southwark, where universal free school meals are available to all primary pupils, not just infants. In contrast, take-up at secondary fell more sharply than primary in Newham, another London borough that also has universal primary free meals.

Other areas with a much more significant drop in primary include Salford in Greater Manchester, Redbridge in London and coastal cities such as Hull and Plymouth.

Council incentive schemes

In several areas known to have implemented policies aimed at softening the blow of UIFSM to pupil premium, take-up has decreased at a similar rate at both primary and secondary level.

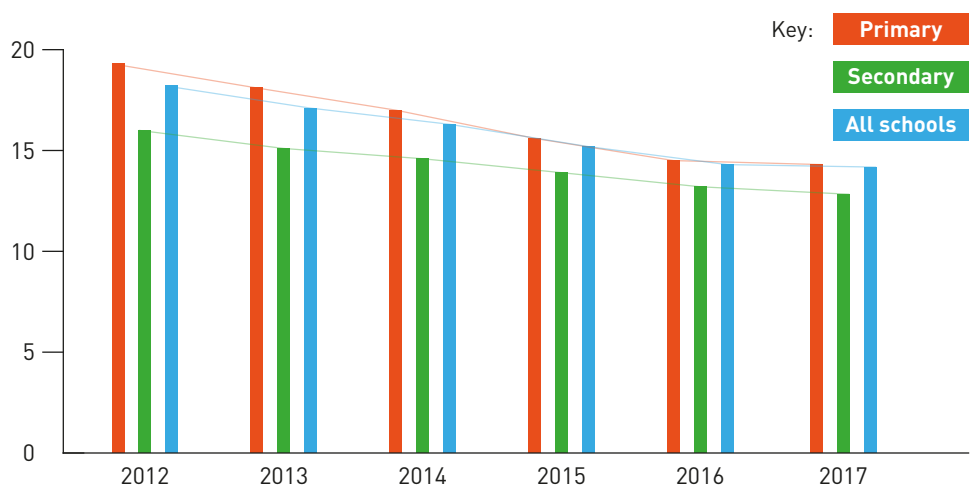
In South Tyneside, the council offers free milk as an incentive for eligible parents to sign up to claim free school meals.

In 2012, before universal infant free school meals were introduced, the council had FSM take-up rates of 24.7 per cent at primary and 23.6 per cent at secondary. This January, its take-up rates were 19.2 per cent and 18.7 per cent at primary and secondary respectively.

The council's offer of free milk was made to every child entitled



Proportion of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals



LAS WITH SUBSTANTIALLY BIGGER DROP AT PRIMARY THAN SECONDARY						
Local authority	Primary			Secondary		
	2012 take-up	2017 take-up	Change	2012 take-up	2017 take-up	Change
	%	%	% point	%	%	% point
Islington	47.9	27	-20.9	44.1	32.1	-12
Southwark	33.6	18.3	-15.3	35	26.1	-8.9
Redbridge	18.4	11.9	-6.5	17.5	16.1	-1.4
Salford	28.9	20.3	-8.6	24.1	20.4	-3.7
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	31.5	22.4	-9.1	27.7	23.2	-4.5

Source for all: DfE/School census

to a free school meal from reception to year 6, Joan Atkinson, the council's lead member for children, young people and families told Schools Week.

"To qualify parents must apply for a free school meal in the usual way. This means that as well as encouraging parents to apply for their free meal, they also make a saving of more than £27 a year on school milk."

Atkinson says the council's catering team visits every reception open day to meet new parents and "remind them about applying for the free school meal".

In Brighton and Hove, take-up at primary level has dropped from 16.7 per cent in 2012 to 13 per cent this year and at secondary from 15.7 to 12.2 per cent over the same period.

The council told Schools Week that its school meals service writes to all parents of reception children every year, telling

them about the meals and asking for details on their eligibility for universal infant free school meals.

"We have processes in place to recheck data collected to identify changes in eligibility where the council may not have been contacted by the parent when they become eligible," a spokesperson said.

"Our proactive stance on this has helped to maintain free school meal eligibility within the city as levels of unemployment nationally have declined."

Similar trends are seen in Bolton and Liverpool, both areas where the councils have changed tack to cope with UIFSM.

National FSM and unemployment data

Nationwide, 14 per cent of all pupils claimed free school meals in January, down from 14.3 per cent last year and the lowest level since the government started collecting

data in 2001.

In secondary schools, 12.9 per cent of pupils claimed free meals, while 14.1 per cent claimed them at primary level.

The data shows that take-up among all pupils peaked in January 2013 before decreasing at both primary and secondary level.

Eligibility for free school meals is based on a family's receipt of certain income-related benefits; the government has said it would expect to see meal claims go down as the number of people on benefits decreases.

However, although unemployment has fallen in recent years, from 7.8 per cent in September 2012 to 4.6 per cent in April 2017, researchers say a lack of data on the overall number of pupils eligible for free school meals makes it difficult to pinpoint the reason for the drop in take-up.

This is because the government publishes annual data on the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals, but not on how many are eligible overall. (FSM data will not necessarily correlate with unemployment data, as those on low incomes are also eligible.)

Dave Thomson, from Education Datalab, said his organisation would "find it hard" to say why take-up has fallen without it seeing data on how many pupils were eligible and "why they had been deemed eligible".

Thomson also said his organisation would like to see the approach of some councils to use benefits data to identify eligible pupils replicated across the country.

Monitoring FSM take-up

Child food poverty adviser Lindsay Graham says schools' efforts to maintain free school meal take-up are not properly monitored in England.

Graham, who is based in Scotland where school inspectors monitor how schools encourage free school meal take-up and tackle the stigma around them, suggested that a similar approach would work well in England.

"My understanding is that Ofsted monitors how pupil premium is spent and pupil premium is linked to free school meals," she said.

"With this connection I would have thought that the free school meals part would have been an essential part of monitoring. I have not seen any examples of how increasing FSM uptake has been recognised by Ofsted.

"The missing part for me is how important the free school meals are to Ofsted and what they actually consider about them during inspections."

Ofsted confirmed it does not "routinely" check on the extent to which schools are promoting FSM and said it has "no plans to add this as a requirement in school inspections".



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NEWS

Financial notice comes to light ten months late

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

The government has refused to explain why it kept a financial notice that revealed “significant irregular financial” practices at an academy trust under wraps for more than ten months.

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) last week published a financial notice to improve (FNTI) that was issued to the Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust (LSSAT) in August last year.

It revealed the trust, which was already in the process of transferring its nine schools to new sponsors, had “significant irregular financial and governance practice over a number of years” that the government had “significant concerns” over.

Analysis by *Schools Week* shows that for every other FNTI published this year, the maximum time between the letter being sent and its publication online was just over two months.

One FNTI was even published within three days of its issue.

The Department for Education (DfE) refused to say why there was a delay in publishing the LSSAT notice.

However, Mike Cameron, a school governor and former teacher, said the delay could damage confidence in the regulation



of academy trusts. He called for the system to be “urgently re-evaluated”.

Schools Week revealed the government had ordered LSSAT to be closed in July last year, with its nine schools transferred to new trusts. The schools were rebrokered by January, although it is unclear if the incoming trusts knew that the FNTI had been issued before they took over the schools.

The DfE would only say that it was up to new trusts to do their own due diligence.

Also, as previously revealed by *Schools Week*, the LSSAT’s founder, Trevor Averre-Beeson, went on to take over a private school in September that closed six months later, leaving more than 80 pupils stranded

and owing staff £231,000 in wages.

The DfE told *Schools Week* that checks on that takeover were ongoing, but could not be completed before the school closed.

But the publication of the FNTI suggests that the department was already aware of financial concerns at the trust.

Instead, the extent of the financial impropriety was only revealed publicly last month – after overdue annual accounts for LSSAT were published online.

The accounts revealed that numerous instances of financial “impropriety” had been reported to the EFA by the new trustees, including the trust paying severance cash to staff before reemploying them the next day, and spending public money on “luxury” booze.

Capital funding for new academies was also “inappropriately” used, forcing the new leadership team to seek additional cash to ensure that classrooms could open “with the necessary basic equipment and furniture”.

The “impropriety” only came to light after the new trustees were appointed to oversee the transfer of LSSAT’s nine schools, after



the government ordered the trust to close.

The FNTI published last week shows LSSAT had failed to manage conflicts of interests, to prevent one person “controlling and directing” the trust, to prevent irregular practices and decisions, and had breached procurement rules to related parties.

The EFA also said the trust failed to prevent a number of senior staff being paid off-payroll, failed to take action to avoid the expected cash flow deficit, and misused capital funds to cover deficits in revenue funding.

The new trustees at LSSAT were told to submit a recovery plan by the end of September (about six weeks after the FNTI was issued).

The warning notice was also signed off by the EFA’s funding director, Sue Baldwin, who is due to become the new regional schools commissioner for the East of England.

An EFA investigation into LSSAT is still ongoing. The government has previously refused to reveal when the report will be published.

Averre-Beeson did not respond to a request for comment.

FUNDING FORMULA LOOKS SET FOR A SOFT LANDING

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Local authorities could retain a role in dishing out education funding until 2022, with government plans for a hard national funding formula in jeopardy.

A report by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) think tank this week warns that the Department for Education (DfE) won’t be able to implement a “hard” national funding formula, which would allow the government to direct the vast majority of funding directly to schools, as planned in 2019-20.

The education secretary, Justine Greening, has said this is the “only way” to ensure all children are funded on a “level playing field”.

But the EPI warns that these plans will involve changing legislation to remove the role of local authorities, which currently distribute government funding to schools based on their own local funding formulas.

The government did not propose any new education legislation as part of the Queen’s Speech, which outlines the new laws planned for the course of the new parliament. While the impact of this on grammar schools legislation has been widely reported, commentators have stayed quieter on the consequences for the national funding formula.

The EPI says the government is instead likely to continue using the “soft” national funding formula, which it proposed as a temporary measure in 2018 only to ease



introduction of the funding changes.

Schools Week has been told this will involve local authorities being given an overall funding pot based on what the schools in their area are entitled to under the new formula.

Local authorities, alongside their school forums, will then continue to decide how the cash is dished out.

But funding experts say this could jeopardise the government’s pledge to ensure no school sees its budget cut as a result of the national funding formula as it will be down to councils to distribute funding.

The EPI says the government will have

to think carefully about how the formula is now implemented, or face a backlash from many MPs in Conservative heartlands who feel underfunded schools do not get enough extra cash.

The EPI also says the retention of councils in the funding process is “unlikely” to be “welcomed” by academies, although they will accept this as a consequence of a minority government.

But Richard Watts, chair of the Local Government Association’s children and young people board, said the setting of schools budgets “works best when done at local level”.

He said councils work with school



forums, headteachers and governors to determine “need and priorities”.

“The government should allow councils to have some flexibility over how the national formula is implemented locally to ensure the widest possible success and acceptance.”

The EPI says the department can still “significantly reduce” the role of local authorities through secondary legislation.

But John Fowler, a parliamentary procedure expert, says it is unlikely the government will bring in the changes this way.

The EPI report also warns that the government needs to find an additional £1.3 billion to protect the schools budget from rising inflation pressures by 2022.

That extra cash will need to be found on top of the £4 billion commitment already included in the Conservative manifesto.

Without the extra funds, the think-tank predicts schools face a real-terms per pupil reduction of 3 per cent by the end of the parliament.

NEWS

Unions criticise EFA reliance on whistleblowers

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Investigates

Almost every investigation into academy trusts by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) over the past four years has been prompted by a whistleblower.

