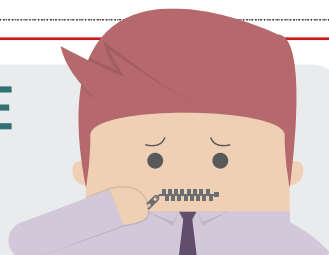


FE Week

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OFSTED GRADE ONE IS TOUGH NUT TO CRACK

No college has been rated 'outstanding' so far this year, while top grades have slumped to a record low despite a new chief inspector



EXCLUSIVE **BILLY CAMDEN** @BILLYCAMDEN

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DfE ditches Boles back-to-school plan for apprentices

ALIX ROBERTSON

@ALIXROBERTSON4

EXCLUSIVE

A plan to force apprentices to go back into schools and promote apprenticeships has seemingly been dumped just a year after it was announced by the former skills minister.

Nick Boles told the parliamentary sub-committee on education, skills and the economy last April that the government would introduce the “commitment on the part of an apprentice and of the apprentice’s employer”, an idea that was welcomed by the Confederation of British Industry.

Mr Boles first mentioned the idea in October 2015 at the Conservative party conference in Manchester, when he proposed “asking every apprentice to sign a simple contract”, requiring them to return to their schools when they’d finished their training and “talk about the values of the apprenticeship they did”.

But the government has been quiet on the scheme since Mr Boles resigned last July – prompting FE Week to ask the Department for Education if the plan had been scrapped.

A spokesperson stopped short of confirming a cancellation, but admitted that there was now “no obligation” for apprentices to go back into schools, adding: “Our Get In Go Far campaign is raising the profile and we

have launched the ‘ASK project’ to raise the prestige of apprenticeships. We are also developing the Young Apprenticeship Ambassadors network who will bring their recent experience directly into schools.”

Her reference to ‘Get In Go Far’ follows Mr Boles’ comments last year, that apprentices returning to schools would “do more to correct the bad impressions than any amount of government marketing”.

He said that hearing from other young people about positive experiences of apprenticeships would “probably be the most powerful thing of all”.

‘ASK’ or ‘apprenticeship support and knowledge for schools’ aims to deliver apprenticeship and traineeship information to young people in years 10 to 13, through teachers, careers advisers, parents and governors – but not those young people directly involved in the training.

The CBI welcomed the plan last April, when its head of education Pippa Morgan told FE Week that businesses were “keen to engage

with schools to help children and young people understand the opportunities their subjects can open up”.

The organisation refused to comment on the apparent demise of the scheme.

However, shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden said the government had “talked the talk and not walked the walk”.

“It is part and parcel of the overall debate about how we get more knowledge of apprenticeships into schools, and it seems to me if the minster is serious about that as part of his career strategy, he shouldn’t be allowing his department to backtrack on this particular commitment,” he told FE Week.

Mr Marsden backed development of a young apprenticeship ambassador network, which it is understood would involve a limited number of apprentices speaking with young people about the training, but warned it would “take some time to do”.

He said: “They could be actually doing a lot more with some of the existing networks, for instance the National Union of Students sponsors the National Apprenticeship Association.”

Shakira Martin, the NUS’ vice president for FE, also refused to comment directly, but did tell FE Week that if “apprentice ambassadors are well trained”, the resulting network would have “a fighting chance of getting the message out there”.



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NEWS

Anger over campus closure after £6 million refurb

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

A college’s controversial decision to close a campus that had only recently been refurbished – at a cost of £6 million – has put it on collision course with its local council.

South Staffordshire College made the decision to shut its Cannock campus after merger plans with Walsall College, which were recommended by two separate area reviews, fell through.

The work was completed in 2013, but provision is expected to cease in July, after which learners will be “relocated to the nearby sites operated by the college”.

The move has dismayed local councillors who claim it will leave the entire Cannock Chase Council district without an FE base.

Jamie Smith, the college’s director of strategy and infrastructure, told FE Week that it continued “to own the building” and was “discussing multiple options with partners in the region, which could include partial use in future”.

He added: “We will – as always – explore all options to mitigate against job losses. This is why we are focusing on relocating and redeploying.”

The planned closure is also not the first for the struggling college, which wound up its Progress Centre, also in Cannock, in 2016.



Learners from the unit, which is currently being sold off, were relocated to one of the college’s other campuses in nearby Rodbaston.

Tony McGovern, the managing director of Cannock Chase District Council, was one of a number of angry councillors. He complained that the decision “will leave Cannock Chase as the only district out of eight in Staffordshire with no FE facility at all, in the area of highest need in the county.”

“The district council is obviously disappointed that the college has made this decision on financial grounds, and considers that the implications of closure of the Cannock site are likely to be negative for

young people and their families who want to access locally provided FE courses in the future,” he said.

Mr McGovern said the council was “made aware of the college’s financial situation” on March 21, after the decision not to pursue a merger was made, and had subsequently tried to provide “potential solutions over the last four weeks”.

The University and College Union’s regional official, Anne O’Sullivan, told FE Week that the decision to close the Cannock campus was “a blow for local students and staff”.

She added: “Our priority must be to protect jobs and ensure that courses are not cut as

a result of the campus closure, so we will approach talks with management with that agenda.”

The merger between South Staffordshire College and Walsall College was first suggested in the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire area review in November 2016.

The final report said that “collaborative working” would “enable opportunities to deliver savings”, “support the expansion of apprenticeships” and “develop progression routes to higher education to meet local skill needs”.

It claimed the merger “would create a college with a £59 million turnover” and “the financial strength of Walsall College would impact positively on South Staffordshire College”.

This proposal was then repeated in the final report of the Black Country area review in January.

However, South Staffordshire College told FE Week on May 3: “The cost of the merger outweighed the benefits to the learners and the wider communities we serve.”

The governing bodies of both colleges issued a joint statement, saying: “Following extensive discussions and comprehensive due diligence, both colleges have concluded that a formal merger is not the best solution at the current time.

“Both organisations will continue to collaborate and work together outside of the complexity of a formal merger.”

Cancer Research leads calls for major levy rethink over charities

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

More than 20 leading charities including Cancer Research UK have joined forces to raise grave concerns over the apprenticeship levy which they fear the government is ignoring.

Major charities like CRUK will “only be able to spend a small proportion” of funding generated through compulsory levy payments, the organisation told FE Week, due to a serious lack of relevant apprenticeship standards.

The charity claims that the situation is aggravated by government rules that prevent the money from being used to train volunteers, who make up a large proportion of the charitable sector’s staff.

It wants charities to be allowed to transfer more than the current 10 per cent cap of levy funds to other related organisations. Without this, CRUK fears donations will end up being spent on apprenticeships outside of the sector, rather than contributing towards charitable objectives.

These concerns were echoed in a letter sent by the Charity Finance Group to education secretary Justine Greening, and co-signed by 24 charities including CRUK, Barnardo’s and Marie Curie.

“By capping the amount charities can transfer at 10 per cent, the government is exploiting the charity sector by using it as a piggy bank to advance other policy objectives,” the charities wrote.

The government has yet to reply to the letter, which was sent over a month ago. A spokesperson would tell FE Week only that a response would come “in due course”.

According to a representative from CRUK, “the lack of appropriate apprenticeship standards for the charity and medical research sectors” would mean it was “only be able to spend a small proportion of the levy funds in our digital account”.

Javed Khan, the chief executive of the children’s charity Barnardo’s, added: “Creating sufficient apprenticeships quickly enough to spend the full amount Barnardo’s would pay into the levy is challenging.

“Whilst apprentices can and do bring valuable skills and potential to the workplace, in the short term this might result in a reduction of funds available for our direct work with children, young people and families.”

Marie Curie, which provides care and support for people living with terminal illnesses, also warned that it expects it will find it “very challenging” to spend all its levy money.

Meanwhile, Mencap’s head of employer



engagement Mark Capper told FE Week that the Education Skills and Funding Agency’s recent move to postpone funding allocations for apprenticeship provision for non-levy-paying employers was another serious concern facing third sector members who hope to deliver apprenticeships.

“This shuts off a huge pool of employees who may be more willing to work with charities rather than larger levy-paying organisations who have their own existing apprenticeship providers,” he said.

FE Week first reported on the CFG’s concerns about the challenges the apprenticeship levy would pose for charities in December 2015, when it also called for the sector to be represented in the Institute for

Apprenticeships.

It raised concerns in its response to the apprenticeship levy consultation, and then in a letter to former skills minister Nick Boles.

Last May Beth Brook, the chief executive of Fair Train, the group-training association for the voluntary and community sector, warned any requirement for charities to ensure their funds are spent directly on their missions would put them in conflict with the levy.

Anjelica Finnegan, the policy and research manager at the CFG, was blunter still. As things stand, she told FE Week, “this isn’t going to work for the sector”.

“The government is going to be taking money away from charities to be redirected to private business – that is not ok,” she added.

Area review transition fund shrouded in secrecy

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

Confusion reigns over the £726 million fund earmarked to help colleges make changes recommended by the area reviews, after the government refused to say how much of it has been handed out.

