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## Struggling school paid £600,000 to football club

- Bolton Wanderers Free School's financial worries force closure as roll falls short
- Rent and utilities bills an 'extortionate' use of public money, says union leader

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
@BILLYCAMDEN

**Exclusive**

An "inadequate" school linked to a former premier league football club and now closing in August

because of financial concerns, paid almost £600,000 to the club in rent and utility bills in just two years, *Schools Week* can reveal.

Bolton Wanderers Free School (BWFS) opened in September 2014 after it was established by the

Eddie Davies Education Trust, a charity named after the club's former owner, Eddie Davies.

The club, relegated from the premier league in 2012 and now in league one, is

**Continues on page 2**

## EDITION 98

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**NEWS****Bolton free school gets the boot**

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CONTINUED  
FROM FRONT

named as one of the school's lead sponsors in all published accounts for the school. Five other sponsors are named.

During its first two years the school paid Bolton Wanderers £504,000 to share its Macron stadium under a "non-cancellable operating lease".

In the academic year 2014-15 the rent was £174,000, rising to £330,000 in 2014-15. The school roll went up five in that time.

The school was also charged light, heat and water bills of more than £54,000 in 2015-16 and £37,000 in 2014-15 – giving a total bill of £595,000 for its first two years.

*Schools Week* asked BWFS the cost of this year's rent and utilities, due to be paid in August, but Toni Carr, the school's principal, said that due to "commercial sensitivity we are unable to provide information with regards to the contractual lease between BWFC and the trust". Bolton Wanderers also declined to comment.

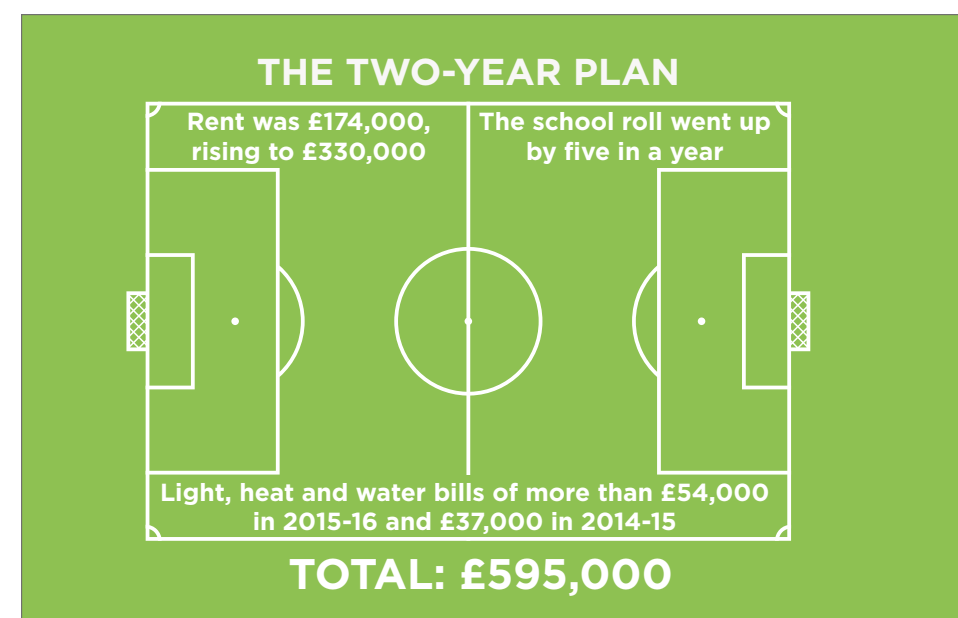
Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said the rent was an "extortionate" amount of public money that "should have been for the education of children, but instead has been fed into a league one football club.

"It seems virtually anyone can set up a free school and then charge extortionate amounts for rent and buildings."

This August's payment will need to be found on top of £500,000 the school owes to the government after it received funding for more pupils than it had on roll, as revealed by *Schools Week* earlier this month.

Ninety-five pupils were on the 16-19 free school's roll in 2015, less than half of the 200 anticipated in its first year and well short of its 400 capacity. The shortfall in pupil numbers reduced the funding to a point which was "financially unviable" according to trustees who announced the closure.

In September last year Ofsted inspectors



deemed the school "inadequate".

According to documents seen by *Schools Week*, redundancy costs would have totalled £165,000 had the school closed last year. That figure is likely to be similar when the school shuts this August, but Carr said the trust had "endeavoured to make savings across the board, and will continue to do this whilst also meeting its contractual duties".