Fourteen of 15 published investigation reports into trusts since 2013 were launched because of the flagging up of financial irregularity or fraud, a Freedom of Information response has revealed.

Unions have criticised this heavy reliance on members of staff, or external auditors employed by the academy trust. They say the EFA must improve its own checks.

It comes as an investigation published last week found the Rodillian Multi Academy Trust, which runs four schools in Yorkshire, broke the rules when it paid nearly £8,000 for its chief executive to stay in a four-star hotel for 78 nights, despite claims he lived within travelling distance.

An investigation was launched after a tip-off in February.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), said the government "should not need to rely on" whistleblowers.

"The current system of oversight lacks the capacity to prevent, rather than just cure."

Whistleblowers have prompted three investigations this year, one last year, six in 2014-15, and four in 2013-14.

They included tip-offs about schools falsely recording pupils who received free school meals, a chief executive buying personal items and presents for relatives on the trust's credit card, salary overpayments and safeguarding failures.

The government only publishes the findings of an investigation on its website in serious cases.

It is not clear which investigation was launched without an informer.

The figures question assurances from the EFA chief executive, Peter Lauener, that the government's oversight system is pulling its weight.

Speaking to the education select committee last year, he said his team did sample checks on multi-academy trusts. It also had a "very large dataset" on academy finances, which was passed through a "risk assessment tool" that flagged up issues.

Speaking to the committee as part of an inquiry into academy finances, he added he was "perfectly happy" to listen to whistleblowers.

But Sir Amyas Morse, the comptroller and auditor general of the National Audit Office, who also spoke at the inquiry, warned the EFA should not "solely depend" on them.

Rather, it should have "leading indicators" that would show if something was "going off whack".

However, Phil Reynolds, senior manager of audit and assurance for academies and



Russell Hobby

education at the accountancy firm Kreston Reeves, said it would be "difficult to see how the EFA will have more oversight unless they're given more funding".

Accountants have also said many whistleblowers are external auditors whom trusts have to employ, and who are in a good position to report irregularities because they are independent professionals.

"Professional ethics means it's our duty as accountants to report wrongdoing," said Chris Whiting, director of Academy Advisory, an accountancy and audit practice for academies.

Serious financial issues often happened

when a "dominant" chief executive overruled a governing body "not confident enough" to challenge them, he said.

The EFA also has other levers to highlight financial mismanagement, rather than purely publishing reports.

For instance, it can issue trusts with financial notices to improve; 50 had been issued by October last year.

A DfE spokesperson said investigations were not published if it was inappropriate, such as requests from the police that the report not be made public.

They added the EFA took any allegations of misconduct "very seriously" and was "not afraid to take action".

Charity wants to bin 'cliff-edge' GCSEs for five-year exam phase

BILLY CAMDEN

@BILLYCAMDEN

"Cliff-edge" GCSE exams at 16 should be scrapped in favour of a 14 to 19 "phase" allowing pupils to complete their qualifications "at the right pace for them", says the Edge Foundation.

The charity, which aims to raise the status of practical and vocational learning, says the UK's education system failed to prepare youngsters for 21st-century jobs.

But its *Plan for 14-19 Education*, published this week, doesn't mention widely reported problems in the university technical college (UTC) programme for 14 to 19-year-olds, nor how to address issues such as under-recruitment.

Instead the report makes eight "radical" recommendations for the government to introduce across all schools, including adding a creative subject such as art or drama into the EBacc, introducing mandatory work experience, and offering apprenticeships to 14-year-olds.

Edge – chaired by the former education secretary and UTC advocate Lord Baker – claims that current GCSEs are designed around "age not stage", where all pupils are expected to be ready for the

same exam at the same age.

The report's author, Olly Newton, director of policy and research at Edge, said this format had led to a "downward spiral of English and maths resits for young people that leave them demoralised and rarely making headway".

To smooth this "cliff-edge", the foundation wants to bin exams at 16 and introduce a 14 to 19 phase that would allow pupils to complete their GCSEs at any point.

"Some schools already offer young people the opportunity to sit GCSEs early in year 10 and there is no reason why they should not be able to sit GCSEs in particular subjects for the first time later too," Newton said.

But Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, told Schools Week that delaying GCSEs by a year or two would "just move the 'cliff edge' to a different point", and pupils would have "less opportunity to study alternative qualifications if they were unsuccessful".

The report follows calls last week from the Baker Dearing Trust, which promotes UTCs, for three "wishes" to boost 14 to 19 education.

They included schools "assessing" pupils that best fit UTCs before sending unsuitable learners on to them.



Geoff Barton

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NEWS

Schools forced to ‘pick up th

The huge rise in the numbers of pupils educated at home is having a knock-on effect in schools, as Jess

JESS STAUFENBERG
@STAUFENBERGJ

Exclusive

The number of pupils leaving school to be educated at home has almost doubled over the past six years, an investigation by *Schools Week* reveals.

The influx also appears to have driven a rise in the number of home-educated pupils returning to schools – which headteachers say is leaving them “picking up the pieces” when home education fails.

Councils, meanwhile, say that more parents are removing their children from school to avoid prosecution for poor attendance or because the pupil might be at risk of exclusion.

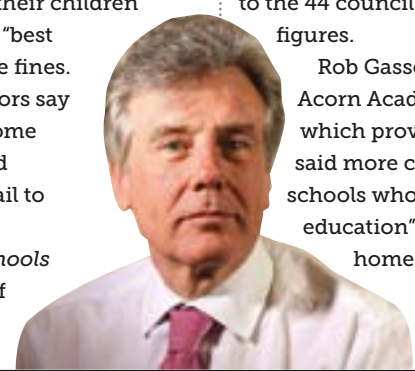
Senior education figures, including the former education secretary Estelle Morris, are calling for change. She has lodged a bid to change the law so that councils have to inspect children who are home educated (see story, page 9).

The former Conservative MP Neil Carmichael (pictured below), who chaired the education select committee, says it is “very difficult” for teachers to help pupils who have been poorly home educated to catch up after “huge chunks of time”.

He urges schools to keep a “weather eye” on children who look like they might be home educated, adding it is “absolutely appalling” if parents pull their children out of school without the “best motives”, such as to dodge fines.

However, home educators say parents only choose to home educate pupils considered “difficult” when schools fail to engage them properly.

Figures gathered by *Schools Week* show the number of home-educated pupils



rose from 15,135 in 2011-12, to 29,805 this year.

But that last figure is likely to be higher as not all pupils are registered, and only 86 out of 152 councils responded to our Freedom of Information request, with figures dating back to 2011.

Councils say dissatisfaction with the school system, greater awareness of home education, not getting a preferred school place and bullying are the major reasons for the rise.

But they also cite “risk of court action”, as parents face fines if their child has poor school attendance.

Schools Week’s analysis also shows a steep increase in the number of home-educated primary pupils in certain year groups.

The number pulled from school in year 5 just before their SATs has risen by 179 per cent over the past six years, followed by a 170 per cent rise in year 4, and a 141 per cent rise in year 6.

However, the rise in home education seems to be accompanied by an increase in pupils later returning to school. There’s been a 60 per cent rise in the numbers coming back, whether into mainstream or otherwise.

A total of 1,601 returned to school in 2011-12, compared with 2,575 this year, according to the 44 councils able to provide returner figures.

Rob Gasson, chief executive of the Acorn Academy Trust in Cornwall, which provides alternative provision, said more children are coming into his schools who “haven’t been receiving an education”. Five who were formerly home educated arrived this year.

“It leaves us to pick up the pieces. I know one boy



who’s been taken out of school because he was getting into trouble, and he’s now doing door-to-door car washing. It’s ridiculous.”

He said more parents were “home educating” to avoid prosecutions for poor school attendance.

Many councils agree. Ten of the 33 that gave *Schools Week* reasons for home education mentioned behaviour, threat of prosecution, or risk of exclusion.

They also said parents often send their children back to school because of the costs of home education. They must pay to enter children into exams, with schools charging up to £150 for a GCSE and £200

for an A-level, according to Oxford Home Schooling, which provides syllabuses for home educators.

Parents also realise home education is not meeting their child’s needs, say five councils, while another four say parents return pupils because the council has ordered them to.

But Mike Wood, a former home educator and owner of the website Home Education UK, says some schools are creating a “hostile environment” if pupils have difficult behaviour.

“These are not feckless parents. In many cases it’s schools not dealing with issues as

CASE STUDY 1: “THE SCHOOL JUST SAID OK”

Sandy* says that the school her boys attended changed when a new head took over. The emphasis, she says, became rules, rules and more rules.

Text messages arrived every day. The reasons for detention were “ridiculous. It was non-stop”.

Her sons, who both scored highly in the 11-plus, were spending a lot of time in isolation. “They weren’t given proper work in there.”

Her husband went to a meeting with the headteacher who asked if they had looked at sending the boys to other schools. “We said they’re full, and then he said, have you considered home education? And we said

no, we haven’t.”

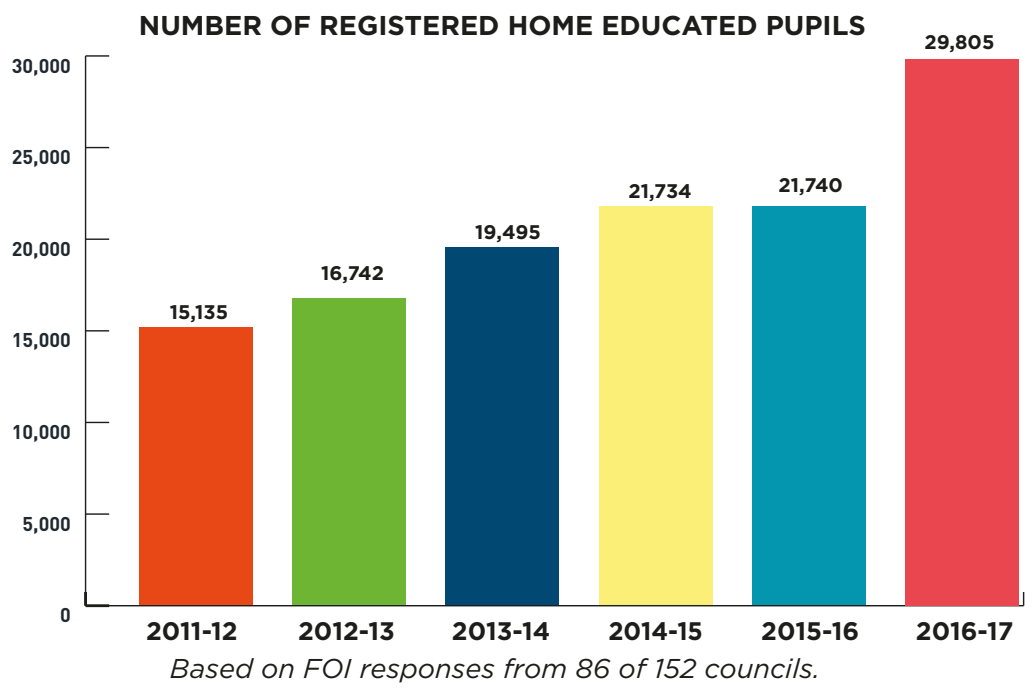
When the couple later decided in favour of home education, they say the school “just said OK”.

They now pay a tutor £60 for three hours a week of maths, English and science.

Sandy does history and geography with them, and French with one. Before the election they also studied philosophy and ethics.

“It takes me about two hours a day for all the research and printing. Teaching the boys is another few hours a day.”

*all names changed



The pieces' of home education

Staufenberg reports



they should.”