The Department for Education is also refusing to reveal who has been appointed to run the unit responsible, even though the application deadline passed two months ago.

FE Week has repeatedly asked both the DfE and the Treasury for information about the status of the restructuring facility, with negligible result.

The information, we are told, will be made available “in due course”.

We understand that there have only been a small number of applications to the facility, as colleges have been put off due to the level of detail they are required to submit with their application.

According to the official guidance on applying, which was first published in May 2016 and then updated in January, colleges must submit multiple documents with their application form, including a detailed implementation plan and a full financial plan.

Julian Gravatt, AoC’s assistant chief executive, said the process of applying to the



fund was “complicated” and would therefore “take time and money”, and called on the government to make applications easier for colleges.

“The next government will have an interest in helping colleges implement area review recommendations, and should therefore tackle obstacles by simplifying the restructuring fund process,” he said.

Information about the restructuring facility has been hard to come by since the fund was first revealed by FE Week in February 2016.

The size of the pot, which is managed primarily by the transaction unit, with the Treasury given final sign-off on allocations, was originally understood to be £560 million – a figure that the government repeatedly refused to confirm.

A Freedom of Information request from FE Week in December finally revealed that £726 million had been allocated towards implementing the area review recommendations.

This would consist “primarily of loan funding”, while £12 million had been set aside for transition grants.

This is cash that colleges can use specifically to bring in consultants or other expertise they need to put in place any changes.

The DfE confirmed in October that 50 grants totalling £3.5 million had already been dished out, but refused to answer FE Week’s subsequent requests for updates – with a representative declaring in December that it would not give a “running commentary”.

Adverts for a permanent director of the transaction unit were posted by the DfE in February, and featured a closing date of March 3.

The unit is currently headed up by Matthew Atkinson, who is on secondment from the audit firm PricewaterhouseCoopers.

PwC provides financial services for 26 colleges, according to 2014/15 college accounts – raising concerns of a potential conflict of interest, were Mr Atkinson was appointed on a permanent basis, as his former firm would then be able to pick up work through the transition grant process.

Landmark euro VAT victory could see colleges refunded millions

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FROM FRONT EXCLUSIVE

Hampshire college has won a long-running dispute with the taxman, in a landmark ruling from the European Court of Justice which could save the sector millions.

The case centred on whether supplies for Brockenhurst College’s training restaurant, MJ’s, were exempt from VAT, and was originally sent to the EU’s highest court in January 2016, after three courts in the UK failed to resolve it for good.

Legal experts believe the verdict will set a precedent which could save the sector tens of millions of pounds as many colleges operate similar facilities.

In their summary of the case proceedings, published this week, the judges wrote that supplies for the college’s restaurant “may be regarded as supplies ‘closely related’ to the principal supply of education and accordingly be exempt from value added tax (VAT)”.

This is the case “provided that those services are essential to the students’ education and that their basic purpose is not to obtain additional income for that establishment, by carrying out transactions which are in direct competition with those of commercial enterprises liable for VAT”.

The court agreed with the arguments made on behalf of the college, that VAT was not due on the income generated from areas

such as the training restaurants or hair and beauty salons, where members of the public pay for services supplied by students as part of their courses.

Brockenhurst’s principal Di Roberts said: “We are pleased with the recent judgement by the European Court regarding the ongoing VAT case and the treatment of income from our training restaurant.”

The case has now been referred back to the UK courts, but Ms Roberts added that the college “remains hopeful” it will ultimately be successful and set a precedent for other educational institutions in similar situations.

Julian Gravatt, assistant chief executive at the Association of Colleges, agreed the verdict was positive.

He said: “It is useful for Brockenhurst College to get this clarification on the VAT status of their training restaurant.

“The education VAT rules are very complicated. Brexit could be an opportunity for a wider review that removes VAT entirely from publicly funded sixth form education.”

Noel Tyler, director of VATangles, the VAT consultancy which advised Brockenhurst College, welcomed the “extremely good news”.

“The European Court has agreed with the arguments that we have consistently made on behalf of Brockenhurst and other colleges through the First Tier Tribunal, Upper Tribunal and the Court of Appeal,” he said.

“Hopefully, this will now finally result in

HMRC making the repayments due to the colleges who have made claims to them.”

An HMRC spokesperson said only that HMRC is “currently considering the judgment of the CJEU”.

Further successful payback campaigns in the vein of Brockenhurst’s could net the sector tens of millions of pounds if this case starts a trend.

As reported in FE Week, a hearing in

February 2014 awarded Brockenhurst College £55,000 – representing four years’ worth of tax payments – and the college went on to win a second hearing in August 2014, after HMRC appealed the decision.

Then, at the third hearing in November, the Court of Appeal agreed with the request from both HMRC and the college to refer the case to the European Court of Justice on the basis that the law was unclear.



INVESTIGATES

Devastating impact of non-levy a

JUDE BURKE
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The allocations horror show has claimed its first victim, as a subcontractor with 18 years' experience has announced it will be forced to close within months after it was dropped by its lead provider.

Other subcontractors are meanwhile warning of "chaos" and mass redundancies due to the massive cuts the government has made in its non-levy apprenticeship funding.

The government has rejected the Association of Employment and Learning Provider's last-ditch plea to increase funding for providers delivering apprenticeships to small employers, after its boss Mark Dawe last week made dire prognostications that the sector could see "closures and redundancies" almost at once.

Lead providers learned in April that their allocations for May to December amounted to a fraction of the costs of their current delivery.

Mr Dawe said he feared the impact would most keenly be felt by subcontractors, who were already "being contacted by their primes, often with great regret, and told that there isn't enough money to support them

from May 1".

Now, it seems his predictions are coming true.

The director of one provider, who has asked to remain anonymous, told FE Week that without additional cash, her business would close in August as she "could see no way forward".

Having failed to win a place on the register of apprenticeship training providers, the final nail in the firm's coffin was when its "only remaining prime" announced it had been given "such a small allocation they cannot afford to subcontract anymore".

"We will try and honour our remaining learners, but frankly, we feel like walking away," she said.

Other providers have spoken of "frustration" and being left "vulnerable" by the Education and Skills Funding Agency's hard line.

Carla Hales, the managing director of Debut Training Academy, which has subcontracted for South Essex College for the past six years, said she was preparing to cut staff after the college told her it would not receive any funding whatsoever for new starts during the next eight months.

According to ESFA figures, the Essex-based provider held a subcontract with the college

worth £390,640 for 2016/17.

Her firm had been accepted onto the RoATP and was expecting to be given its own allocation for non-levy employers.

However, she admitted that this "unsettling latest turn of events" had "put us in an exceptionally vulnerable position".

Jane Dale, the managing director of Meat Skills Training School, said she had "never before experienced such chaos in the training forum" in the 30 years she had been in the business.

This Ipswich-based provider held a subcontract with Colchester Institute worth £356,888 in 2016/17, according to the ESFA list.

But it was told by the college that "we do not have any places at all for 19+ level two and three" between May and December, although its 16-18 allocation had not been cut, she said.

"The impact on our company will be severe;

we will be unable to continue training young people, therefore we will go out of business," she said.

Anthony McGarel, deputy principal and chief executive of South Essex College, said the college had been allocated just 25 per cent of its previous eight-month allocation for 16-18 apprenticeships, and a mere 13 per cent for 19+ apprentices.

"Work is still ongoing to analyse the number of starts the allocation could cover for non-levy-paying employers," he said. "It may be possible to subcontract some starts but we are not able to confirm this just yet."

A spokesperson for Colchester Institute said the college had not yet cancelled its subcontracting arrangements.

"We are working proactively with our supply chain to honour existing contract commitments where possible," the

WE SPOKE TO THOSE AFFECTED

“We have gone from holding our own contract to sub-contracting to various colleges over the last 10 years. Over the last few years allocations have been squeezed and primes have stopped or reduced sub-contracting. Now, our only remaining prime has been given such a small allocation, they cannot afford to sub-contract anymore. We will try and honour our remaining learners, but frankly, we feel like walking away.”

Anonymous provider that is closing

“I believe we have done everything right over the last few years: we deliver a niche apprenticeship provision in a high priority sector, we engage healthy numbers of 16-18 learners, we have heavily invested in digital learning and year on year our success rates improve. Despite all of this we are facing a scenario where we have no further apprenticeship business. We are out there speaking to levy employers, but the levy market is going to take a while to develop.”

Luke Muscat
Managing director
Back 2 Work Complete Training

“We are concerned on a number of fronts - not only for our own business that has successfully trained thousands of hairdressers over the past 18 years, but for the impact it will have on our employers - all non-levy paying SMEs who rely heavily on apprentices for the success of their own businesses. Not forgetting the impact it will have on young people wanting to start an apprenticeship.”