Christine Bayliss, an academy trust founder and former civil servant involved in setting up free schools, said she hoped the Education Funding Agency would "get involved" so the taxpayer did not bear all the costs.

Bolton Wanderers Football Club is itself in debt, owing eight times its annual income. Its latest accounts show that it owes about £190 million; its revenue in 2015 was £23 million.

Last year it was issued a winding-up order, but it was given extra time to raise short-term funds.

*Schools Week* asked the club if it had given any money or benefits to BWFS to support the education of pupils. It declined to comment.

Bolton is not the only football club that has set up a school in recent years.

Tottenham Hotspur sponsors the Tottenham UTC. The UTC rents space for its school from TH Property Ltd, a property company which is part of a group of firms running Spurs.

The company has received about £500,000 in rent since 2014 for Tottenham UTC's use of its buildings.

A Spurs spokesperson told the Guardian that the "rent and rates" figure had not actually been spent in cash, but represented an accounting allocation of a proportion of costs related to a 35 year lease. He did not respond to the Guardian's request to explain how much cash had been received.

The UTC will close this summer having failed to attract enough students. It had just 134 pupils on roll in January 2016.

"All of this is at the expense of the taxpayer," Bousted said.

"Their money should be going to educate children but it is evidently being used for a whole range of different purposes."

A Department for Education spokesperson declined to comment.

**One governor paid £3,287 in expenses in one year**

A governor at Bolton Wanderers Free School (BWFS) was paid £3,287 in expenses for attending what appears to be a maximum of four meetings during the 2014-15 academic year, the school's accounts show.

Education leaders are calling for the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to investigate.

The 2015 BWFS accounts state: "During the period ended August 31, 2015, travel, subsistence and accommodation costs totalling £3,287 was reimbursed to one governor."

The accounts show the governing body met for a maximum of four times throughout 2014-15, which works out at about £820 a meeting for the unnamed governor.

At that time the school had 12 governors,

most of them staff or local parents, plus the wealthy breadmaker and former Bolton Wanderers vice-chairman Brett Warburton, who resigned as a governor of the school in January this year, and the former Bolton Wanderers chair Phil Gartside, who died last year.

Toni Carr, the principal of BWFS, would not name the governor in question, but said the expenses were "paid in line with policies put in place by the trust and governing body on the opening of the school".

She would not say if the £3,287 was paid for anything other than the four meetings.

Christine Bayliss, an academy trust founder and former civil servant, said it was an "unusual" situation and she would "question the integrity of a trustee or director claiming such large expenses for

attending what could be just four meetings a year.

"It certainly raises eyebrows and if I was the EFA, I might be asking a few questions about what that money has been spent on."

Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said the school should be investigated for paying such a high amount.

The EFA has in the past investigated trusts that have paid high governor expenses.

The Education Fellowship Trust, which last month became the first to voluntarily give up all its schools, was investigated after it paid governor expenses of £45,000, including the cost of a fact-finding trip to New York.

The Department for Education declined to comment.

## NEWS

# Schools plan to hire former pupils as apprentices

BILLY CAMDEN

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Four multi-academy trusts are gearing up to offer jobs to former pupils and send staff to train apprentices in other schools after successfully getting on to the new register of apprenticeship providers.

The government last week published the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP), a list of organisations eligible to deliver apprenticeship training. Nearly 2,000 are believed to have been approved.

Providers will be funded to do the training via the apprenticeship levy that starts next month. Most maintained schools and academies in chains with an annual payroll of £3 million or more will be forced to pay up.

Most schools are also covered under a new obligation requiring them to employ an average 2.3 per cent of their headcount as apprentices – for a school with a hundred staff, this means employing at least three apprentices a year.

The new register will allow academy trusts to deliver apprenticeship training to their own staff and pupils instead of relying on other providers, such as colleges or a private business.

*Schools Week* found four trusts on the register.

The Greenacre Academy Trust, which runs three schools, hopes to offer apprenticeships to former pupils.

Dan Wise, the deputy headteacher at Greenacre Academy, an all-boys' school in Kent, told *Schools Week* he was "proud of the 'Greenacre boy'" and wanted his chain to be somewhere that ex-pupils could aspire to work at.

"Having developed some fantastic young adults, we are



**I'm your mother. I still get to drop you off at the gates and kiss you goodbye even if you are an apprentice teacher!**

keen to bring them into our trust and use their skills."