He says local authorities should prosecute parents who do not provide a proper home education, but that home inspections would be expensive and ineffective.

A Department for Education spokesperson said it respected parents’ rights to educate their children at home, a responsibility many take “very seriously”.

But they added: “Schools are encouraged to notify the local authority if a child has been removed for home education. All authorities also have a duty to identify, so far as possible, children not receiving suitable full-time education.”

BILL PROPOSES ANNUAL INSPECTIONS BY COUNCILS

A former education secretary is among those demanding a change in the law to give councils greater powers to intervene in home education.

Estelle Morris has introduced a private members’ bill in the House of Lords, on behalf of Labour peer Lord Soley, urging that councils monitor the “educational, physical and emotional development” of home-educated children.

But home education supporters say the plan to include yearly inspections inside homes is “draconian” and will treat parents like criminals.

Lord Storey, the Liberal Democrat spokesperson on education and a former head who has regularly questioned the government on home schooling, told *Schools Week* the current law was insufficient.

“There should be a right to home tuition. But without being too bureaucratic about it, it does need to be approved, and once it’s approved it needs to be properly monitored.”

Currently, a parent of a school-age child must ensure he or she gets a full-time education “either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”, and that it must be suitable to their age and ability.

Councils must issue a school attendance order to parents, forcing their child to go to school “if it appears to the local education authority” that the child is “not receiving a suitable education”.

But the private members’ bill, which was heard in the Lords last week, proposes that local authorities should have to assess home-educated children once a year.



The assessment “may include” a visit to their home, interviewing the child, looking at their work and interviewing the parent, say the proposals. Parents must also provide any information relevant to the assessment if asked.

The bill also proposes that home-educated children should be registered with the local authority – a practice many councils have, but which is not yet law.

Greg Smith, head of operations at Oxford Home Schooling, a not-for-profit trust that provides syllabuses for home educators, says the bill has spawned a Facebook group of 400 parents, many of whom feel the measures are “draconian”.

The only other occasion on which the state has the right to enter your home is “if you’ve committed a crime”, he says.

Some local authorities treat home education “like truancy”, or as a

safeguarding problem, rather than working with parents.

“You really are on your own if you home educate, and that’s poor – councils should be supporting you.”

Parents who tried to engage with councils had sometimes been treated to a “series of lectures on safeguarding”.

However, Neil Carmichael, the former chair of the influential education select committee, says that he knows of instances in which children have been seriously neglected when home educated.

Home education as a solution to behavioural or attendance issues in school also “just does not make sense” and would likely “exacerbate” the problem.

“This is one of those issues that hasn’t got the traction it deserves yet. The more it gets raised, the better.”

The bill is due to be discussed further in the Lords.



CASE STUDY 2: “A LIFE-CHANGING DECISION”

Cassie’s* parents move around the world a lot with their business and wanted to be able to take Cassie and her three younger siblings with them without disrupting their schooling.

They also believe the education system does not always bring out the greatest potential in children – and say Cassie had been bullied and lost confidence.

So they decided to home educate. Cassie worked with tutors to sit eight iGCSEs in 2014 and three A-levels in 2016. She is now set to study English literature at King’s College London.

“It was a life-changing decision. From having

to pick up the telephone and talk with my tutors, to writing my first assignment, many milestones were marked,” she says.

She used textbooks and resources from an online website.

But it wasn’t always easy.

“There were essays I didn’t want to write and questions I didn’t know how to answer.”

But she says that home schooling has given her confidence to talk to new people “as you sort of have to when you’re at home”.

Self-studying also prepared her for the low contact hours at university.

CASE STUDY 3: A CHANGE OF POLICY

The number of home-educated pupils in Milton Keynes has remained fairly stable over the past four years following the council’s “proactive and robust” approach to “suitability” of provision.

In 2014-15, 0.65 per cent of the local authority’s pupil cohort were home-educated, which fell slightly to 0.56 per cent this year.

Meanwhile, the number of pupils returning to mainstream education has continued to rise, from 14 in 2013-14 to 61 this year.

The council did not monitor home education before 2015-16 but, in line with its legal duty, took action only if provision was “not suitable”.

Now, schools have to fill out a form when a parent chooses to home educate, outlining any concerns. Then parents compile a programme about what they’re teaching, including evidence.

The programme is reviewed by a qualified teacher before a parent gets the go-ahead. If not, a specialist team visits the home to find out more.

If the council still isn’t satisfied, the parents are issued with a prosecution notice to get the child back in school.

A particularly important change is the new “fair access” process that requires a child to return to their original school if home education is not approved.

Simon Sims, strategic lead on children missing education, says: “This means the parent is far less likely to withdraw the child in the first instance, and schools will not want to try to get rid of them because they know they will come back.”

Better than last year, but one-third still miss KS2 standards

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Heads have warned against knee-jerk reactions to SATs results after more than a third of pupils missed the government's "expected standard" in key stage 2 reading, writing and maths – although numbers are well up on last year.

Interim results, published on Tuesday, show that 61 per cent of pupils this year achieved the government's chosen accountability target in all three disciplines.

It's a big rise from last year, the first under the tougher SATs, where just 52 per cent of pupils reached the expected standard.

But it's still down on the 80 per cent of pupils who achieved the level before the new SATs were introduced.

School leaders have called for caution, saying schools should not be judged on SATs results alone.

"Currently, the methods to hold schools to account aren't as fair or as reliable as they should be," said Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers.

"At the moment, parents and schools know that these results have to be taken with a pinch of salt. This can't be right. Just looking at data misses the majority of the real work that schools do to help young people achieve their full potential."



Hobby said SATs data would only give parents "part of the picture" when judging a pupil's success or school's effectiveness.

"League tables are the least helpful way of knowing if a school is the right place for your child."

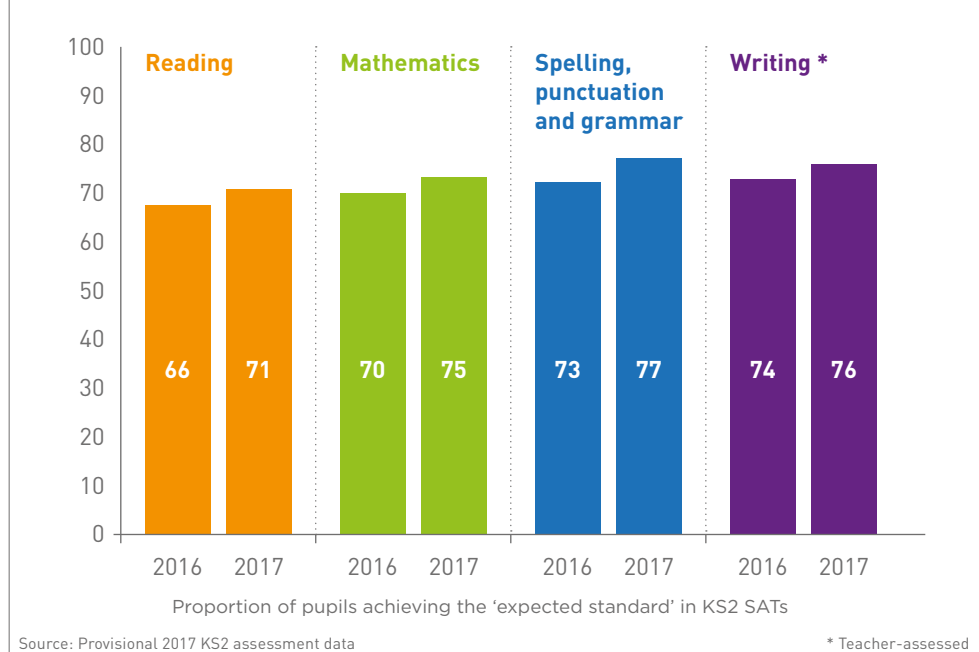
The number of schools that have fallen below the government's floor standards will not be confirmed until the final scores are published in December.

Tuesday's interim results show that 71 per cent of pupils achieved the standard in reading, compared with 66 per cent last year, while 75 per cent met the standard in maths, up from 70 per cent.

In spelling, punctuation and grammar tests, 77 per cent of pupils met the expected standard, up from 73 per cent, and the proportion meeting the standard in writing was 76 per cent, up from 74 per cent.

Schools minister Nick Gibb said the results showed "sustained progress in reading, writing and maths" and are a "testament to the hard work of teachers and pupils across England".

"Thanks to their commitment and our new knowledge-rich curriculum, thousands more children will arrive at secondary school having mastered the fundamentals of



reading, writing and maths, giving them the best start in life," he said.

The government has also published the marks pupils needed this year to achieve the government's "expected" scores.

They had to score 57 out of 110 in maths (down from 60 last year), 26 out of 50 in reading (up from 21) and 36 out of 70 in spelling, punctuation and grammar (down from 43) to reach the expected standard.

Allana Gay (pictured), deputy headteacher at Lea Valley primary school in north London, said the changes to the scaled scores were "significant" for any examination paper.

"It seems that the assessment is going through a phase of finding where the standard lies.

"Either that or schools have quickly adjusted to the new assessment and are being defeated by the bell curve...We will need far more years of settling before it can become the reliable information source that is needed."

The interim results follow a chaotic 2016 when the harder tests were introduced. Hitches included the high-profile leak of a test paper that led to an investigation into the work of the Standards and Testing Agency.

NEW FUNDS FOR TEACHER TRAINING

The government is inviting bidders to apply for new funding to develop "innovative approaches" to initial teacher training.

Education secretary Justine Greening announced the plans in March to ensure, she said, that "high-quality new teachers reach schools and areas that need them most".

She did not say how much cash was up for grabs, but successful bidders will be handed three-year certainty in training allocations from 2018 – currently only awarded to the best-performing teacher training organisations.

The fund is open to school-led and university providers, or bids that involve a partnership between the two.

It's the latest move by the government to address teacher shortages, particularly in challenging areas.

School Workforce Census figures published earlier this month show the number of new teachers entering the profession in England has dropped to its lowest rate in five years.

Meanwhile, the number of secondary schools with at least one advertised vacancy or temporary-filled post rose from 23 per cent in 2015, to 27 per cent last year.

The government said bidders should focus on improving trainee recruitment and teacher supply in schools, areas and subjects "which need this the most".

Those interested in applying have to submit an expression of interest form by Monday, July 17.

To bid, visit www.gov.uk/guidance/initial-teacher-training-opportunity-to-pilot-innovative-approaches-in-the-provision-of-itt

FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR INFANTS WILL STAY, SAYS GIBB

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
@FCDWHITTAKER

Universal infant free school meals are here to stay, the schools minister Nick Gibb has announced this week, confirming a U-turn on a Conservative party manifesto pledge.

Gibb told MPs in parliament on Tuesday that, having listened to feedback from schools, the government had decided that it was "right to retain" the existing provision.

The government will now have to find alternative sources for the extra £4 billion promised for school budgets.

The climb-down on infant meals is the latest in a series of U-turns on controversial manifesto policies, and comes after the shelving of plans to lift the ban on new grammar schools.

The unpopular plans to save £650 million by stopping free meals for all infant schools in favour of an entirely means-tested policy for all primary school pupils prompted criticism from leaders and campaigners during the election campaign.

Rumours of the policy's demise surfaced after the government opted not to include the plan in the Queen's Speech, which was light on education.

"We have listened carefully to the sector's views on the proposal to remove infant free school meals, and we have decided that it is right to retain the existing provision," Gibb told MPs after he was quizzed by the shadow education secretary Angela Rayner.