Lynne Hayes
Business development manager
JET Hairdressing Academy

“We have built long-lasting and trustworthy relationships with our employer base over the previous five to six years, and have worked diligently in the last 12 months to extend our employer contact base to meet the demands of a new contract and the reforms. The impact now will result all these relationships being damaged and links will be broken. We did not envisage that we would be placed in a position that would damage our reputation as a reliable and trustworthy provider”

Carla Hales
Managing director
Debut Training Academy

“The food industry is deemed by the government as a skilled shortage area, yet they are decimating the funding for non-levy paying employers. Eighty per cent of the present workforce in the food industry are being affected by Brexit, hence the need to train up even more butchers. We have been delivering meat training for 30 years, and during this time I have never before experienced such chaos in the training forum.”

Jane Dale
Managing director
Meat Skills Training School

“Our lead has allocated us a small number of starts from May to July but only for 16 to 18 and against frameworks not standards. Whilst the allocation is less than ideal, it will help us to maintain our business whilst growth cases are applied for and, hopefully, the whole system is sorted out. Or is that just wishful thinking?”

Gemma Hall
Operations director
EASI Hairdressing Academy



WENDY
VICKERS

Chief executive of ITEC Learning Technologies Ltd

Damaging for SME apprentices

We are a small, not-for-profit training provider specialising in IT training and have been successfully running government-funded programmes since 1984.

We primarily support SMEs, and have approximately 100 employers with apprentices at the moment. Our success rates are well above the national average and have been 85 per cent-plus for the past three years or so.

We were forced 12 years ago into consortium by what was then the Learning and Skills Council (the SFA's predecessor) and lost our direct contract through no fault of our own.

Subsequently we have had to subcontract from two primes: South Essex College and Colchester Institute.

Both of these are telling us that they have not been given sufficient allocation to cover their own programmes, let alone those of subcontractors.

Needless to say, this will affect our business greatly. We are unable to start any current

SMEs who want to employ apprentices as our primes have insufficient allocations.

I am at a loss to know what to tell them, how to support them, or even convince them to continue to believe in apprenticeships.

The damage this is doing to SME apprenticeships is very high and will get worse over the summer months. I am convinced that once they get used to not employing apprentices, they will not return to the programme.

The other issue is the apprentices. We have 22 young people who have successfully applied for our IT apprenticeships when they leave school or college next month - what are we supposed to tell them?

We are unable to engage with SME employers for them and there are not enough levy-paying employers in this area to recruit them all.

The worst thing about all this though is that at ESFA and government level, no one seems to care about us and the fact we may go out of business within the next 12 months.

Allocations ‘horror show’ laid-bare

spokesperson said.

“Senior management continues to review the reduced funding allocations provided from May and the impact this may have for service delivery to its customers.”

The plight of many providers prompted Mr Dawe to write to education secretary Justine Greening urging her to “ask the ESFA to reissue larger non-levy allocations to providers as soon as possible”.

But the response he received, from ESFA boss Peter Lauener (see below), made no mention of increasing this funding – and instead indicated that levy-paying employers – which make up 2 per cent of all companies in the UK – were the department’s priority.

“These allocations have been made in a fair and transparent way that reflects the shift towards the levy, and our forecasts of demand for new starts over the eight-month period from May to December,” he wrote.

He also promised to publish a list of provider contract values “once a full and final list is available”.

In a letter sent to providers last month, the ESFA said it had “worked out your allocation by calculating your share of provider earnings to non-levy-paying employers” and detailed the methodology it had used.

“Within the available budget, we have cushioned your allocation in recognition of the fact that we have had to approximate your delivery to non-levy-paying employers,” it added.

The letter also confirmed that “the current approach to subcontracting” would be maintained for new starts to non-levy-paying employers until the end of December.

A spokesperson for the Department for Education would not comment on why the list of allocations was yet to be published, and directed FE Week back to Mr Lauener’s letter.

They said: “As per normal practice, once providers have signed their contracts and we have a full and final list of contract values, the ESFA will publish it.”



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NEWS

Ambassador vows to ‘beat drum’ over SME fears

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

The government’s small business apprenticeship ambassador will “continue to beat the drum” over fears that limited access to funding will drive SMEs away.

Jason Holt spoke exclusively to FE Week after the devastating impact of last week’s “derisory” funding allocations for providers delivering apprenticeships to small employers between May and December became clear.

The announcement, made on April 25, followed a decision to pause the £440 million procurement process for employers not

subject to the levy, in part because it was massively oversubscribed.

It provoked widespread fears for the future of apprenticeship engagement; 98 per cent of employers will not pay the levy, which only applies to businesses with a payroll of more than £3 million.

Mr Holt, who has been government apprenticeship ambassador for small business since 2013, told FE Week: “I am grateful to FE Week for raising the issue, and I can promise I will continue to beat the drum of SMEs once the new government is formed.”

Five years ago, he led a review on behalf of the government into how more SMEs could be encouraged to take on apprentices.

“It would clearly be an issue if non-levy payers did not have necessary access to high-quality apprenticeship delivery,” he said. “I know senior officials would want to work hard to resolve them in consultation with the sector.

“As chair of the Apprenticeship Stakeholder Board for past two years, I personally have been impressed with just how responsive officials have been to stakeholder feedback and concerns. I have every confidence they will address any issue swiftly.”

The Federation of Small Businesses’ national chairman Mike Cherry meanwhile warned that small businesses should have a key role in helping hit the government’s target of three million starts between 2015 and 2020,

and claimed it was now being dangerously undermined.

“We want to see high-quality provision rolled out across England in the foreseeable future, and we are concerned at how this could be impacted by recent reports on funding allocations,” he said.

“We are keen to engage constructively with the government, to clarify the position as soon as possible, to provide reassurance to small employers with apprentices, and those that are thinking about taking on their very first one.”

He added that the FSB was “seeking to clarify” the situation with ministers and civil servants “as soon as possible”.

The Confederation of British Industry also warned employers had been “clear from the outset that for the apprenticeship levy to be effective, it needs to create a stable market for skills, encouraging investment from employers and providers alike”.

Its spokeswoman added that the outcry, led by Association of Employment and Learning Providers boss Mark Dawe, who described the allocations situation as a “horror show”, underlines “issues we previously raised about implementing a major reform on tight timescale”.

“We have called on whoever the next government is to treat the next two years as a transition and deal with matters like these quickly,” she added.



Jason Holt

Sixteenth studio school confirms it will close

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

An ‘inadequate’ studio school in Essex has announced it will close in August due to dwindling student numbers, making it the 16th institution of its kind to shut its doors.

The closure of New Campus Basildon Studio School leaves just 34 of these 14-19 vocational schools open, with 14 already closed and another, Future Tech Studio School in Warrington, on the verge, after it admitted in March that it would shut up shop by the end of this academic year.

New Campus Basildon had just 158 students on roll last September, a figure confirmed through a Freedom of Information request lodged by FE Week, despite a capacity of 340.

Its poor pupil numbers were coupled with a damning ‘inadequate’ overall Ofsted report, published in April last year, which led to its final demise.

Inspectors pointed to low achievement and poor standards of teaching, while governors had “failed to provide sufficient challenge” to senior leaders.

Paul Griffiths, the college’s chief executive, said the decision to close was “incredibly difficult but necessary to ensure pupils were given the best possible educational chances”.

Admissions to year 10 were suspended in September 2016, when St Clere’s Co-operative Academy Trust took over as the studio school’s sponsor, pending investigations into its long term viability.

The school announced that year 11 and 13 students are still able to finish their courses, while those in year 12 have received support to complete studies or obtain places with other colleges.

The school’s headteacher Ashlie Hughes said “the decision to close the studio school was a very difficult one to make”.

“Everyone has worked hard to improve the educational provision for the students, who have made significant progress over the last two terms,” she said.

New Campus Basildon offers vocational courses for youngsters aged 14 to 19 in subjects including health and social care, sport, art, media and music.

The school opened in September 2013, with Essex-based Seevic College as its main sponsor, but the college later withdrew.

New Campus Basildon Studio School was reportedly placed under financial restrictions by the Education Funding Agency in June 2015, following concerns about a “significant deficit”.

News of the latest closure comes just over a year after the Shared Learning Trust in Luton,



formerly known as the Barnfield Academy Trust, announced that it would be closing its studio school.

As reported by our sister paper Schools Week, the Studio School Luton, opened in 2010 but had just 66 pupils and 12 staff, with no new students signed up to start in September 2016.

That announcement came a day after two Da Vinci studio schools in Hertfordshire admitted that they too were closing due to “real challenges”.

These were part of a string of closures

for a programme which has struggled with recruitment since its conception in 2010.

The studio school model’s issues mirror those of its close relative, the University Technical College, which FE Week recently revealed recorded drops in student numbers in two thirds of its institutions this academic year, prompting calls to drop the scheme.

Even Michael Gove, the key ministerial architect of the government’s policy on UTCs – which also recruit at age 14 – has admitted that the experiment has failed.

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EDITORIAL

Don't shy away from campus grades



The ongoing decline in the number of colleges with outstanding inspection results risks seriously undermining confidence in the sector.

This comes at a time when our minister Robert Halfon keeps stressing the importance of boosting the public image of FE.