He said the trust also wanted to upskill existing staff, first through business and administration apprenticeships.

"In time we plan to offer Greenacre apprenticeships to our post-16 learners to give them a more diverse choice."

Three other trusts are on the register as "main providers" – meaning they can send out their own staff to deliver apprenticeship training in other schools.

Ian Cleland, chief executive of the Academy Transformation Trust (ATT), which runs 24 schools, said

his chain would share "experience and expertise" in apprenticeships linked to services in a school.

Relevant apprenticeships currently available and include business and administration, catering and hospitality, facilities management, digital professions, accounting and finance, and early years.

A teaching apprenticeship is also under development. It is expected to be the same standard as all existing initial teacher training programmes and is due to be ready from September next year.

Also waiting in the wings is a school business manager apprenticeship, expected to be in place later this year, and a teaching assistant apprenticeship, which also should be ready later this year.

Cleland said ATT was firmly interested in delivering the new teaching apprenticeship.

Delta Academies Trust, formerly known as SPTA, is also on the RoATP as a main provider.

A spokesperson for the chain said it would develop its own staff and pupils with "various" apprenticeships while also offering training to other schools and academies.

"The benefits to our organisation will be the further professional development of our staff and an increase in the range of opportunities available to our students, parents and local business."

Both ATT and the former SPTA have faced financial difficulties. Last year, ATT made support staff across 21 schools reapply for their jobs in a drive to save £500,000, while SPTA cut 88 jobs across its seven secondary schools to reduce a projected £6.8million deficit.

South London Academy is also a main provider, but would not provide a comment about its plans.

## LOCAL HEADS SAY NO TO MAY'S SELECTION PLANS

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Exclusive

Two schools on prime minister Theresa May's doorstep will shun any opportunity to convert to grammars, claiming it would put "high quality education available to all students at risk".

The Royal borough of Windsor and Maidenhead council – which covers May's constituency – asked for its secondary schools' views on introducing partial or full selection.

Proposals for expanding selective schools are due in the coming weeks, with existing schools converting to become grammars mooted as one option.

The council has previously said that it is keen to introduce grammar schools, but St Edward's Royal Free Middle School and Windsor Girls' School, both based in Windsor, said they have no interest in becoming selective.

The headteachers of both signalled concerns over the wider impact of the selection plans, adding they could not sign up to "a system that puts the needs of the majority at risk".

However Holyport College, a free school sponsored by nearby Eton College and also based in May's constituency, backed the government's plans for selection.



The college, co-founded by the Conservative leader of the local council, Simon Dudley, said it would propose banded entry or partial selection to "ensure the academic needs of all children" were met, should the government allow it.

In a joint submission, Desborough College and Newlands Girls' School said they would allocate 20 per cent of places to selection by ability if allowed.

The findings show the potential divisiveness of the proposal to allow non-selective schools to become selective.

When it first introduced the plans, the government said such schools would have to meet certain criteria to convert, such as meeting local demand.

These submissions could be used as evidence to show demand on the part of school leaders.

But Rod Welsh, head at St Edward's, told the council: "A return to a more selective system is highly likely to worsen outcomes for the majority of young people."

Alongside Gill Labrum, head at Windsor Girls', he pointed out that the region was the

ninth highest-achieving local authority last year.

"This is significantly higher than our neighbours who educate within a selective system."

The two heads added that there were also places at grammar schools in neighbouring authorities, such as Slough and Buckinghamshire.

They also pointed to various studies showing there was "no compelling or credible research that grammar schools improve outcomes for all".

But Walter Boyle, headmaster at Holyport, said his heavily oversubscribed college was keen to expand. Partial selection would allow it to "fulfil [its] vision of meeting the needs, academic and otherwise, of all children in the local and boarding communities".

Boyle said his college had demonstrated a "willingness and ability" to cater for pupil premium children, and had a strong track record with looked-after children.

Desborough head Paul Frazer said: "Pupils gaining admission through this route will be taught a demanding, academic curriculum based on that offered by the majority of grammar and independent schools."

The other three schools that responded to the consultation said it was too early to comment.

# NEWS: ACADEMY WATCH

## GREENWOOD SET TO LOSE TWO SCHOOLS

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

**Investigates**

The Greenwood Academies Trust will be stripped of two schools after Ofsted questioned its ability to drive improvement without a "balanced portfolio" of academies.

The trust, which runs 31 schools across the east of England and the East Midlands, has now been told by the government to rebroker the City of Derby Academy and Skegness Academy.