"Universal infant free school meals ensure that children receive a nutritious meal during the day, which saves hard-working families hundreds of pounds a year and boosts educational achievement, especially among children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds."

The Conservative party had also pledged to introduce free school breakfasts for primary pupils, which it would have funded through the money saved by scrapping infant meals.

It is not clear whether that proposal still stands.

In response to a parliamentary question, Robert Goodwill, the new

minister for children and families, said the government was "reflecting on our programmes in relation to school meals and will come forward with proposals in due course".

When pressed on what the government would do to improve school funding, Gibb repeated a claim made last week by the education secretary, Justine Greening, that no school would face a budget cut as a result of the new national funding formula.

But he refused to make a similar guarantee of protection from rising cost pressures.

"We do understand that schools are having to face pressures," Gibb told MPs.

"But we would not have had to make those sacrifices and deal with those efficiencies if we had not inherited a record budget deficit in 2010."

The minister said the government was looking at the 25,000 responses to its consultation on the national funding formula, which he reiterated would still be implemented next year, and would respond in due course.

The government also faces pressure to end the 1 per cent cap on pay rises for public sector workers, including teachers.



NEWS

NO TIME TO BECOME LEGENDS IN THEIR OWN LUNCHTIMES

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

An academy’s plans to slash its lunchtime break and extend the school day is the latest example of a revamped timetable following the introduction of the new “big fat” GCSEs.

Ashlawn School, a partially selective academy in Rugby, told parents the timetable changes have been proposed to “meet the challenges” of the reformed GCSEs and linear A-levels.

Many schools are toying with timetable changes as a result of the more “rigorous” qualifications. But Ashlawn is unusual in extending the school day while also cutting break times.

Leaders propose that the school day will start at 8.40am and end at 3.35pm, with lessons extended to 65 minutes, compared up from 60. The move will increase the overall school day by 15 minutes, although teaching time will increase more.

Lunch will be cut from one hour to 35 minutes, and a break in the morning will be 15 minutes not 20.

But not all parents are happy with the proposals. Tracy Tilley calls them “woefully inadequate”, adding: “Ashlawn is physically a large school [about 1,500 pupils] so it takes time to get to the dining hall. A reduced lunch period will mean the children get no time to socialise, rest or refresh.



“This is surely not good for their mental health and well-being, let alone their ability to concentrate given the longer lessons and longer day. They will effectively have no rest for seven hours.”

Other parents have posted online to say that they are worried cutting lunch time will reduce the school’s ability to run

extracurricular activities during the break.

To balance out the increased time in school, Ashlawn is proposing to close one week earlier at the beginning of the summer holidays, giving pupils seven weeks off compared with the standard six – although some parents say they won’t be able to get extra time off to look after their children.

Local-authority maintained schools currently must open to pupils for 190 days each year, with an extra five days for teacher training.

However, academies are free to alter their school year as they please, providing it complies with funding agreements.

As reported by *Schools Week* last month, an academy trust in Gainsborough cut the traditional six-week summer break by one week, adding an extra week’s holiday elsewhere to the school year. It later abandoned the idea after a rise in unauthorised absences.

Tall Oaks Trust made the change to allow parents to go on holiday outside the peak season, but it caused problems for those with children at different schools as holiday dates no longer aligned.

In a letter to parents, Ashlawn said the remodelled year “will mean that students, particularly in the key examination years, will have more time to deepen their learning and increase their levels of achievement and progress”.

A school spokesperson said a consultation on changes had closed and responses would be analysed before a final decision was made. The concerns of parents would be addressed.

Unions told *Schools Week* that headteachers were best placed to make decisions on the school day.

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NEWS

IN brief

NASH MEETS SST OFFICIALS

Academies minister Lord Nash has met key officials from the studio schools programme to discuss a review of the model's "concept".

Department for Education (DfE) ministerial meeting records, published last week, show Nash met the Studio Schools Trust (SST), responsible for promoting the programme and assisting sponsors in opening new institutions.

The purpose of the meeting in March was listed as "to review the concept of studio schools".

It follows a difficult period for the institutions, which have been plagued by recruitment problems and closures. Sixteen have announced plans to close, leaving just 34 open across the country.

However, the SST's chief executive David Nicoll denied the concept of studio schools was even discussed at the meeting.

The DfE did not respond to requests to clarify details of the discussion.

ARK ABANDONS TRAINING PLANS

The academy chain Ark has abandoned its ambitious plans to scale up a new teacher training partnership with two trusts in the north after losing out on government funding.

Ark, which runs 35 schools, partnered with Dixons Academies Trust and Oasis Community Learning to run separate two-year initial teacher training programmes starting this September.

Schools Week understands the trust was confident of securing funding for the schemes – which it planned to expand after the first year – under the Department for Education's £75 million Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund.

Applications opened in February. But after delays following the general election, it has now been told it will not be given funding.

The training of the first cohort of seven, who start this September, will be honoured. But no new recruits will be taken on after that.

OCR EXAM BOARD CHIEF QUILTS

Simon Lebus, the group chief executive of Cambridge Assessment, which runs exam boards OCR, Cambridge International Examinations, and Cambridge Language Assessment, is to stand down after 15 years.

He will leave the organisation, which has trebled in size during his tenure, in March next year.

His departure coincides with the organisation moving to new headquarters in Cambridge that will bring together all the organisation's Cambridge-based staff – currently in 11 different offices – under one roof.

Lebus said he was looking to developing a "portfolio of non-executive interests".

The announcement follows a controversial summer for exam boards, with the emergence of mistakes in several exams, as well as disruption caused by exam paper leaks.

OCR had to apologise in May after its GCSE paper contained an error relating to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Academy closes with PFI debt of £21m

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

The government is to close a struggling academy after fears that "crippling" private finance initiative repayments will leave it "unable to pay the bills".

Schools Week reported last week that education secretary Justine Greening had agreed "in principle" to close The Kingsway Academy following two-year long discussions over its viability.

Northern Schools Trust, which took on the Wirral academy in 2014, said low pupil numbers and rising private finance initiative (PFI) repayments, currently costing more than £600,000 a year, made the school "unviable and potentially not able to pay its bills".

It was confirmed on Monday that the school would close in August next year. Year 6 pupils due to start this September will be found new schools.

Schools Week understands the PFI contract still has about 15 years to run – with repayments of about £21 million due to be paid. Wirral Council is now set to pick up repayment of the outstanding debt.

The situation exposes the frailty of schools whose buildings were built or refurbished under PFI – especially when their pupil numbers, and income, falls.

Schools make repayments through councils under contracts that run for about 25 years. Those repayments rise each year, regardless of funding levels.

Extensive investigations by *Schools Week* have revealed how schools have been pushed into financial ruin by soaring debts

owed to the private firms that funded their buildings.

Nigel Ward, chief executive of the Northern Schools Trust, said he was "disappointed" with the decision. But he said it was a "very good alternative" that allows a "co-ordinated and planned approach to securing alternative places for pupils".

Ward previously said the closure plans were "nothing to do with the quality of education being provided", but were down to low pupil numbers and the PFI deal signed by Wirral Council to refurbish the school years ago.

The Liverpool Echo reported last year that Liverpool council was repaying £4.3 million PFI costs per year for a school, even though it closed in 2014.

Bernie Mooney, Wirral's cabinet member for children and family services, said Northern Schools had never raised PFI costs as a problem before, adding it was fully aware of the repayment levels before it took over the school.

The council said the PFI repayments included caretaking, maintenance, and building renewals – costs that other schools also had to pay.

According to Edubase, Kingsway has capacity for 1,500 pupils, but has only 443 on roll.

However, Mooney said pupil numbers fell under the trust's tenure, including after its



decision to close the sixth form.

He also accused the Department for Education of taking a "cavalier attitude" to the closure, with no local consultation.

A report into multi-academy trust performance, published by the Sutton Trust last week, urged the government to allow local authorities to set up academy trusts to avoid an increase in "schools no one wants", or SNOWs".

As previously reported by *Schools Week*, many SNOWs are attached to a hefty PFI repayment contract.

Former education secretary Nicky Morgan previously said that schools with hefty PFI contracts would get extra funding under the new fair funding formula, due to be introduced in 2018.

Further details are expected to be released later this year.

Super-sized burgers? No, it's super-sized classes

JOHN DICKENS
@JOHNDICKENSSW

Primary schools and secondary classes are becoming "super-sized" to deal with a population surge.

Census data from January this year, published on Thursday, shows a 20 per cent rise over the past two years in the number of secondary school pupils taught in classes of more than 30.

Unions said funding pressures and resulting staff cuts were forcing schools to reorganise classes among fewer teachers.

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said larger classes were "more difficult to manage, mean an increased workload, and make it harder to provide feedback and support to pupils".

The census also shows that the average size of a primary school has risen by 40 pupils since 2009 – the equivalent of more than one extra class per school.

The average primary school now has 279 pupils, up from 275 in January last year. There are also 122 primaries with more than 800 pupils, up from 109 last year.

The rise follows a bulge in the numbers coming through the primary system, up from 4.19 million last year, to 4.27 million



this year. But the average class size is still 27.1 – the same as last year.

However, the average class size at secondary is at the highest level for nearly ten years, although pupil numbers rose by only 30,000. It is now at 20.8, up from 20.4 last year.

In the recent general election campaign, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn claimed pupils were being "crammed in classrooms like sardines". He pledged that he would keep "super-size" class sizes down if his party were elected.

Unions say heads have to increase class sizes to cope with funding pressures, with some now at 40 pupils or more.

The percentage of pupils in classes of more than 30 rose from 10.3 per cent last year to 11.5 per cent in January, the highest level on record since at least 2006.

Further analysis of the figures by the Liberal Democrats found that 344,000 secondary pupils were now being taught in classes of more than 30, up 21 per cent compared with two years ago.

Layla Moran, the Lib Dems' shadow education secretary, said pupils were now treated like "battery hens", with budget cuts leading to even larger class sizes and teacher lay-offs.

But Barton said the general election showed that parents were "deeply concerned about the underfunding of education".

"These statistics provide yet more evidence of the pressing need for the government to make a greater investment in the future of our young people."

The Daily Telegraph reported on Saturday that education secretary Justine Greening has urged Theresa May to spend an extra £1 billion to protect school funding.

The paper said Greening wants an extra £1.2 billion by 2022 on top of the additional £4 billion already promised in the Conservative manifesto.



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What time does the parade start tomorrow?



EDITOR'S COMMENT

@johndickenssw | john.dickens@Schoolsweek.co.uk

My last week for now ... and I've become a caretaker

First, an apology to all those readers flicking through the pages of their *Schools Week* to read the latest take from our usually indefatigable editor Laura McInerney.

I won't attempt to replicate her usual sharp look at the week's hottest edu-topic. Instead, I'm going to take full advantage of my rare moment in the spotlight to let you know that I'm taking a sabbatical from *Schools Week*.

I'll be leaving in August to start a year-long, round-the-world trip with my wife, starting in India and ending somewhere in South America.

It brings to an end (for now) a pretty incredible two-and-a-half years. But there'll be no more late-night Wednesday deadlines, frantically reading over copy to ensure we've got it all right.

No more heated phone calls to the Department for Education press office

demanding why we've been given a one-line response after asking seven questions.

No more delving into endless academy trust accounts to spot a sky-high severance pay-off, or a chief executive pocketing a bumper pay rise.

No more getting chucked out of a school by the caretaker, despite me trying desperately to explain my visit was purely about ensuring I'd done everything I could to give the school the chance to put across its side of the story.