Surely colleges can't be solely to blame for this.

They clearly have a problem with securing the top score under the current common inspection framework.

I suspect this is due, in part at least, to problems with assessing increasingly large and diverse institutions, often spread over multiple towns and cities.

To her credit, the new chief inspector Amanda Spielman sympathised with colleges' plight when I interviewed her in March, and looked ahead to possible changes in how they are inspected following an imminent review.

We haven't seen the results of this yet, but let's hope long-mooted plans to introduce "campus level" inspections, which would involve different reports for separate local college campuses that exist within a large merger, are a key change to emerge.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@afeweek.co.uk

LEVY LAUNCH HORROR STORY TWEETS:

Apprenticise

@ApprenticiseUK

Interesting. Time will tell, let's hope all will work out.

Peter Thompson

@PthompsonSTG

Primes up to 80% allocation cuts? How on earth are subcontractors going to be sustainable? No one is worried about the learner

Skills Consultants

@SkillsInfo

'Accused of fanning the fire' or fuelling it Mark? AELP should be providing the bucket to put it out. Need more teeth. @AELPUK @SkillsInfo

Brian Quinn

@mrbgq

We need an unprecedented intervention

Graham Hoyle

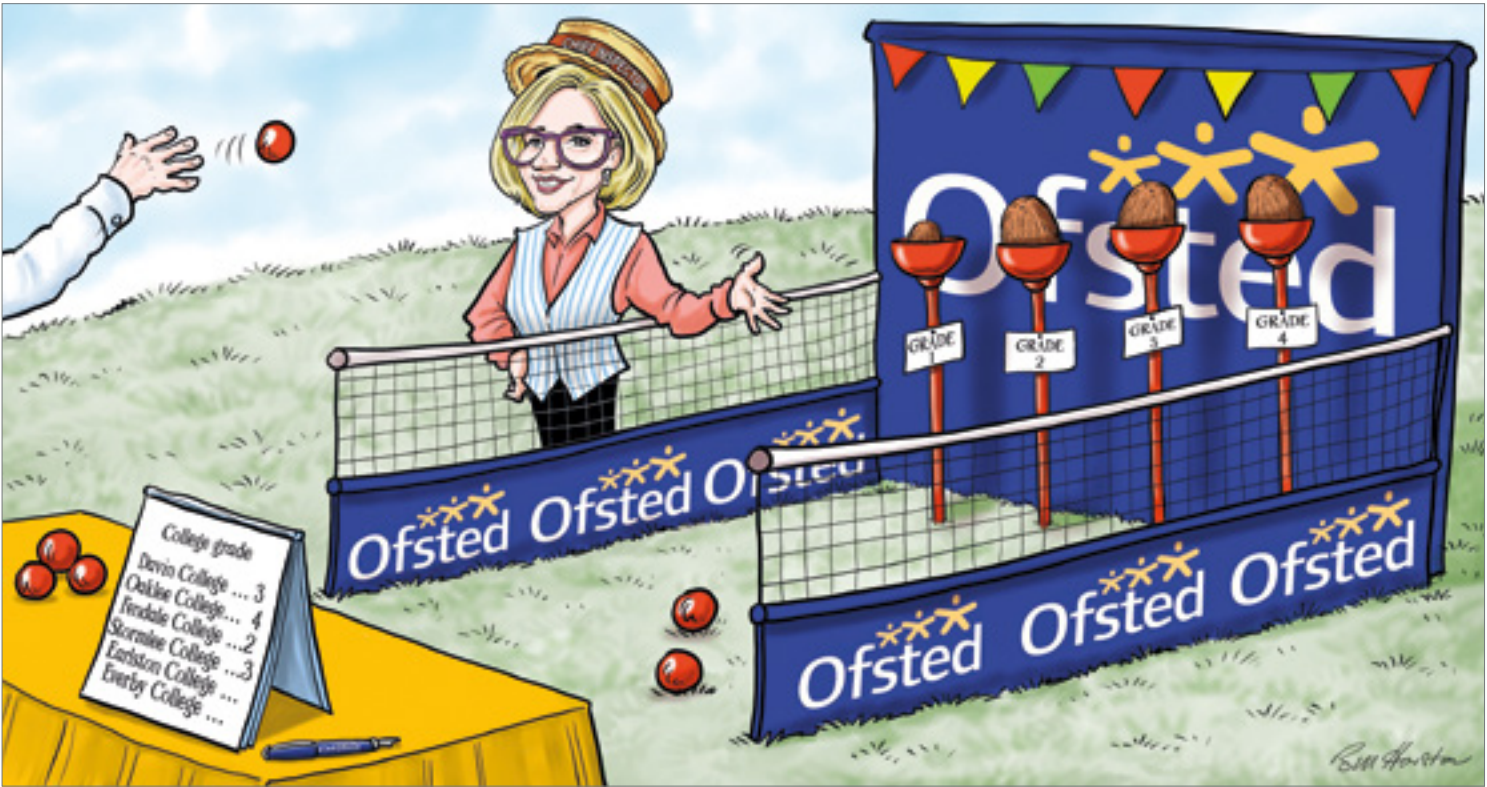
@GrahamHoyle2

Is this because of underlying bias against ITPs, Academia's war against WBL, officials' incompetence, misunderstanding of how delivery works??

Eduk8Stoke

@Eduk8Stoke

What amazes me is how little coverage there is on the news. You wouldn't think we were in the midst of an election



Lowest percentage for 'outstanding' colleges

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

FROM FRONT EXCLUSIVE

The number of colleges with top marks from Ofsted has fallen to its lowest ever level this week, after Blackburn College slumped to a shock grade three.

New analysis by FE Week has uncovered a downward grading spiral for general FE colleges over the last 10 years.

Just one college has received an 'outstanding' grade, across the 124 full inspections that the inspectorate has carried out since the latest Common Inspection Framework (CIF) was introduced in September 2015.

An average of 11 colleges received grade ones every year between 2005/06 and 2014/15. The most successful year was 2007/08, when 37 of the 133 colleges inspected (28 per cent) were given full marks.

The overall percentage of general FE Colleges with a grade one has now fallen to just 13 per cent, or 26 out of 205 colleges.

The number of colleges graded either 'outstanding' or 'good' has also fallen to a record low, of just 69 per cent.

This grading spiral has happened despite several mergers over the last two years, which saw several poorly performing colleges removed from the stats as they joined their

better-graded neighbours.

Colleges had been hoping that the inspection regime might soften under Ofsted's new chief inspector Amanda Spielman – something that has so far not materialised.

David Corke, director of education and skills policy at the Association of Colleges, said it was "clear" that Ms Spielman is "fully committed" to inspecting colleges based on evidence but that it would take time for her to introduce changes to the new CIF.

"The CIF predates [her] arrival and it takes time to introduce changes to an existing framework which is deeply linked to current government policy," he told FE Week.

An Ofsted spokesperson insisted that under Ms Spielman's lead, Ofsted would continue to "treat the FE sector with the same rigour, and with the same regard to the evidence, as any other area we inspect", adding: "That is what colleges and their students deserve."

The latest college to lose its grade one was Blackburn College, which crashed to 'requires improvement' in a report published April 4.

It had not been inspected for nearly a decade.

Two other former 'outstanding' colleges, Bury College and Holy Cross College in Manchester, were also revisited earlier this year after 10 years without inspection and

both found themselves tumbling to grade threes.

The only college to be given a grade one since the new CIF came into play has been Truro and Penwith College in Cornwall. Its report, published in April last year, saw Ofsted return the highest possible rating for six headline fields, including leadership and management, quality of teaching, learning and assessment, outcomes for learners, and 16-to-19 study programmes.

Ms Spielman, who took the reins from Sir Michael Wilshaw in January, has made it clear that the inspectorate would consider scrapping the 'outstanding' grade now she is in charge.

She told MPs on the education select committee last June that getting rid of the rating was "something I would like to see fully discussed", following criticism that FE providers and schools are given a false impression when they're labelled with it.

But in an interview with FE Week editor Nick Linford in March, Ms Spielman said that although there were "many cuts possible" to Ofsted grades, the trade-offs "have to be looked at and you have to have some degree of acceptance by all stakeholders involved that this is going to serve the various purposes".

She added that she didn't see the removal of grades "as something for me with my scythe and armour".

General FE college overall inspections grades each academic year

| Grade | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 so far |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| 1 | 11 | 20 | 37 | 18 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 44 | 49 | 54 | 40 | 43 | 34 | 14 | 41 | 45 | 18 | 42 | 13 |
| 3 | 37 | 42 | 32 | 32 | 35 | 41 | 22 | 29 | 27 | 26 | 31 | 21 |
| 4 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 12 | 4 |
| Total inspections | 100 | 120 | 133 | 94 | 92 | 84 | 45 | 76 | 81 | 51 | 86 | 38 |

All general FE college grades at end of academic year

| Grade | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 so far |
|-------------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| 1 | 16% | 14% | 13% |
| 2 | 61% | 57% | 56% |
| 3 | 20% | 23% | 26% |
| 4 | 3% | 6% | 5% |
| Total inspections | 215 | 207 | 205 |

% of grades given each year (from table above)

| Grade | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 so far |
|-------------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| 1 | 4% | 1% | 0% |
| 2 | 35% | 49% | 34% |
| 3 | 51% | 36% | 55% |
| 4 | 10% | 14% | 11% |
| Total inspections | 51 | 86 | 38 |

Source: Ofsted Annual Reports and monthly statistics, as at 4 May 2017

Already a leading Finance or People Services professional? We will give you the opportunity to do more.