It is the latest trust to be criticised for not driving improvement at its most challenging schools (see story, below right).

It was told in December that it had "let down pupils over a number of years" after a focused Ofsted inspection of six of its schools found half required special measures.

Chief executive Wayne Norrie said running challenging schools meant the trust "does not have a balanced portfolio."

"Unsurprisingly, in a recent review Ofsted challenged our capacity to provide adequate support to the academies in the group."

Norrie said that while the trust was "hugely disappointed" it was "vital that we review our portfolio and strive to achieve a balance of schools."

"During this period of change we are working closely with our pupils, staff, parents and trade unions to minimise disruption."

Parents at the Skegness Academy, in Lincolnshire, have been told that the government has named the David Ross Education Trust (DRET) as the new preferred sponsor.

DRET runs the only other secondary in the town, Skegness Grammar. A spokesperson for the trust told the Lincolnshire Live website that it was completing due diligence for the takeover, but insisted no decision had yet been made and there were still "key areas that need to be explored".

*Schools Week* revealed last week that several senior figures at DRET have resigned, including chief executive Wendy Marshall and chair David Blunkett.

Parents at the City of Derby Academy have been told that Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Ashbourne, is the preferred sponsor.

Queen Elizabeth's did not respond to a request for comment as *Schools Week* went to press.

Ofsted rated City of Derby inadequate after a focused inspection of the trust in November last year. Inspectors said trustees had "not held leaders to account for continued poor performance, nor kept sound oversight of the school's improvement and school finances".

It also found Greenwood, set up in 2009, had not done enough to identify the "weaknesses and needs" of its academies.

But Ofsted said the trust had improved overall effectiveness in 20 schools. The trust said at the time that it accepted the majority of the watchdog's findings, but was disappointed with the claim that it had let down pupils.

## Council asks RSC to rebroker failing academy

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

A local authority has taken the unusual step of pleading with a regional schools commissioner for an inadequate academy to get a new sponsor.

Wolverhampton council wrote to Christine Quinn, the RSC for the West Midlands, to voice concerns about Wednesfield High Specialist Engineering Academy after the school was rated inadequate by Ofsted last month.

The council said in a letter that a new sponsor must be found for the academy and has stepped in to support the Education Central Multi-Academy Trust (ECMAT), the school's current sponsors.

The school was handed to the trust, which is run by the University of Wolverhampton, in January 2015.

The university's first trust, the City of Wolverhampton Academy Trust, was banned from taking on new schools in 2013-14 due to poor performance. But the university was allowed to continue running ECMAT, which grew from six schools in 2013-14 to 13 this year.

Wednesfield is the second of ECMAT's schools to be rated inadequate. The ACE Academy in Tipton was rated inadequate for the second time in two years, with inspectors raising concerns similar to Wednesfield over

behaviour, safety of pupils, bullying and weak teaching.

The council's letter to the RSC highlights the blurred lines over local council involvement when schools are not quickly rebrokered by commissioners after being placed in special measures.

Ofsted has criticised local authorities over the past year for the performance of schools in their areas, even where most schools are academies and therefore beyond their powers of intervention.

Bradley Simmons, Ofsted's regional director for the south west and south east, wrote to Reading council about the poor standards in all secondary schools in its area in April last year, saying the council must "share my disappointment".

Similarly, Poole council was congratulated in November last year when standards improved, although about three-quarters of schools were academies.

Ofsted said it would not hold local authorities accountable for the improvement of schools no longer under their control.

A spokesperson said accountability for improvement was solely the responsibility of academy trusts and RSCs.

However Phil Bateman, a Labour councillor for Wednesfield North,

told the local newspaper, the *Express and Star*, that the council had written to Quinn asking that the school be rebrokered.

He said the local authority had no controls over the school's operation, "but the city can make its case to the regional commissioner, which it has".

Janet Downs, a member and blogger for the Local Schools Network, which campaigns for council-run schools, said it was not fair to expect local authorities to provide free support or services to struggling academies.

"If academies accept local authority help, then they should pay for it in the same way as they would pay an external consultant."

A spokesperson for Wednesfield High said the school was "disappointed" the council had asked the RSC to find new sponsors without first speaking to ECMAT or the University of Wolverhampton.

The school was in a "poor position" in 2015 and needed "time" to turn around. A new headteacher was being recruited.



The ACE Academy

## Ofsted puts off MATs taking on 'untouchable' schools

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

More sponsors will shun "untouchable" schools if Ofsted continues coming down "like a ton of bricks" on trusts that don't turn them around quickly, warns a former government adviser.