(The school in question, Grey Coat Hospital in Westminster, west London, never did provide a comment. But neither did David Cameron or Michael Gove – whose daughters both attended the school, which we revealed had breached school admission laws by asking parents for money when offering them a place.)

But I'll miss them all.

From joining as a general news reporter from a local paper in Slough, I didn't know much about education...I know a bit more now.

What I did have was a passion for investigative journalism – something *Schools Week* prides itself on delivering every week.

We've never shied away from tackling the thorny education issues, and we do our hardest to cover them without fear or favour.

And we've done exactly that this week with Jess Staufenberg's in-depth investigation into the rise of home education, and the problems that schools say it is causing (see pages 8 & 9).

While I've

taken on the role of *Schools Week*'s chief school scandal reporter, what I'll remember, after speaking with hundreds of educators who have been instrumental to shaping our coverage, is that the majority are incredibly good people, who work tirelessly to do amazing things every day.

We're a small team here, and we're all super proud of the paper we produce every week. But being in a small team means we need a decent amount of camaraderie to get through those tough deadlines.

That's what I'll miss the most.

As usual, we'll have our end-of-year round-up in next's week edition, our last before the summer break.

Hopefully, we'll (you'll) also have Laura back too.

John Dickens, chief reporter
Laura McInerney is away





**DIXONS
ACADEMIES
TRUST**

Chief Operating Officer

Salary: £80,000 - £100,000 package

The Dixons Academies Trust is built around the high-performing Dixons City Academy, which opened 27 years ago as one of the first state-funded independent schools in the country. In recent years our family of schools in Bradford has grown to eight, and now comprises three primaries, four secondaries and one all-through 4-19 school. It includes both sponsored turnaround academies addressing educational failure, as well as brand-new free schools meeting growing demand locally.

We have a solid platform from which we continue to build. Dixons' first school in Leeds (the all-through Trinity Chapeltown) is planned to open this September, followed by a shared Post 16 provision in Bradford a year later. We have achieved a great deal in a relatively short time, but such is the culture of expectation here that we know our greatest impact is yet to come.

We are now seeking to appoint a Chief Operating Officer to provide strategic and operational leadership for all business and financial aspects of the Trust and to be responsible for the flow of information to the CEO, the Senior Executive Team, Academy Principals, the Governing Council, and where necessary external parties. The successful candidate will be a qualified accountant and Chief Financial Officer of the Trust. In the first instance, you will be based with the Finance team at Dixons Trinity, the first secondary free school nationally to be graded outstanding by OFSTED.

The main function of the role is to ensure that central functions within the Trust meet the needs of the Academies they serve and operate as cost-effectively as possible.

The Chief Operating Officer will be accountable for:

- The strategic leadership of finance (including strategic financial planning, financial compliance and statutory reporting).
- Line management of two Financial Controllers to ensure the operational effectiveness of their team, and the accuracy and timeliness of internal financial processing and reporting.
- Governance and Board administration functions, including internal audit arrangements and assisting the Chair with Board development.
- The consistent application of employment-related policies across the Trust and oversight of the Trust's external HR contract.
- Line management of strategic I.T. to ensure service levels are met.
- Co-ordinating the work of Academy Business Managers in areas of common working such as joint procurement and health and safety.

The success of this role will be assessed against the business, financial and compliance performance of the Trust and its Academies, and against the effectiveness of support provided to the Chief Executive and overall leadership within the Trust.

The Chief Operating Officer will support the astute management of risk and the joint pursuit of the aims of the Trust. S/he will advise the Board and provide analysis and evidence of improvement to both directors and those providing external scrutiny.

This post-holder will be enterprising, will seek opportunities and will be innovative with the purpose of generating additional grant and earned income for the Trust, in line with agreed objectives.

The Chief Operating Officer is accountable to the CEO.

For more information please contact:

Angela Bullivant, PA to the CEO, on **01274 423123** or email A.Bullivant@dixonsta.com

Closing Date: 10th July 2017 (Monday)

Shortlisting: 11th July 2017 (Tuesday)

Interviews: 14th July 2017 (Friday)

Dixons is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful applicants will need to undertake a DBS enhanced check.

No agencies need apply.

Head of SAP Centre of Excellence

24 month fixed term contract, full time
Salary: Competitive Location: Cambridge



Cambridge Assessment

An exciting opportunity has arisen for an experienced SAP professional as Head of SAP Centre of Excellence, to provide excellent leadership in guiding, directing, and managing the SAP Centre of Excellence team.

For the duration of this fixed term contract your primary focus will be stabilising our SAP environment whilst ensuring the delivery of new functionality is seamless. Reporting into the IT Director you will closely collaborate across the organisation with our internal customers and technical teams in defining solution options that meet our business needs. You will have ownership for planning and managing multiple application services, development, maintenance, and enhancement of our services utilising SAP technologies and resources.

About the role:

- You will be the key point of contact for Business stakeholders for SAP operations, prioritisation and issue resolution.
- Provide clear leadership and management across technical and functional SAP COE teams to enhance current processes.
- Accountable for delivering and maintaining functionality, system availability, security and performance across the SAP Landscape (ECC/Hana, BW/BOBJ, SRM, CRM, PI, BPC), supporting business requirements.
- Provide leadership and guidance to the business on their use and development of the SAP solutions.
- Continually identify and seek opportunities to improve business processes and support critical business strategies.
- Work closely with key IT functional areas that enable multiplatform solution development.

- Responsible for collaborating with business-unit management, technology / business subject matter experts, various IT functional areas, and outside consultants, to assess feasibility, determine costs versus benefits, prioritize projects, and develop and implement systems plans that address the information requirements of the business and adhere to established strategic business and systems objectives.
- Proactively manage and interface with 3rd party service providers, ensuring fixes and enhancements are delivered in a quality manner and within predefined SLA timescales

Benefits

- Generous contributory pension
- 28 days annual leave, plus bank holidays
- Annual performance related bonus and increases (discretionary)

- Enhanced maternity/paternity pay and childcare voucher scheme
- Employee discount and cash back scheme at 1,200 retailers
- Cycle scheme
- Subsidised canteens
- Support for professional qualifications

The closing date for receipt of applications is **11 July 2017** and interviews will be held on **3 August 2017**

To find out more about this role please view the job description here: <http://bit.ly/2uomJdB>

As part of your recruitment process you will be required to undergo a background screening. This will be carried out by our selected supplier, Credence Background Screening Limited. CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

Senior Business Development Manager, UK & Ireland

Salary: Circa £43,000 Location: Cambridge



Cambridge Assessment

What it's about

We have a vacancy in the Global Network for a Senior Business Development Manager within the UK & Ireland team. In this role you will have overall accountability for the sales and recognition functions across all sectors in the UK and Ireland region, one of the largest markets for Cambridge English.

What you'll be doing

1. Lead the planning of all business development and recognition activities in the UK and Ireland across all sectors; responsible for developing the business plans in conjunction with the Country Head, UK and Ireland and the Regional Recognition Manager, Europe & North Africa.
2. Responsible for the generation of new business opportunities primarily in the Higher Education sector in addition to driving sales with international education groups and other providers across all sectors. The role will involve leading the sales process from initiation to completion,

- organising and delivering promotional presentations, attending conferences, events and seminars, identifying and reporting new business opportunities and providing market intelligence.
3. Accountable for the development of relationships with key stakeholders in the region including HE institutions, government and exam centres and for ensuring Cambridge English qualifications gain maximum recognition in the region.
 4. Develop and maintain specialist knowledge about our markets, assessment and the wider-educational landscape. Create and maintain high level relationships with internal stakeholders, being the voice of the customer

What we're looking for

Essential

- Educated to degree level; postgraduate qualification (e.g. MBA) preferred
- Excellent negotiation skills
- Proven sales and account management

Desirable

- The ability to use and interpret data as a basis for sound decision making
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to think strategically
- A willingness to work flexibly, both independently and as part of a team
- Significant experience of working in a busy and complex office environment

Desirable

- An awareness of the English as a Foreign Language sector
- Experience of working within an educational or other service environment
- Working in a B2B context
- This is an excellent opportunity to join a market leader and be rewarded with valuable learning opportunities, a competitive salary and benefits.

Benefits

- Generous contributory pension

- 28 days annual leave, plus bank holidays
- Annual performance related bonus and increases (discretionary)
- Enhanced maternity/paternity pay and childcare voucher scheme
- Employee discount and cash back scheme at 1,200 retailers
- Cycle scheme
- Subsidised canteens
- Corporate discounts on BUPACare, Gym memberships and car rental
- Support for professional qualifications

The closing date for receipt of applications is **11 July 2017** and interviews will be held on **3 August 2017**

To find out more about this role please view the job description here: <http://bit.ly/2toydO1>

As part of your recruitment process you will be required to undergo a background screening. This will be carried out by our selected supplier, Credence Background Screening Limited. CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

OXLEY PARK ACADEMY MILTON KEYNES



Academy Principal Required

Competitive Salary offered

Oxley Park Primary School became Oxley Park Academy on 1st July 2011. It was one of the first primary schools in Milton Keynes to achieve this status. As an academy Oxley Park is independent from the Local Authority and, although state funded, is directly accountable to the Department for Education.

We made the decision to become an academy in order that we could best meet the needs of our pupils. This was not purely a financial decision but based on the freedoms and autonomies which academy convertors have, to meet their community's needs. The rich and varied curriculum we offer is one example of the benefits we have already made by achieving academy status. We continue to work in partnership with the local authority and local schools in many ways, including through my role as a Local Leader of Education.

Oxley Park Academy is proud to be part of a very supportive community. It is very well supported by the Academy Directors (Board of Governors). We have very high expectations of ourselves to provide an excellent education for all of the children who attend our school, and equally we have very high expectations for children's learning and behaviour.

Our motto is "Dream, Believe, Achieve – Together". Our greatest privilege is to work in this amazing school. We love the job we do and are eternally proud of "Team Oxley" and the successes they achieve.

Due to the expansion, in September 2017, of our school over 2 campuses, and the current Academy Principal's new designation as CEO, the Governing Body are seeking to recruit a new Academy Principal with effect from 1st January 2018, or earlier.

The successful candidate will work as part of an amazing team who have high aspirations for our future and will play an integral role in shaping and ensuring successes over multiple sites.

We can offer you:

- An amazing team - "Team Oxley"- children, staff, parents, Governors, community
- Beautiful, state of the art buildings and facilities
- A strong, professional learning culture throughout
- Strong ethos on values
- A focus on "the child" at the heart of what we do
- The chance to make a difference!

Salary is negotiable. We want the very best for our school and our community. If you are the very best, please apply.

.....

An application pack is available on request. Visits to the school are encouraged. Please contact **Jo Peacock**, PA to the CEO, to arrange a visit and request a recruitment pack jo.peacock@oxleyparkacademy.com

Closing Date: 12 noon Tuesday 11th July 2017

Interview Dates - Both 18th & 19th July 2017

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As we draw closer to the end of another academic year, and start to make preparations for the new school year, we'd like to offer you and your organisation the opportunity to discuss your upcoming recruitment needs with us and see how we will reduce your costs.

We're currently offering 25% off our standard unlimited packages for the 2017/18 academic year. This offer is available for all packages booked before July 30th.

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Unloc Enterprise Academy Facilitator (Part-Time)

Salary: £23,000-25,000 pro rata, term time only
(3 days per week, full time considered for right candidate)

Line Manager: Managing Director

Start Date: August 2017



Are you passionate about working with young people?
Do you have an entrepreneurial story to share?