We want two top tier professionals, in Finance and People Services respectively, to be instrumental in shaping how the College Group develops. Both posts are crucial to the continued success of the organisation. Previous background of applicants and the experience gained will be relevant to our challenges, adding value to the College Group and enhancing its culture of achievement.

The persons appointed will be outstanding in the fields of Finance or People Services. Vision and strategic foresight should sit comfortably alongside professional qualifications and expertise, and confidence around accountability for delivery and outcomes.

Bradford College Group is a highly visible and effective organisation (Annual Revenue £60m; 800 fte staff; 17000 students in FE and 3000 students in HE), committed to changing the profile of education and skills in Bradford. The College Group is regarded as an anchor institution in its locality. By continuously improving its performance and impact, the College Group acts as a catalyst and shifts the aspirations and outcomes of students while anticipating and meeting the expectations of employers. We change lives and communities.

The scale of the College Group reflects its distinctive mixed economy of Further Education, Higher Education and Employer Responsiveness. It is one of the largest organisations of this type in the UK and expects to sustain this profile as the policy emphasis shifts further to employer demand, skills and apprenticeships.

Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Excellent and Attractive Salary + benefits

The Role:

To meet its challenges, the College Group has to be assured of its financial standing. This means being informed and alert, ensuring compliance with funding protocols while being able to allocate resources to meet new challenges, satisfy stakeholder expectations and underwrite competitiveness. We expect commercial acumen.

Our financial strategy will continue to support growth and strategic aims around expanding FE, extending the range and scope of HE, and responding appropriately to new initiatives around apprenticeships. The College has been through phases of cost realignment and very significant new capital investment and, as a result, its focus is firmly on growth.

The Director will be a key member of the Executive, overseeing the College Group's financial systems and processes. A similar approach to corporate services is expected. While this is a Senior Postholder, and a Corporation appointment, the routine reporting line is to the Group Chief Executive.

The Director has a pivotal role in ensuring that resources are committed and accounted, from budgeting through to reporting. External accountability to relevant bodies on behalf of the College Group will be a prime responsibility. It will be important that the Director understands and relates to the academic community and its ambitions.

The Director's role will be central to the development and growth of the College Group. The Director will monitor the growth of revenue and provide informed advice on allocation and investment. Decision-taking at all levels across the College will be informed by the Director and his/her Team. At the same time, the Director will be a key member of the College Executive, and a source of information to the Corporation.

The strength of the College Group will both depend on and influence its range of partnerships, and the Director will advise on their development and operation.

The Person:

The Director will have appropriate professional qualifications, sitting alongside the ability to understand our policy and operating context, in order to plot and steer the College Group's financial direction. The College Group is agile and proactive and it is fundamental that the Director can bring anticipation as well as advice.

The Director will lead committed teams and will have the attributes to respond appropriately to academic colleagues.

Director of People Services

Excellent and Attractive Salary + benefits

The Role:

The College Group recognises that people are its primary resource. The College Group is committed to ensure their development and enhanced contributions, at all levels, to meet the diverse challenges set by, for example, shifting government policy, heightened competition, enlarged employer expectations, and the drive of Widening Participation.

Leading the People Services Team, the Director will ensure change in the culture and performance of the organisation. The intention is to have an HR function which continuously informs, challenges and develops the organisation and its people.

The College Group is looking to attract accomplished and experienced candidates who feel that they have the knowledge and confidence to influence the leadership of the College Group across all its operations, and add value to its decision-taking. The recognition and expectation of all staff are fundamental issues, including the processes by which these functions are engaged and heighten institutional performance.

The Director of People will report to the Group Chief Executive.

The Person:

We expect the person to be in an industry-leading role. The ability to understand the policy and political environment in which the College Group exists will be vital.

The successful candidate will be someone who realizes the importance of people services to the success of the organisation and aligns this to a demonstration of awareness of the processes, implications and consequences of introducing change.

Awareness of the complexities and sensitivities of negotiating change will be combined with shrewd judgement on the necessity, force and pace of change.

Personal resilience aligned to an open style of negotiation will be important.



Interested candidates can have an informal discussion with **Prof Bill Wardle** of WAW Consulting on bill@billwardle.com or **07777642100** OR the Group Chief Executive, Andy Welsh, via Zosia Lipka on Z.Lipka@bradfordcollege.ac.uk or **01274 433000**



An exceptional opportunity for an inspirational leader

Vice Principal: Curriculum, Performance and Innovation

c. £90k depending on experience

Kirklees College is a large successful FE college, operating across seven vocational centres and a number of community based centres across Huddersfield and Dewsbury. With an income of £40million we offer a broad curriculum to over 18,000 students across full-time study, apprenticeships and part-time courses. We enjoy strong support from partners in the communities we serve and know that our continued success depends on our ability to provide a learning experience that is second to none. We want the College to grow and flourish, based on a reputation for excellence and inclusion, serving the needs of students and employers. Having opened our exciting new Process Manufacturing Centre in Huddersfield we are continuing to work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Authority to radically transform our provision in Dewsbury with 2 new centres currently under construction.

As our new Vice Principal-Curriculum, Performance and Innovation, we will expect you to work with skill, pace and commitment. We are seeking an inspirational leader who will play a key role in continuing our journey towards excellence. You will have a strong track record in curriculum innovation and quality assurance together with a creative and visionary leadership style and the ability to develop and implement holistic strategies, motivate a high performing workforce and leverage new opportunities. You will be working with a progressive, committed and supportive Board and senior leadership team who are ambitious for success. You will have the opportunity of reviewing, shaping and implementing the long-term strategy for the College. This post provides an exciting opportunity to deliver successful,

sustainable and meaningful change and to contribute to the College being clearly recognised as a beacon of excellence and inclusion.

If you have a proven track record of achievement at a senior level in the education sector and are passionate about the positive economic and social role that FE at its best can play then this could be the opportunity for you.

Please visit www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk/jobs and search under our latest vacancies page where you will find details on how to apply for this role and further information about this amazing opportunity.

If this sounds like the role for you, please do not hesitate to contact Marie Gilluley our Principal and Chief Executive for an initial informal discussion on 07816 539987.

Closing date: Wednesday 24th May 2017

The planned selection centre will take place on Tuesday 13th June and Wednesday 14th June 2017. Our senior leadership team is currently under-represented in all BME categories; we therefore particularly welcome applications from candidates within these groups.



THE JCB ACADEMY

ENGINEERING APPRENTICESHIP TUTORS (Mechanical, Welding or Bench Work)

Start date: Monday, 21 August 2017

Salary: £26,119-£39,023 per annum

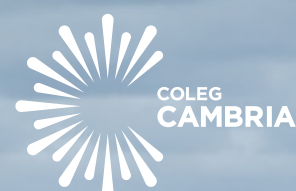
The JCB Academy was established in September 2010, the first of a brand new kind of school in the UK, with a focus on delivering high-quality engineering and business education. We currently cater for approximately 580 full time students aged 14-18. We began delivering apprenticeships in 2013 and will have 170 engineering apprenticeship starts this summer across our programmes which focus around engineering specialisms particularly fabrication and welding, mechanical engineering and electrical engineering, at craft, technician and engineer levels.

We are looking for dynamic and inspirational individuals who are specialists in mechanical, welding or bench work and you will plan, deliver and manage the assessment of level 2 and 3 BTEC units. If you have experience and an engineering aptitude and can demonstrate you have the potential to deliver high quality teaching we would love to hear from you. This may be your first teaching position or you may be an experienced tutor eager for a new challenge and the opportunity to work in a unique environment.

Please contact **Alison** at Hays on **0121 236 4476/ jcbacademy@hays.com**

Closing date: 9am on Wednesday 17th May 2017

Appointments are subject to satisfactory references and an enhanced DBS check. The JCB Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment



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in curriculum or MIS. You must have experience of working in a successful organisation at Head of Department/middle management level. You will be highly motivated and flexible, conversant with the issues facing FE and at the forefront of your area. Applicants need to be prepared to travel and stay away from home when required. In return we offer a competitive remuneration package and to be part of a friendly and supportive team.

For further information please contact **Samantha Bunn** on **07872 378965** or email your CV in confidence to **samantha.bunn@fea.co.uk**



Let Me Play Ltd were recently accepted onto the new **Register of Apprenticeship Training Organisations**.

Let Me Play have recruited a number of truly excellent people to help fulfil several new apprenticeship levy contracts now in place, however are still on the lookout for ambitious and knowledgeable staff to come on board as soon as possible.