Ofsted criticised the Northern Education Trust (NET) this week for failing to "secure urgent and necessary improvements in too many of its schools".

It followed a focused inspection of nine of the trust's schools in November and December, after Ofsted conceded that NET had taken over many schools with "deep-rooted shortcomings and systematic failure".

Trust chief executive Ian Kershaw, who led the Trojan Horse investigation in Birmingham, claimed the government had asked NET to take over the "untouchable" schools.

Robert Hill, a former government adviser and education consultant, warned that Ofsted criticism could put off trusts from taking over schools that had "failed for generations".

He said while trusts were given some incentives to take on tough schools, such as a respite from inspections until their third year, the current accountability system was "misaligned and confused".

"Both Ofsted and the regional schools commissioners then come down on trusts like a ton of bricks if they seem to be taking too long to improve



Ian Kershaw

chronically inadequate schools."

*Schools Week* has reported extensively on schools identified as needing support, but deemed too toxic to take over.

Two trusts have refused to take over the Hanson Academy in Bradford, leaving it waiting for a permanent sponsor for six years.

Ofsted said that NET's "weak" due diligence had "masked the complexity of issues" in several schools it took over, with trust leaders still tackling unresolved finance and human resources issues.

This, combined with rapid expansion, meant trustees were left with a "mountain to climb", and NET was way off meeting its pledge for all schools to be good or better within three years of joining.

The watchdog said that only half of the schools inspected after a NET takeover had improved their rating. Of the 18 inspected, eight required improvement, and four were inadequate.

But there were "signs of a positive move forward in the primary sector", and it

praised a comprehensive review of the maths department in each secondary school.

The trust, sponsored by the education consultancy Northern Education, whose chair is the former education secretary Estelle Morris, has now been urged to review its business plan and to set up effective school improvement strategies.

But Kershaw said he was "astonished" that the focused inspection report had taken so long to surface, meaning it was "incapable of recognising the effect of the significant developments in our school improvement strategy since 2016".

He said Ofsted had apologised for the delay, adding NET has since made "significant new appointments, injected substantial resources and made major changes to our systems over the past six months".

Hill added that if a trust's portfolio of schools was dominated by schools needing "deep turnaround" they were "bound to struggle", unless they had robust systems to provide effective support.

But he said that the Department for Education had to "take its share of the blame for encouraging overly ambitious growth. Some regional schools commissioners still tend to be cavalier in pushing multi-academy trust expansion."

Hill called for trusts to act responsibly in the scale of the challenges they took on, but said the regulatory system needed to support them "without being complacent about the rate of improvement expected".

## NEWS

## School of former trust boss closes after six months

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Investigates

A private school set up by the founder of a collapsed academy chain has closed six months after it opened – leaving more than 80 pupils stranded.

Schools Week revealed last week that parents and staff at Henriette Le Forestier preparatory school in Croydon, south London, were told it would break up nine days before the scheduled Easter vacation.

A letter to parents said that a drop in pupil numbers and unpaid fees of about £75,000 had caused financial problems.

Parents were urged to pay up, with talks ongoing for extra investment to ensure a “sustainable future”.

But staff were told on Monday that the school would now close permanently after two education organisations declined to invest. Parents are said to be in talks to see if they can take it over.

The £9,000-a-year private school was taken over last September by a firm run by Trevor Averre-Beeson, who co-founded the Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust (LSSAT).

LSSAT was closed by the government and its nine schools handed to other academy chains last year, following poor performance at some schools and concerns over financial issues. Averre-Beeson stood down as its chief executive in 2015.

Martin Powell-Davies, London regional secretary for the National Union of Teachers, told Schools Week on Tuesday evening: “Staff have already seen money withheld from their February salary, leaving some unable to meet their expected monthly direct debits.

“We are urgently seeking to clarify what salary and pension payments are still owed and to insist that Mr Averre-Beeson pays staff



Trevor Averre-Beeson

## “ Staff have already seen money withheld from their salary

in full, along with appropriate notice and redundancy pay.”

Schools Week understands a redundancy process is ongoing, and staff will be paid money owed to them under their contractual rights. It is not known how many are affected, but at least ten are known to unions.

Guidelines on school closure from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers

(ATL) say that private school staff are entitled to be paid notice in accordance with their contract, and the school is bound by statutory redundancy provisions.