Join an exciting, new, fast-paced and growing social enterprise as an Unloc Enterprise Academy Facilitator. Our agile team, based at our central HQ within Portsmouth College and with satellite offices in Alton and Cambridge, are passionate about young people engaging with enterprise and being the innovators of the future.

We pride ourselves on being innovative, embracing new technology and ensuring that we have young people at the heart of everything we do. The Unloc Enterprise Academy is one of three core areas of work comprising primarily of our bespoke long course, short course and engaging enterprise days. The Unloc Enterprise Academy Facilitator post will be responsible for organising and delivering Unloc's enterprise work including delivering/teaching weekly sessions at a number of schools and colleges. The post will also form a crucial part of our Enterprise Days delivery team.

The ideal candidate should have a passion for working with young people, confidence in delivering engaging sessions as part of a short course and excellent organisational skills.

Join an exciting, new, fast-paced and growing social enterprise as an Unloc Enterprise Academy Facilitator. Apply now for this opportunity via: <http://bit.ly/2sonm8c>

Specific Responsibilities

- To organise and deliver Unloc's enterprise work •Develop the course content of the Unloc Enterprise Academy long course and short course along with the Unloc Directors and Curriculum Development lead
- Directly deliver the Unloc Enterprise Academy short course and long course (made up of weekly taught sessions) at schools and colleges in the region that have signed up to the Academy.
- Coordinate Unloc's wider enterprise related activities such as during Global Entrepreneurship Week.
- Deliver any Unloc Enterprise Days according to demand. These are whole days where the Unloc team works with up to 150 students to engage them with enterprise and often include short masterclasses and an enterprise challenge.
- Promote, alongside the Unloc Directors and other members of the Enterprise Academy team, the work of the Academy to expand the enterprise work Unloc does.
- To deliver Unloc's training and workshop packages if and when needed. •Delivering Unloc training and workshop packages to young people across the South East. Training on how to deliver these workshops is provided.

Qualifications

- Essential: GCSE Maths and English at grade A*-C (or equivalent).
- Essential: A-Levels at grade A*-C (or equivalent).

- Desirable: Level 3 ICT qualification.
- Desirable: A Bachelor's Degree in a relevant subject (or equivalent industry experience).

Experience and Knowledge

- Essential: Previous work with young people.
- Essential: Previous experience of enterprise.
- Desirable: Previous knowledge of the youth sector across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
- Desirable: Experience of running (or being involved in running) your own business.

Abilities and Skills

- Essential: High level writing skills.
- Essential: Ability to prioritise and manage own workload.
- Essential: Ability to manage a budget.
- Essential: Ability to work as part of a team.
- Essential: Ability to work independently.
- Desirable: High level of skill when using Google Apps For Work.
- Desirable: Ability to write press releases.
- Desirable: Ability to use Twitter and Facebook.

Other

- Essential: Willingness to undertake staff training and development as required.
- Desirable: Car driver with clean UK driving licence.

SCHOOLS^{WEEK}

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Wallace joined the team in January 2016, having worked as a sales and marketing executive for leisure and hospitality company, Eclectic PLC.

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Email: wallace.williams@schoolsweek.co.uk




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READERS' REPLY



Greening: no school will lose funding

**Clare Kellett**


1. Cake too small already.
2. Staff lost already.
3. Curricula cut already.
4. Costs rising already.

Funding cuts need not to be halted, but reversed. No more losses after huge cuts = losses, just not as bad as they might otherwise have been.

Sue Smyth

The devil will be in the detail.

Size does matter, says trust chief


**Tackling Inequality // @inequality2017**

Sounds like he means...make a profit. Schools aren't and shouldn't be treated as businesses, but I agree that they should live within their means.


David Carter // @Carter6D

No doubt that scale relates to viability but 20 primary schools in Cornwall compared with 20 secondaries is very different.

Detentions don't provide a moral compass


**Education State, address supplied**

"Clear punishment and reward structures helped children to become kind adults as it reinforced good behaviour until it was 'habit'" – or until they can't take the punishment any longer?

**Helena Barron**

Soon teachers will have no way to punish the children at all. I use time out as a parent. Surely that is just a mini detention. It's much kinder than other consequences.

Know your curriculum and tell us about it, says Ofsted

**Michael Slavinsky // @michaelslav**

This, done well, is a boon for new teachers. Often cause of overwork is lack of detailed long and medium-term plans.

Sputnik Steve // @sputniksteve


Interesting for three reasons:

- 1) Interesting move for Ofsted to make.
- 2) Interesting responses.
- 3) Great engagement from Sean Harford.


James Durran // @jdurran

Is the plan to judge whether schools are thoughtful about/attentive to the curriculum, or to judge its content? Former good; latter fraught with risks.

School life in the 'write-off' class

**NI Principal // @NI_Principal**


This really does ring true.

**Lorena Arikamedoshika Woodfine**

Nonsense. They don't lack academic success because of the sets they are put into. They end up in lower sets BECAUSE they attain lower grades. Those lower grades are usually the RESULT of lower aspiration.


Lower sets get more specialist help. They are more likely to be MUCH reduced in number of pupils with the addition of extra teaching assistants. They get MORE tuition, not less. We do MORE work on aspiration.

And my level 1-3 set have carried out EXACTLY the same work and practicals as my level 7-9 set. They're just not extended beyond their abilities.

**Sharper Pencils // @sharperpencils**

Could it be that setting reduces workload for teachers? Not saying this to be controversial as it is a relevant consideration re retention.

How we dealt with A-level exam 'leaks'


**John Bennett // @JohnBennett134**

Basically you're not going to do anything. How about predicted grades? This really isn't fair and you know it.

Obs Omo // @obsomo

So if someone cheated, but it didn't show up as a statistical anomaly, they're basically going to get away with it? If there was a leak, how can you be sure it was confined to a few colleges? Surely it could/would have been spread online very quickly.

Schools must meet new EU data laws

**Phil Neal // @Phil_Neal**

More on GDPR to come as the rules aren't entirely clear. Taking data out of schools in unencrypted spreadsheets is risky.

Detentions don't provide a moral compass

REPLY OF THE WEEK

**Matthew McGee, address supplied**

It's not often I agree with Katherine Birbalsingh, but in this case she's 100 per cent correct. Detention does no child any harm. I got loads of detentions when I was at secondary school and I didn't suffer by that in any way.

They didn't do me any good either, but that's a different story.

REPLY OF THE WEEK RECEIVES A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!



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MEHWASH KAUSER

English teacher,
Belle Vue Girls' Academy, Bradford

Lifting the prospects for Muslim girls

Schools can be instrumental in addressing the discrepancy in the number of Muslim girls in the world of work, says Mehwash Kauser

A report published in 2015 by the Muslim Council of Britain concluded that only 29 per cent of Muslim women aged between 16 and 24 are in employment, compared with 50 per cent of the same age group in the general population.

The barriers are many: cultural expectations, parental ambitions for “doctors and lawyers” leading to other options being disparaged (the reality for many of the girls my school serves) to geographic limitations when applying for jobs or promotions.

Many Muslim girls also are not accustomed to seeing their mum, sister or aunt in the workplace; this leads to it being regarded as “other”, an unfamiliar world where the norms and values are inaccessible and alien. However, school leaders can intervene to cultivate familiarity, comfort and a sense of belonging.

What happened to work experience?

All year 10 students at my school take part in a week-long placement in which they are expected to adhere to professional expectations, from planning a journey to and from work to demonstrating initiative and developing key communication skills. I cannot stress the importance of Muslim girls being in the workplace, and learning that it is a place that they belong in; work experience empowers and builds confidence and readiness to work.

How are you conducting careers interviews?

These are a key opportunity to discuss the early stages of career development. Every student at our school has an interview with an information guidance officer, during which she designs a career plan, mapping out not only post-16 and higher education or vocational courses, but also where the students sees herself in five to seven years. Students who have expectations of becoming “doctors or lawyers”, but not the grades to achieve this, need clear direct guidance before they become disengaged and discouraged.

Are you preparing them enough?

The “Building my Skills” course, taken by all of year 12, is designed to introduce students to careers in engineering and construction; all students who take a level 3 course take part in mock interviews with university admissions tutors; every student has to complete a UCAS application and a personal statement meaning no one is left without the knowledge of how to access higher education.

What is enough?

School leaders face an additional, difficult amnesty decision: when have they done enough?

Our students are predominantly bright, diligent, intelligent young Pakistani Muslim women. However, they do face certain cultural barriers that must be navigated sensitively. This does not mean they must not be challenged.

An example: we decided to call the provost of a Russell Group university to explain that one student’s family had removed all financial support unless she attended the local university.

This is the kind of moment where senior leaders will have to pause and question whether they allow this student’s potential to stagnate or if they support their student in achieving her ambitions.

Following contact from the academy, the student was accepted with financial assistance, thus bypassing the need for financial support from her family. She is now reading chemical engineering at a world-class university and has spent a year in industry in Switzerland.

This is a Muslim woman who will be a force to reckon with, wherever she chooses to work, and shows what is possible when school leaders decide Muslim girls are worth investing in.

Our school expects all our students to move on to higher education, an apprenticeship, employment or training; we expect that they will contribute to their communities; we expect that they will be successful. The fact that they are Muslim girls comes second.

If we are to impact Muslim girls’ place in tomorrow’s workplace, we need to be fearless, to be relentless; to push; challenge and question; to expect more. And to watch Muslim women deliver.



MICHAEL PAIN

Chief executive, Forum Education

MATs are overcoming entrenched challenges

Ignore the headlines: multi-academy trusts are showing great potential for maximising the talents of teachers, leaders and others, says Michael Pain

There’s no doubt the academy system has received a pretty harsh press of late. If we’re not seeing headlines comparing trust leaders to the bankers who crashed the financial system, we’re being told of how they’re making local communities feel “powerless” as they move towards the rigorous governance structures they’re otherwise criticised for not having in place.

Don’t get me wrong, the press plays an essential role in highlighting poor practice in academy trusts or elsewhere in our education system. However, as someone who has developed a number of multi-academy trust leaders’ networks across the country, and who is in close touch with the work of dozens of trusts, I feel the tone of late has done a disservice to the way in which many MATs are overcoming some of the system’s most entrenched challenges.

That’s why it was encouraging to see last week’s research by the National Foundation for Educational Research that shows how MATs are actively deploying their teachers across schools, not least to those schools with the most disadvantaged intakes and who traditionally find it tricky to recruit and retain staff. This is important because, as a system, we urgently need to find ways to move our best teachers into some of our most challenging schools, finding solutions where policies such as the national teaching service have previously failed.

What’s more, the research also highlights how MATs are creating their own leadership pipelines, potentially mitigating some of the leadership recruitment challenges faced by the wider system.

However, even these conclusions have faced criticism. Some have suggested that the movement of teachers between schools is disrespectful and disruptive at a time when we should be focusing on workload and work-life balance.

That overlooks two points. First, the numerous MAT leaders I have spoken with are clear that they will only move teachers between schools who want to move. Any trust that does otherwise won’t retain its

best staff or reputation for long.

Second, research shows that millennial employees are attracted to organisations that provide ample opportunities to work across a range of settings and contexts (we’re told that many of this generation will, through choice, have at least ten jobs during their lifetimes). If we are going to attract the most talented employees and graduates – in education we really do need to be strategic about how we do this – we need to give our top employees the variety and diversity of work experiences that MATs can provide.

The leadership development finding is also important.

“The distance between schools must be sensible

MATs have been accused of narrowing the autonomy and freedom of leaders in their schools. Yet, many are providing a structure for people to step up to leadership at all levels: as teachers taking on a leadership secondment in another school or as a head who can also step up to a trust-wide school improvement role.