The job roles we have remaining can be found to the right. All job roles are full-time and are based at our head office in Hammersmith unless stated otherwise. All job roles pay a competitive salary.

For more information and a job description, please e-mail **Nick Winham**, Recruitment Manager - **nick@letmeplay.co.uk**
No agencies please.

Or visit our careers website: **www.lmpcareers-site.com**

Our websites:

www.letmeplay.co.uk
www.lmpeducation.org
www.sportingeducation.org
www.apprenticetrainingagency.co.uk

Apprenticeship Levy Account Manager (Quality Assurance) –

must have IQA Level 4 or above.

Quality Assurance Officer –

must have IQA Level 4 or above.

Travelling TA Assessors –

Bham/Manchester, Great Yarmouth, London/South East.

Travelling Sports Assessors –

Bham/Manchester, Great Yarmouth, London/South East.

Travelling BA Assessors –

Bham/Manchester, Great Yarmouth, London/South East.

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LECTURER: A-LEVEL MATHS



Contract: Part time, permanent
Salary: £11,598 - £16,612 (£23,196 - £33,225 FTE)
Hours: 18.5 hours per week

Petroc is one of the South West's leading colleges, committed to raising the aspirations, knowledge and skills of individuals, communities and businesses in Devon and beyond. Operating from three campuses, two in North Devon (Barnstaple) and one in Mid Devon (Tiverton), Petroc reaches out to a large rural community across the whole county.

We have many things to be proud of at Petroc. Our students consistently produce record-breaking results and progress onto the country's leading universities, further training or employment. We have enviable learner success rates placing us in the top 9% of colleges in the country for A Levels and BTECs.

Petroc is looking to appoint a Lecturer in A level Maths: You will need to work collaboratively both within the department of Arts and Science and with internal/external stakeholders on the delivery and development of high quality maths programmes, and contributing to the successful realisation of the targets and development plan for the department.

Petroc is committed to Equality and Diversity, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The College Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure seeks to support this agenda through the selection stages and pre-employment checks.

Please visit the Petroc College website to complete the online application form:
www.petroc.ac.uk

Closing date: Friday 12th May 2017



Teacher in GCSE English

Salary: £22,356 - £33,980 per annum, pro rata
Full time perm and 0.8 fixed term

Tameside College is a further education college that offers a wide range of courses including Full-Time, Part-Time, Apprenticeships and University Level.

We believe in excellence and we back that up with high standards, real working environments and great teaching. We also believe that attending college is about more than achieving a qualification, important though that is. That is why we aim to give every person the opportunity to develop their full potential in a supportive and friendly environment.

Joining us as a Teacher in GCSE English, you will be required to teach English GCSE (or equivalent) courses both theory and practical. You will coordinate programmes with responsibility for the quality of curriculum development and planning, the preparation, tracking and monitoring of assessments and targets. Tracking of the student learning programme to include administering all paperwork related to tutor courses and groups, tracking documents, achieving and maintaining group size targets and arranging additional support where required. You will have a degree level qualification in English or related subject. Certificate in Education/ PGCE/Bachelor of Education or required to achieve equivalent within 3 years of appointment.

Level 2 qualifications in the following or be prepared to achieve within two years (English and/or Maths).

You will be able to plan curriculum flexibly and effectively with a focus of delivering outstanding teaching and learning and be a strong team player with excellent communication skills.

Closing date for applications: noon, Friday 12th May 2017

English/ESOL Tutor



Contract Type: Part Time - Permanent
Section: Adult College
Salary (in £) £21.91 - £26.61 Per Hour TO1-TO5

Passionate, dedicated, making a difference. If this describes you, read on...

Are you passionate about English? Dedicated to teaching adults? Then we want you! The Adult College of Barking and Dagenham is the Local Authority's leading provider of adult and community learning graded "Good" by Ofsted in December 2016. Barking and Dagenham is a vibrant and growing Borough and the Adult College is committed to supporting its community to seize the opportunities this growth will bring. Come and join the team and start making a real difference today.

We are looking to appoint experienced Functional Skills English tutors with excellent success rates to deliver at Levels Entry 3 to Level 2 in a range of mainstream, vocational and apprenticeship courses (including Business

Administration, Supporting Teaching and Learning, and Health and Social Care).

We also have opportunities for experienced ESOL tutors to help develop our thriving Family Learning programme in the borough schools. We offer flexible delivery hours including evenings.

The successful candidate should be qualified to level 4 and hold a recognised teaching and/or training qualification or will demonstrate a willingness to undertake this.

To apply for this vacancy, please visit: <http://bit.ly/2p5bNyz>

Closing date for applications 30 May 2017

Interview date (Week Commencing) 12/06/17

MGL GCSE maths

Salary: £23,831-£33,187

Hours: 35 hours

We are seeking to appoint an outstanding practitioner who has the ability to deliver inspirational teaching and learning in Maths. The successful candidate will have experience in teaching GCSE Maths. They will also have a strong desire to share a love of Maths and motivate and encourage students to reach their full potential.

The successful candidate will have experience of consistently good teaching and learning delivery methods including the use of innovative Information Learning Technologies and individualised learning plans. The successful candidate will also have experience of managing and supporting diverse groups of learners through Maths programmes and a clear understanding of strategies for raising performance and using monitoring and evaluation processes to monitor student progress.

Candidates who are new to the profession and can demonstrate, through interview, a high level of capability are encouraged to apply.

Please apply at the following link:

<http://www.calderdale.ac.uk/content/view/jobs/current-vacancies>

Closing date: 9am Monday 15th May 2017

Provisional interview date: Thursday 18th May 2017.



Lecturers in GCSE English



(Full time, Part time, Sessional opportunities)

Salary: £23,294 - £33,175 (Subject to experience & qualifications, pro-rated for part time)

Hours: Full time, Part time, Sessional (Hourly Paid)

Judged Good with a series of Outstanding areas by Ofsted in January 2015, we are committed to achieving excellence for all our students. Inspirational teaching and the dedication of all our staff supports the continuing growth of our student success.

These posts provide the opportunity to plan and teach engaging GCSE English classes to students from our various College vocational areas and to contribute to the department's journey to Outstanding.

Successful candidates must be motivated, possess exceptional organisational skills, work well with colleagues and have a creative and innovative approach to enthuse our students to succeed. Ideally you will be qualified to degree level in English and will hold a full teaching qualification. Candidates will have an innovative approach to teaching and will ensure that lessons are designed to not only develop skills but that they connect to the industry which the students aspire to work in.

Successful candidates should be available to start 29 August 2017 in time for the 2017/18 Academic Year.



For full vacancy details and to apply visit our website <https://careers.esc.ac.uk> or contact the Human Resources department on 01737 772611 (option 3).



www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk

Maths and English Tutor

We are recruiting across the London area for self employed English and maths Tutors.

Salary:
Competitive

Role:

Learning Curve Group require Tutors in maths and English to deliver a range of qualifications within our flexible learning portfolio at Level 1 and Level 2. All qualifications are nationally accredited through NCFE and include Level 1 certificates and functional skills at Level 2.

Are you:

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Taylor-made: A manifesto for FE

As political parties scramble to write their manifestos, carefully crafting their words to minimise the number of broken promises if they get into power, Graham Taylor sets out some suggestions for further education policies.

Preserve FE funding

If politicians believe their own rhetoric, that education and skills are the future of our country's economic success, then at least preserve funding in real terms. Pay for this by decoupling the triple lock that increases pensions at a faster rate than workers' pay – admittedly not a vote-winner, but fair.

Promising to replace European funding for education when we Brexit would be a bonus.

Invest in adult learning

Now that the EFA and SFA have at long last merged, scrap the funding divide between 16-18 and adults. Too many providers are chasing too few 16-18 learners as school leaver numbers fall, so let us use any funding shortfall here to reskill or upskill adults. We could vire funds in the past so why not now?

There are millions fewer adult learners today because of draconian funding cuts. Has every party given up on lifelong learning and the benefits of learning for its own sake? If the UK is a knowledge-based economy, are we supposed to gain knowledge by osmosis?

The parties are strangely silent on this.

Tried and tested professional and technical qualifications, which learners and businesses want, seem to be treated as second class.

Let the customer decide

Give employers paying the apprenticeship levy, a payroll tax which threatens jobs, freedom to spend it how they wish.

Apprenticeships may not always be the best solution for workforce training needs. Don't pick favourites; this only distorts the market.

Streamline training budgets

Switch training budgets from other government departments such as the Department for Work and Pensions to the Education and Skills Funding Agency, to reduce duplication and waste.

Reduce hypothecated funding

This leads to underspend or rushed work and is costly in time and money, reinventing lots of wheels, usually with different names and ministers attached.

Publish success rates

Success rates should appear on provider websites, in the form of a percentage retention rate multiplied by their percentage achievement rate. This is a simple and understandable quality indicator, unlike the present (16-18 only) performance tables.