If some MATs do take away autonomy, it’s usually in those areas that have been shown to put potential heads off the job, such as finance and site management. Rather than diminishing the opportunities to lead school improvement, MATs are enabling these opportunities to proliferate.

Geographical proximity is key to all of this. Providing secondments, career development, and cross-trust leadership opportunities is only viable if the distance between schools is sensible. MATs make that work either by limiting their growth to a specific locality or moving to cluster models.

Some of the criticisms aimed at the MAT system have been justified; some have not. But the way in which many MATs work has huge potential to attract talented people to join and remain in the profession, serving some of our most disadvantaged pupils.

That’s not to be scoffed at when we know that it is teachers who ultimately make the difference.

Don't be too sure that your view of education is the only right one, says Phil Beadle. You will miss the usefulness of what other people have to say and "become blind to the truth of things"

In early February 2006, I wrote an article that concluded "cod" psychological inventories such as learning styles were "a set of crutches for the indolent of mind". Coming two years after Frank Coffield had constructed a widely respected demolition of the same, it was a tad tardy, jumping aboard a non-existent bandwagon.

The month before, I'd enjoyed a respectful public debate about "multiple intelligences" with Professor John White – he was against; I was broadly for – but we both acknowledged the theory was the (flawed) product of one person's mind. In the same year, I invented a thing called Brainless Gym, in which teachers were required to place their hands on parts of their bodies to improve laterality or whatever and simultaneously locate both their arse and their elbow.

I think little of the articles. They were written out of self interest. I wanted the world to congratulate me on an ability to see through windows.

I am not alone in my habit of making confident assertions; it is comforting to be certain. But certainty is often under-nuanced and can lead to intractable ideological positions: ones from which we draw conclusions based on collective beliefs.

Such ideologies can have the tenor of the religion. In dismissing ideas because they are



PHIL BEADLE

Author and education consultant

Teaching isn't about being on the right team

espoused by people with whom we generally disagree, we may be right, but we miss the usefulness of the other's position and become blind to the truth of things.

For instance, in rightly dismissing learning styles as fallacy, we miss the fact that practitioners might have applied them merely as a useful totem for ensuring students did not have to subsist on a pedagogical diet possessing only one element.

In properly understanding that "multiple intelligences" was just one of a number of theories of intelligence (some of which are still fashionable, but won't be in time), we lose it as a prism with which to alter students' view of themselves as underachievers.

In laughing at any word that starts with the prefix "kin", we write off the entirely innocent

idea that having students engaged in some bodily activity might help to cement learning.

In short, if we focus only on that which is approved, we render our toolbox more paltry than it might otherwise have been.

We fall into this error by assuming the moral superiority of our own position to that of those who inhabit contrary (or complementary) positions.

People on either side of the debate are too ready to throw around offensive stereotypes claiming the other side does not care about the wellbeing or academic achievement of children. I do not believe this of either side, but wish we were free to take our influences from where they ring true, without there being a pogrom against unacceptable ideas that writes off the intellect and professional

judgment of many teachers.

While I might, for instance, wonder whether there are kids at Michaela Community School who want to be left to eat their lunch without teachers asking them clever stuff, their policy

“An interested teacher is an omnivore

on equipping kids with the cultural capital of having read a series of novels from the canon is enlightened and – with the proviso that those novels come from a range of sources – should be rolled out to every school.

While I might wonder aloud whether evidence-based practice is having any real positive effect on student experience, I note gleefully that the intellectual level of the curriculum is travelling upwards. An interested teacher is an omnivore and the usefulness of the ideas is key, not the ideological purity of the source.

Every generation thinks it invented sex. But "being right don't [necessarily] make you true", and checking first who said something before we engage with the veracity of what they have said is merely evidence of the desire to be a minor footnote in a forgotten report about the right side of history. It is rather too base and binary a position for anyone with half a mind.

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SCHOOLS**WEEK**

REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS OF THE WEEK

To view individual blogs visit www.schoolsw week.co.uk/reviews



Our blog reviewer of the week is Jill Berry, a former head, now educational consultant, author and Twitter addict @jillberry102

Disconnect in the classroom

@effortfuledukatr

A new blogger to me, Blake Harvard reflects on the relationship between practitioners and researchers, and what might be done better to connect the two. He examines the barriers that might lead to teachers making good use of the outcomes from research, and then identifies possible strategies for overcoming these barriers. He includes useful compilation sites and recommends ResearchEd workshops. "As a high school teacher, I feel it is partly my duty to find the most applicable evidence-based practices for my students...Teachers and students deserve access to this research and time to read through and discuss ways to apply it in the classroom. This is where it has to be done to be most effective and have the greatest impact across cultures around the world."

Reflecting on accessing and conducting research

@HeadteacherJMS

On a similar subject, Sarah Brinkley considers accessing – and conducting – research as a teacher or school leader. She recognises how potentially overwhelming this might be, but talks of her experience as a practitioner researcher and what she has gained from it. She describes identifying an issue her school wanted to learn more about, where she accessed support, carrying out related reading and then conducting research in her own context. She also talks of the importance of customising and adapting what we learn. "Small-scale teacher-led research turned out to be neither as scary nor as daunting as I first thought."

Why growth mindset isn't what you think it is

@Inner_Drive

Bradley Busch explores the phenomenon of growth mindset and how, in the rush to embrace its principles and access the benefits, some educators may have misinterpreted what is really involved. He warns against focusing on the importance of "effort", which he identifies as only one of the factors that can lead to improved performance. He quotes Carol Dweck: "Too often nowadays, praise is given to students who are putting forth effort, but not learning, in order to make them feel good in the moment: 'Great effort! You tried your best!'" Busch reminds us that learning, not effort, is the focus, and describes strategies beyond "try harder" that can lead to success.

Growing, learning and flourishing as a leader

@Vivgrant

Integrity Coaching's Viv Grant profiles the head of the new Aureus School in Oxford, Hannah Wilson (@TheHopefulHeadteacher). She explores what school leaders can do to sustain themselves, to build resilience and to find joy in the role. Wilson reflects on the importance of clear values, and using them to guide you, especially when you are tested. She talks of managing workload, being realistic and knowing yourself well, modelling this positively and supporting others to do the same. And she considers practical ways in which leaders can prioritise well-being, make the most of support networks and ensure they know when they need to "send up a flare". "In leadership it is so important to practise what you preach. My school's ethos is to ensure that my staff and students 'grow, to learn, to flourish', I recognise that I also need to ensure that I commit to and model this as the headteacher."

Fellows of the Royal Society are human too

Jonathan Gregory, @UniofReading

Finally, I was pleased to discover this post by the University of Reading academic Jonathan Gregory, recently designated a Fellow of the Royal Society, but still acutely mindful of the danger of "imposter syndrome". In a refreshing, honest and fascinating consideration of the power of humility, knowing our limitations and being committed to continuing to learn, he concludes: "See what there is to be discovered, because there may be unknown mountains hidden in the mists of ignorance, and amazing panoramas can occasionally be glimpsed through the gaps."

BOOK REVIEW

World Class: Tackling the ten biggest challenges facing schools today

Edited by David James and Ian Warwick

Warwick

Published by Routledge

Reviewed by Becky Allen



What should we teach? How can school progress be measured? What does outstanding leadership look like? These are deep, almost impossibly complex questions that have challenged educationists through the generations. This book, describing itself as a "powerful manifesto for change", seeks to contribute to the debate with five 1,000-word essays on each of the ten biggest challenges they say face schools today.

I was excited to read it because the questions that its editors have posed to world-class educationists are genuinely interesting. Dylan Wiliam, John Hattie, Doug Lemov and Robert A Bjork, all in one book. Who could resist?

But just a few pages in I could see that the format wouldn't work, at least for me. One thousand words is enough for someone to make a point, but on such complex issues as "How can we improve professional standards?", it is never enough to explain the reasoning behind the point and provide evidence that supports the perspective.

Because of this, the book is best thought of as a series of opinion pieces. In fact, as I read I was reminded of Caitlin Moran's recent opinion piece in *The Times*, "Why I should run our schools", that so upset the edu-twitterati. They claimed that if she knew anything about the evidence she would not propose the "semi-feral library-based self-education" that she did. Take an expert, give them 1,000 words to answer a complex question, and it is hard to feel convinced they have the answers to fixing the education system any more than Moran does.

I liked the essays where I knew the contributor's work well enough to believe the arguments they made. It is always a pleasure and comforting reassurance of my own world-view to read the ideas of

Rob Coe, Christine Counsell, Tom Bennett, Steve Biddulph and Tim Oates. For the essayists who made statements that I disagreed with, the format simply did not give them the space to have any possibility of convincing me to review my prior position on the topic.

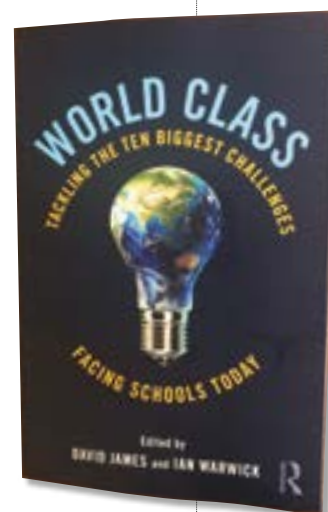
World Class is the panel session of the education literature world. Conference panel sessions are great for the panellists because they can participate with little preparation, drawing on past materials to throw together their three-minute blurb.

And yet, unlike a panel session at a conference, in this book there is no question and answer section, no means for the audience to unpick the arguments of a panellist, no space for one panellist to challenge another's perspective. So when Carol Dweck asks "Who will be

better prepared for the unknown jobs of the future?", other contributors cannot respectfully suggest that most jobs of the future will be the same as those of the present. Views in the book conflict, with no possibility of resolution.

Some of the overarching questions undoubtedly work better than others. The chapter on "How can teachers become specialists?" is interesting, as is "How can we improve behaviour in the classroom?"

Others worked less well for me, perhaps because the interpretations of the question



World Class is the panel session of the education literature world

itself (eg, "How independent should schools be?") were too broad and so the essays spoke to completely different sub-questions.

In the end, I liked the essays that didn't try to answer the question they were set. John Hattie and Doug Lemov wrote short stories about an aspect of their life or work. They weren't trying to make an overarching argument, without the word count for the necessary foundations. They just told the reader about something interesting. And I enjoyed reading that.



A week in Westminster

Your regular guide to what's going on in central government

FRIDAY:

We've called him the "immovable Nick Gibb" after he survived yet another reshuffle, but government records show that the schools minister is very moveable, geographically, when there's a big education summit.

Travel documents published online show that £7,770.47 was spent flying Gibb to Dubai and putting him up at the lavish Global Education and Skills Forum in March "to promote British educational exports".

While he was there, he was treated to dinner by Jonathan Hughes D'Aeth, the headmaster of Repton School, and Fiona McKenzie, the director of Gabbitas Middle East.

It is unclear whether it was the government or the organisers of the summit who paid for his attendance, but clearly one or the other feels it was worth shelling out for.

MONDAY:

There's a new parliament in town, and a bid by a recently spurned education minister for the chair of the powerful education select committee could make the contest, and the committee itself, a bit more exciting.

Neil Carmichael, the former chair and one-time frontrunner to take it again, is out of the running on the grounds of no longer being an MP.

But the former skills minister Robert Halfon is a wild card. He has an axe to grind – he's been highly critical of the PM since she unceremoniously sacked him last month.

We suspect that any grillings of the education secretary Justine Greening and Gibb under his watch could take an interesting turn, given his knowledge of how the department works under a May government...

TUESDAY:

Greening was conspicuous by her absence from a key debate on school funding, sending in Gibb to bat for her when Angela Rayner, shadow education secretary, was granted an urgent question in parliament on education funding.

Rayner demanded to know where Greening and her boss were, and was praised for her line on the £1bn Tory-DUP deal, calling Arlene Foster the most expensive right-winger since Cristiano Ronaldo. WiW is told this is a football joke, although technically incorrect because Ronaldo plays on "the left".

She demanded to know whether the extra £150 per pupil handed to Northern Ireland would be matched in England.

Gibb didn't answer, but he may soon have some family support with his message.

According to The Sun, Gibb's BBC boss brother Robbie is the favourite to be the next director of comms at No 10. Forget the Milibands, the Johnsons and the Eagles, the Gibbs are the new Westminster dynasty.

WEDNESDAY:

They're changing the guard at the National Association of Head Teachers, but the anointment of new general secretary Paul Whiteman looks set to come a little earlier than planned.

Russell Hobby is due to start his new job at Teach First in September, the month Whiteman officially becomes the union's general secretary.

But Hobby has now announced that his successor will take over as interim boss from July 17.

Week in Westminster understands that a busy year, including a general election campaign and a lot of travelling around the country, has left Hobby with extra leave to take before he officially jumps ship, hence the early start for Whiteman.

Hobby says he'll still be working until September as a "shadowy figure behind the scenes to support transition", but admits he'll get a good summer too.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEELIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS



Name Marie Power
Age 29
Occupation Director of external affairs, Future First
Location London
Subscriber since February 2016

Fly on the Wall is a chance for you, the subscriber, to tell us what you love (and hate) about *Schools Week*, who you'd like to spy on and, of course, what the world of education would look like if you were in charge...



FLY ON THE WALL

Where do you read your copy of *Schools Week*?
On the train on the way home from work on Friday.

Which section do you enjoy the most?
The opinion section. It's good to hear other people's views and it always gives me something to think about.

If you could wave a magic wand and change one education policy, which would it be?
School starting age. When I look at my four-year-old nieces and nephews toddling out the door, they seem too young to be stepping on to the conveyor belt.

Who is your favourite education secretary?
Estelle Morris, because she was honest and human.

What is your favourite story or investigation in *Schools Week*?
I always enjoy reading Laura McInerney's editorial.

What do you do with your copy once you've read it?
I leave it for my colleagues. As an education charity, it's important we're well informed.

What would you do if you were editor for a day?
I'd give the *Schools Week* writers' free rein to cover anything they wanted (as long as I had the final say!).

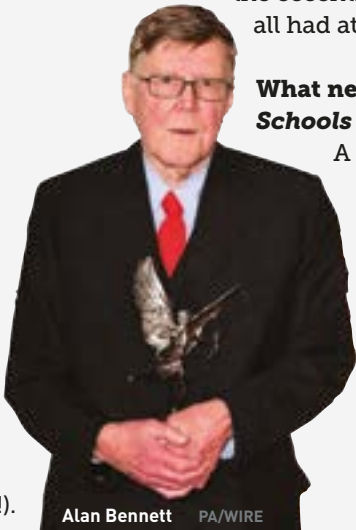
Favourite memory of your school years?
Discussing the great Seamus Heaney with my wonderful teacher Mr Boyle, who also happened to be Heaney's friend.

If you weren't working in education, what would you be doing?
I'd write a novel; at the rate I'm going it will take me forever.

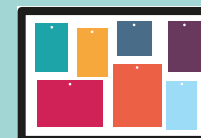
Favourite book on education?
It's not quite a book but I'm sure an Alan Bennett play is close enough. *The History Boys* is funny and sad and everything in between. We can all relate to the character of the eccentric, inspiring teacher because (hopefully) we've all had at least one.

What new things would you like to see in *Schools Week*?
A crossword.

If you could be a fly on the wall in anyone's office, whose would it be?
Baroness Mary Warnock. An amazing woman who has led such an interesting life. And, like me, she's the youngest of seven.



Alan Bennett PA/WIRE



Medieval building comes back to life

FEATURED

A team of pupils from Strood Academy in Kent is helping to bring a 13th century-building back into the public eye.

Temple Manor, a grade 1 listed medieval stone hall built by the Knights Templar – a military and religious order founded during the Crusades – is on an industrial estate,, with few people aware of its existence.

The school and Medway Council – which manages the site on behalf of English Heritage – applied for a grant to help to restore the building last year, and has now received £50,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Young Roots programme.

The council will work closely with the school to restore the building and to explore ways to engage members of the public, particularly young people, with the old hall.

Is current plan is to develop the site into an attraction that uses augmented reality technology to engage with younger audiences. It will team up with local universities to explore how this can be achieved.

During weekly after-school clubs led by history teacher Jayne Fenton, Strood's year 7, 8 and 9 pupils are researching the building's history and picking out facts that will help to tell the story of the site to visitors.

Once restoration work is complete,



Temple Manor
Inset: The school hosts an open day at the heritage site

the pupils will also help with the promotion and marketing of the site. They have already hosted a focus group with local home-schooled pupils to find out what they liked most about the building.

Strood's principal Kim Gunn, said: "The project will help pupils to develop many skills including digital media and communication, alongside learning about an important local heritage site, which we hope will encourage more people to visit and learn about its history and relevance to the local area."

Stuart McLeod, head of the lottery fund



in the south east, added: "The Young Roots programme is all about giving young people the opportunity to develop their skills and connect with their local heritage. This project will help to shine a light on a little-known treasure, and develop new ideas to preserve Temple Manor for the future."

TEACHERS CAN GET THAT MILLION-DOLLAR FEELING



This year's winner, Canadian teacher Maggie MacDonnell

A global teaching competition is now accepting nominations for the world's best teacher.

The Global Teacher Prize aims to spotlight the work of teachers across the world, and is open to educators from every country.

The competition – run by the Varkey Foundation – is open to those teaching young people aged 5 to 18; teachers of children in compulsory schooling; part-time teachers; or tutors of an online course.

Fifty teachers will be shortlisted in December this year, with the list whittled down to ten finalists who will be flown to Dubai for a ceremony at the Global Education and Skills Forum in March. The winner will receive \$1 million.

Judges will look out for teachers who have been recognised by the community for their achievements, equipped pupils with life skills, used innovative teaching methods and encouraged others to join the profession.

Nominations can be made at www.globalteacherprize.org. The closing date for applications is October 8.

Pupil becomes school's head for a day



Joe Lever in the hot seat
Inset: with headteacher Adam Pettitt, kitted out in the school uniform

A year 8 pupil took over London's Highgate School for a day, swapping places with the school's headteacher who was sent to take up his place in classes.

A charity raffle gave Joe Lever the chance to become head at the independent school, while the incumbent Adam Pettitt went back to life as a pupil.

Joe attended staff briefings, observed lessons, wrote reports and lunched with teachers while Pettitt took part in a classics and PE lesson, and came second in a 1,500m race.

Joe was also interviewed about his day for the school's HighNotes newsletter.

"This was an eye-opening experience, as I was able to see behind the scenes of how Highgate is run," he told his interviewer. "I enjoyed meeting teachers, sitting in on my Friday classics lesson and working with the grounds staff, but I'm also excited to tell my friends about it when we go back to normal."

Pettitt added: "Joe did an excellent job of assuming my responsibilities for the day, and all the staff were impressed with his work."

"I thoroughly enjoyed getting the chance to relive my days as a pupil."



Pupils with the aircraft
Inset: Ready to take off

Flying high in STEM challenge

A group of year 9 pupils flew a four-seater plane as part of a programme that engages young people with STEM subjects.

Twenty-seven pupils from Bristol Metropolitan Academy received flying lessons in groups of three with an instructor at Gloucester Airport, before each took turns to control the plane in the air.

The lessons were the culmination of a year-long Airbus Flying Challenge – funded by the Airbus foundation – which gives young people the chance to experience all aspects of aviation.

The academy has linked the programme with GCSE design and technology, maths and physics, with pupils learning how to work out measurements and the weight of

an aircraft, as well as mastering computer-aided design.

They also toured the airport's fire station and were invited on board a £7 million luxury jet.

Phillipa Evans, a design and technology teacher at the academy said: "The programme has helped students' knowledge of physics as they learnt about how planes fly and the forces that act on an aeroplane."

"To see them get their reward for their commitment is fantastic."



MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new and who's leaving



ANDREW MILLIKEN

HEADTEACHER,
FOLKESTONE ACADEMY,
KENT

START DATE September

CURRENT JOB Head of school, Sedgemoor School, south Dorset

INTERESTING FACT He's a historian whose favourite specialist subject is the Paris peace talks before the 1960s.



CHRIS JESSUP

EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL,
WELLSPRING ACADEMY
TRUST, BARNLEY

START DATE September

CURRENT JOB Headteacher, Yarborough Academy, Grimsby

INTERESTING FACT He considered training as a chef before deciding to take up teaching.



MARK LEHAIN

DIRECTOR, PARENTS AND
TEACHERS FOR EXCELLENCE

START DATE September

CURRENT JOB Founder and head of Bedford Free School

INTERESTING FACT His first Saturday job as a teenager was as a conductor on a Routemaster bus. He later worked in retail banking for a couple of years before deciding that educating teenagers was more interesting.



BARRY SMITH

SUBJECT SPECIALIST
LEADER MFL, INSPIRATION
TRUST, NORWICH

START DATE September

CURRENT JOB Deputy head and co-founder of Michaela Community School, north London

INTERESTING FACT His favourite karaoke number is *Papa Was a Rolling Stone* by The Temptations.



ZOE LIGHTFOOT

HEADTEACHER, HEMPLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL, YORK

START DATE September

CURRENT JOB Head of school, Haxby Road Primary Academy, York

INTERESTING FACT She was "gunged" by pupils for Comic Relief this year, with BBC Radio York's breakfast presenter Kay Crewdson.

Get in touch!

If you want to let us know of any new faces at the top of your school, local authority or organisation please let us know by emailing news@schoolsweek.co.uk

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SCHOOLS WEEK Sudoku challenge

			7		6		2	
		6	3					4
		1		5				9
		3		7			4	2
	8	4				7	1	
2	5			1		3		
5				4		2		
4					3	8		
	6		5		9			

Difficulty:
EASY

6	1			8			9	5
7	8	5			6			
		4	5	1		8		
			3					
		9				5		
					4			
		8		6	7	9		
			9			1	3	8
9	5			3			7	4

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Last Week's solutions

8	4	5	7	9	6	1	2	3
7	9	6	3	2	1	5	8	4
3	2	1	4	5	8	6	7	9
6	1	3	8	7	5	9	4	2
9	8	4	6	3	2	7	1	5
2	5	7	9	1	4	3	6	8
5	3	8	1	4	7	2	9	6
4	7	9	2	6	3	8	5	1
1	6	2	5	8	9	4	3	7

Difficulty:
EASY

6	1	2	7	8	3	4	9	5
7	8	5	4	9	6	3	2	1
3	9	4	5	1	2	8	6	7
1	4	7	3	5	9	2	8	6
8	2	9	6	7	1	5	4	3
5	6	3	8	2	4	7	1	9
4	3	8	1	6	7	9	5	2
2	7	6	9	4	5	1	3	8
9	5	1	2	3	8	6	7	4

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference
to WIN a **Schools Week** mug



Spot five differences. First correct entry wins a mug. Tweet a picture of your completed spot the difference using @schoolsweek in the tweet.