Make English and Maths accessible

Allow applied options as alternatives to the GCSEs. Alternatives are permitted at level three, when students can take English language or literature or a combined English A-level, just as they can take core maths or standard maths, so why not at level two?

Stop sixth-form waste

Close all school sixth forms with under 100 learners – on grounds of both quality and value for money. The next round of area reviews should include small-school sixth forms in the mix.

Welcome international students

Exclude international and EU students from the net migration count. They are a real asset, particularly for HE. One in 10 world leaders was educated here. Most have fond memories and are pleased to trade with us. Isn't this what we want?

Stop changing things all the time!

The sector needs some stability. Every government, however well intentioned, loves to meddle. Please don't tinker with curriculum content, grading systems, quality measures, systems or methodologies. Unrelenting change doesn't help anyone. Like-for-like data and quality comparisons are lost over time.

If you must change, don't change everything at once. The new apprenticeship regime will create all sorts of unintended problems.

As Ronald Reagan advised politicians: "Don't just do something, stand there!" In a similar vein, I say this: assign the budget, set quality standards, then let us get on with it.

Support the further education sector

Parties always make the right noises. They preach the value of learning and encourage it, but do they really like FE?

That's for the politicians. As for everyone else – vote! We get the politicians we deserve...



These funding cuts will set apprenticeships backwards

The government's determination not to open up any more lines of funding for our incredibly hard-pressed providers is a strategy that's doomed to end in disaster, perhaps for many years to come, argues Phil Hatton.

The government keeps telling us that it wants to achieve a target of three million apprenticeships, even though we all know that's extremely ambitious. It's heavily reliant on small businesses taking apprentices on for the first time, on convincing employers of the benefits to their businesses, and on young people receiving unbiased and independent advice.

Yet every time a minister steps in front of a camera, they stubbornly repeat and refuse to back down from this key numerical pledge.

Surprisingly, over the last few months major changes have been bearing down on us like an iceberg: a new funding agency, levy and non-levy employers, frameworks replaced by standards, end-point assessment and even the bonus of an Institute for Apprenticeships.

Sadly, the news that apprenticeship providers are facing up to a "horror story" of bankruptcy and failure suggests that our shiny new ESFA (no doubt following ministerial orders) is ignoring the blindingly obvious fact that the whole apprenticeships system will need extra funding if it is to have any realistic chance of being successful. The last thing our sector needs is strangulation; instead it needs a turbo-boosted oxygen mask.

Helping colleges and providers gives me the chance to talk to a wide range of employers and learners, and I see many of the latter interested in but not necessarily well-informed about apprenticeships.

A large proportion of 18-year-olds stayed on at school to take A-levels, largely because there was no one independent to mention the other A-word, "apprenticeships", when they were 16. These same youngsters are now panicking at the prospect of the recommended next step: uni. My prediction for late summer is that many will not want to take up their university places, and because of this funding debacle with apprenticeships, will instead either become NEETs or pick a career path they are not committed to.

I know from my own dealings that civil service advisers often lack the gumption to inform their seniors of the most likely outcome of an action, when this would seem

to contradict their ideas. Well, this is not only a huge mistake now, but unless it is quickly changed, it will have an effect for many years to come. There was a time when ministers sounded out inspectorates about possible outcomes of policy decisions, as an independent source, but that time has gone.

Trust me, when they speak out about what is happening to providers, AELP is not just talking for its members but for the young people of Britain and their futures.

If providers have to cut staff literally to survive, they are unlikely to be able to get them all back when the penny finally drops with ministers. Providers are recruiting staff to deliver potential growth areas like higher apprenticeships in management and specialist IT, but the expected funding has been slashed without warning. So much for strategic planning.

“
Our sector needs a turbo-boosted oxygen mask

The government needs to admit the introduction of the levy and standards apprenticeships has been poorly handled and rushed, to make it happen for May 1. Getting it right should have been far more important than hitting a target date.

The ESFA cannot leave this until after the election. We are in that crucial time of the year for recruitment to apprenticeships, and if the funding for places is not there, the impact on small businesses engagement will be harmful in both the short and the long term. The impact on literally hundreds of thousands of young people will be devastating to each individual whose parents have encouraged them to work hard.

This damage is an unmerited extra blow to the sector, which still has to deal with the negative impact of end-point assessment, which is not even available for some standards-based apprenticeships now starting, and for which the unregulated costs are likely to be a future front-page story just like HE fees were.

If the government is strong, as we are being told it is, it needs to admit and correct this funding mistake now.

EXPERTS

Apprentices need help getting the right mental health support in place to give them the best chance of retaining employment once qualified, says Chris Kingsbury.

It is great to see the mental health of young people so high on the agenda. This is something I notice increasingly as I attend conferences and seminars across the UK. However, we still need a culture shift for them to feel it okay to talk openly about their mental health and seek the right support.

“An apprentice with mental health challenges should have the same career opportunities as anyone else

Many young people don't realise they are experiencing symptoms of mental ill-health or are not aware that there is something wrong. They are also afraid to openly share what they are experiencing.

With the boost in apprenticeship numbers that will accompany the levy, training providers, colleges and employers are looking



CHRIS KINGSBURY

Partnership lead for the mental health support service at Remploy

Supporting apprentices' mental health improves employment retention rates

at their infrastructure and ways they can support young people with mental ill-health.

If mental health is not addressed appropriately, it can have a negative long-term impact on people's lives. Statistics have shown that when someone with a mental health condition falls out of work it is harder for them to secure another job – more even than someone with a physical disability.

To ensure equality of opportunity we have to do three things:

Provide access

First, we need to make sure that they have access to tailored, individual support.

Providing mental health champions or mentors is one way. Others are: engaging with local community and mental health teams, seeking support from local NHS provision, or facilitating access to support groups. Colleges must also ensure student services can signpost staff and students to the appropriate services.

Challenge stereotypes

Second, we should be challenging preconceptions of mental health. Colleges and providers can help by creating a positive environment that allows open conversation about mental health and creates a culture of support, not stigma.

I have already started to see some great examples of this. For instance, Total People, a not-for-profit apprenticeships and work-based training company, with which we worked on a series of video blogs about mental health aimed at staff and apprentices.

The videos are now posted on all its internal sites and are shown during inductions, meaning that apprentices are fully aware of the support available and can access it when needed.

Addressing mental health in a variety of contexts is vital to normalizing the topic and encouraging young people to access support services when needed.

Educate staff

Third, we should be ensuring that employers, colleges and training providers have a strong understanding of mental health in the workplace. These institutions need a greater appreciation of the challenges that young people experience, coupled with knowledge about how to offer an appropriate system of support.

My role at Remploy is to work with organisations to create a culture in which apprentices feel it is natural to talk to someone about their wellbeing and gain the relevant support.

Social taboos combined with this lack of knowledge can mean we shy away from offering opportunities to young people with mental health difficulties, but education about how support functions in an apprenticeship or college setting can build the confidence of learners and training providers alike.

The Access to Work Mental Health Support Service, funded by the UK government and provided by Remploy delivers a tailored programme of vocational support to apprentices. Since 2011 it has supported more than 7,000 people, with more than 90 per cent retaining employment within the first six months.

An apprenticeship is such a fantastic opportunity enabling young people to build a long lasting and fruitful career. It is critically important that young people facing mental health challenges have the same opportunity to complete their apprenticeships as their peers.

www.remploy.co.uk/supportingapprentices

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Crescent Purchasing Consortium Acquire Tenet Services

National education purchasing consortium Crescent Purchasing Ltd are delighted to announce they have acquired procurement services provider company Tenet Education Services Ltd. The two companies will continue to run independently but this new collaboration means members can now receive an end to end procurement solution.

Crescent Purchasing Consortium (CPC) is owned by the FE sector and promotes a member-driven ethos, while Tenet Services provide procurement solutions to drive value for money.

CPC Chairman David Pullein said: *"We are delighted to secure the acquisition of Tenet to complement the services currently provided by CPC. This will enable Crescent to provide a complete service to the education sector and continue the excellent work of Tenet Education Services."*

Currently CPC has a portfolio of approximately 60 frameworks covering a wide variety of products and services, two specialised websites and purchasing training programs. Tenet specialises in service contract consultancy offering tailored services which suit individual requirements and budgets from one off tendering to onsite procurement services. Both are now available offering members a unique one-stop procurement solution.

Outgoing Tenet Chairman, David Thoms said: *"I and my fellow directors are excited by the sale of Tenet to CPC, as this will enable us to achieve our ultimate aim of being able to offer and provide the widest possible range of procurement solutions to both our existing clients and the education sector as a whole."*

www.thecpc.ac.uk

www.tenetservices.com

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*

Building up to the construction nationals



Bricking it: competitors in action

Gold-winner Glenn Bullock, with Chris and Jules

Construction trainees from across the south-west of England gathered at South Devon College to compete for a place in the national SkillBuild 2017 competition.

A total of 58 competitors from nine colleges took part in the regional heat, with trades such as cabinet making, decorating, brickwork and plastering all represented.

Competitors went head to head for a place in the national finals, which will be held at the Skills Show, taking place in Birmingham in November this year.

There were 12 winners, five of whom are construction students from the college's Paignton and Newton Abbot campuses, who took gold in bricklaying, joinery, painting and decorating, and plastering.

Also in attendance were Chris Frediani and Jules Perryman from the BBC's DIY SOS, who were on hand to spill construction tips and tricks to students.

"If we can do a bit to encourage people to get into construction, they might choose to study it and make a good career out of it," they said.

"That's why it is so important to inspire them at a younger age. We need to back the colleges, we need to push on with apprenticeships and I am taking several on next year. It is the construction industry that will keep Great Britain great."

In addition, construction-themed taster sessions – including lessons in how to patch plaster – were given to more than 300 pupils from local primary and secondary schools.



Cogito ergo sum: the team takes on the rowing machine

Row, row, row your rowing machine

A group of public services students have raised more than £600 for the families of fallen police officers with a 24-hour rowathon.

Eleven students from London South East Colleges each took turns on a rowing machine to raise money for Care of Police Survivors (COPS), which supports families of police officers killed while on duty.

Each student did 17 10-minute sessions in a rowing relay, with the challenge commencing at four in the morning.

The students covered a distance of 213km on the machine in 24-hours, for which they

received cash pledges from across the college.

Toby Hartcombe, 17, who took part in the fundraiser, said: "The money raised from this rowathon is just a small gesture of our appreciation towards all public servants who spend their lives protecting the public. COPS was the first charity to be suggested and we voted unanimously to support it."

Public services tutor Robert Burr added: "The students showed willingness, cooperation, teamwork and organisational skills; all of which are the qualities they will need if they are to work within the public and emergency services."



On yer bike: Lecturer Dave Saul, right, with student Melissa Summerfield

Fighting cancer from the saddle

Catering lecturer with a cycling obsession is raising money to help young people fighting cancer regain their physical fitness with a Tour-de-France themed dinner.

Dave Saul, a lecturer at Stratford-upon-Avon College, has teamed up with Cyclists Fighting Cancer, a local charity, to host the event, which will take place at the college's Academy restaurant.

The six-course dinner – which catering students at the college will help prepare – will reflect the route of the famous cycling contest, with courses influenced by dishes from Germany, Belgium and France.

Money raised at the event will go to

oncology units throughout the UK, and pay for rehabilitation equipment – including bikes and tricycles – to help rebuild the strength and confidence of young cancer sufferers.

"I can't think of a more worthwhile cause than helping children recover from cancer," said Mr Saul. "The dinner will boost CFC funds even further – as well as providing us with what is certain to be a thoroughly enjoyable evening."

The event, which takes place on June 15 is open to all. Tickets can be purchased here:

<http://9nl.at/StratfordCycle>

Beauty student gets her fairytale ending

A budding beautician has taken the first prize in a college fashion competition with her fairy-inspired creation.

The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London hosted a competition for beauty therapy students to create a look based on the themes of history, fantasy or special occasions.

Entrants were required to do the make-up, style hair and choose the clothing themselves to complete their creations.

Kasturi Tandel, 34, who is taking a level two diploma in beauty therapy, used her 10-year-old daughter's obsession with fairies as the inspiration for her entry and took the top spot – winning a selection of hair and

make-up products donated by Redken.

Second place in the competition was awarded to Valbona Bajrami, 31, and in third was Tudey McKoy, 22, who both opted to create special occasion looks.

Speaking of her creation, Ms Tandel said "I wanted to do something creative and imaginative and so decided on a fantasy fairy look. My daughter is 10 and into fairies, which was part of the inspiration behind it."

On hand to model the look – which took a total of three hours to put together – was Tandel's sister-in-law, Malvica Damania, who said: "I wish I could keep this look all day, but I've got to go to work later and don't think I could turn up like this!"



Magic in the air: Kasturi Tandel, third from right, with her winning 'fantasy fairy' look

Principal turns undercover boss for a day



The principal of Bradford College has gone undercover as a member of the on-site security team to find out what goes on behind the scenes at the college. Samantha King reports.

David Harwood started his job as principal 18 months ago, and in that time has initiated an undercover boss project, where he takes on a new role within the college each term to see what's working well and what isn't.

So far, Mr Harwood has been a receptionist, a member of the estates cleaning team and, his personal favourite, a student.

"The estates team had me picking up litter, and as a student I was in an art and design class so they had me doing drawings," he said. "I can't draw for toffee really, and all the students were laughing at my efforts, but again it just demonstrated for me the skill set our young people have."

However, his most recent exploit was as a member of the college's new security team, in an effort to find out how they were settling in, and how they interacted with the campus's 4,000 students.

"I thought I would spend time with this new team to see particularly how they interact



Principal Dave Harwood, right, in his security gear

with our students. The main thing I want our staff to do – including the security people – is to inspire and motivate our students by engaging with them, and having conversations about how they're doing on their course and what's next for them.

"It was really funny because when you walked past dressed as a security person, staff had to look twice. You could see them thinking, is that who I think it is?"



In his natural habitat as principal

During his day as a security guard, he donned the uniform and a radio and patrolled the corridors, moving smokers away from non-smoking areas and dealing with student disputes.

Following his undercover exploits, the principal ensures he gives a feedback session to the team with which he has been involved.

"The staff really value when you recognise their expertise and skills, and the challenges



they face in their jobs.

I will share my feedback with the team and say 'thank you for letting me join you in your job, these are some of the things I've discovered'.

"It certainly helps me, because when we're talking about things such as the college's IT systems I can say, well, that doesn't work on the ground because I've done it."

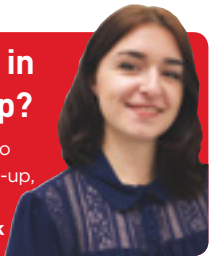
Mr Harwood is already planning to go undercover for a second time as a student, and will oversee two students taking his seat as principal for a day in a job-swap twist.

"Going undercover makes me step out of my comfort zone," he said. "The exec team make decisions all the time that impact on staff and it's really nice to go and experience the jobs that other staff do. Not only that, but you can get to know them and hear their personal stories about why they work in FE."

"It's really interesting to see the challenges of their work and what they do in the college."

Do you want to be in Campus Round-up?

If you have a story you'd like to see featured in campus round-up, get in touch by emailing samantha.king@feweek.co.uk



MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

Roger Dawe has been named the new chairman of the Career Colleges Trust. The Trust, founded by Lord Baker, works with employers and education providers to set up career colleges, of which there are currently 12 open across the country, rising to 18 by the end of 2017.

Career colleges specialise in industries facing a skills shortage, including engineering, construction and digital.

Mr Dawe served as private secretary to Harold Wilson between 1966 and 1970, and held a range of posts in the Departments for Employment and Education up until 2000.

Since leaving the department, he has been deputy chair of the Open University, has worked for KPMG as a senior education advisor and, until March this year, was chair of the Corporation of Bromley College of Further and Higher Education (now London South East Colleges).

"High-quality technical and vocational education is crucial for our economic future

and for people to make the most of their talents," he said.

"I strongly believe that the career college concept, which focuses on employer-led education, is key to addressing the skills

shortages that many industries are facing."

He will chair his first board meeting later this month.

The managing director of YMCA Awards, **Rob May**, has been appointed CEO of ABE, a not-for-profit awarding body.

ABE provides qualifications in the areas of entrepreneurship, business start-up, business management, marketing, human resources and travel, tourism and hospitality management.

Mr May will begin his new job this week, leaving the YMCA Awards, which he has led for two years.

During his tenure, YMCA was the first organisation to win the FAB award for

innovation two years in a row.

He will hold the new position alongside his existing role as non-executive director of the Federation of Awarding Bodies, which he has held since October 2016.

He said he was "very excited" to lead the organisation at a time when "there are so many opportunities and challenges in the global education market."

"Our aim is to build an organisation which is leaning into the future, recognising the many changing ways that people teach and learn, but also showing respect to our own traditions and those of the study centres and partners we work with around the world," he added.

Charlotte Bosworth has meanwhile joined awarding body Innovate Awarding as managing director.

Ms Bosworth was previously director of skills and employment at OCR Examinations/Cambridge Assessment, where she was responsible for the vocational side of OCR's business; her career in education began in 1996 at RSA Examinations Board.

She is joining Innovate Awarding to help build end-point assessments for the new Apprenticeship standards, and hopes to bring her experience in curriculum delivery and qualifications development to the role.

She replaces John McNamara, who is leaving to join the board as a non-executive director.



ROGER DAWE



ROB MAY



CHARLOTTE BOSWORTH



See how we’re giving our members a head start.



See page 11 for more information

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FE Week **Sudoku challenge**

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

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Difficulty:
EASY

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Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next edition

Last Week’s solutions

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Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

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To WIN an FE Week mug



Spot five differences. **First correct entry wins an FE Week mug.**
Email your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to: news@feweek.co.uk.
Last Edition’s winner: Catherine Storey, New College Durham