One parent told Schools Week that the family must now pay for private tutors.

Croydon council, which is responsible for ensuring all children in the area have a school place, said that it would find places for affected pupils if required.

Averre-Beeson, director of HLF Schools which runs the private school, said he could not provide further comment other than what was included in his letters to parents.

The first said that the drop in pupil numbers from 121 to 84 had had a “significant impact on the school’s financial sustainability”.

This was exacerbated by the fees

outstanding for this term.

However, in another letter sent on Monday, Averre-Beeson said that he had agreed to transfer the school’s lease “at no cost” to parents who wanted to set up a new trust to “explore the possibility of keeping the school open”.

Schools Week understands parents are looking to secure funding before forming their own trust.

Sister Bernadette Davey, headteacher of the Virgo Fidelis convent senior school, previously told Schools Week that its junior school (now renamed Henriette Le Forestier) had been leased on a 25-year deal to Averre-Beeson.

She did not respond to a request for comment this week



## WHO IS TREVOR AVERRE-BEESON?

Trevor Averre-Beeson made his name as the superhead that turned around Islington Green secondary, the school that Tony Blair rejected for his children.

But the reason for his departure from the north London school in 2006 is unclear – although it has been reported that he quit amid the fallout of plans to convert it into an academy.

He returned to the spotlight when he was parachuted in as super head of the Salisbury School in Enfield, north London, where the American for-profit firm Edison Schools had a £1 million contract to run the school over three years.

Results rose from 22 per cent of pupils achieving five A\*-C grades including English and maths when the company took over in 2007, to 27 per cent in the summer of 2009 – below the 30 per cent government floor.

Enfield council did not renew the contract, and the school (then called Turin Grove) became an academy. But Averre-Beeson, who was employed at the

school for two years, said the contract was a success as only 13 per cent of pupils had achieved A\*-C grades before the company took over.

He then co-founded the school improvement firm, Lilac Sky Schools, which went on to sponsor Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust (LSSAT).

In July last year the government stripped the trust of its nine schools. Official reasons have not been released, but it followed poor performance at some schools and finance concerns.

The regional schools commissioner for south-east England and south London, Dominic Herrington, raised concerns about LSSAT’s sponsor – Lilac Sky Schools, the for-profit company owned by Averre-Beeson – providing services totalling more than £800,000 to the trust. This was stopped in 2015.

An Education Funding Agency finance review of the trust is believed to be ongoing, but Averre-Beeson claims that it has found no instances of financial malpractice.

## THE DISAPPEARING LILAC SKY

Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust (LSSAT) has yet to be wound up, according to Companies House, but it is no longer running any schools. The trust’s website has closed.

References to the trust or to Lilac Sky Schools have been erased from the public domain.

Lilac Sky Schools was renamed HLF Schools on August 31. The company’s website has also been rebranded to Education 101.

Lilac Sky Education, another school improvement firm that previously provided services to LSSAT, has been renamed Corporate AB Ltd. Averre-Beeson told Schools Week last year the companies had been renamed “to avoid any additional confusion” with LSSAT.

Schools Week has also learnt that proposals for a new Jewish free school in north London, which Lilac Sky Schools supported, have been scrapped.

Meanwhile, the financial fallout from the collapsed trust continues.

Patrick Leeson, corporate director of education and young people’s service at Kent County Council, said during a council meeting in September last year that the fallout had been “incredibly disruptive”.

Revised accounts for 2015 show LSSAT increased the amount it topsliced from its schools’ budget (up to 7 per cent) after running up a £666,000 deficit.

Schools Week has previously reported that Averre-Beeson disputed details in the revised accounts, which he claimed were released by the trust following government intervention, to “embarrass him”.

But Leeson said this percentage of the schools’ budgets was “not tenable” and that schools were now facing “financial difficulty as a result. That is outrageous”.

Parents also faced a financial penalty as they have had to buy new uniforms at some of the now rebrokered schools.

## NEWS

## Burgers and wedding bells: how schools boost their budgets

JESS STAUFENBERG

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Exclusive

Some schools are generating tens of thousands of pounds a year by renting out wedding spaces, hiring out food vans and opening shops.

In an effort to make up funding shortfalls, ventures such as revamping a van to sell burgers and gaining a licence to host weddings have raked in up to £40,000 extra a year – with some bringing in thousands of pounds more.

But finance experts say if schools become increasingly reliant on their own resources for funding, those with less attractive buildings or less experienced business managers could fall behind.

A new report by The Key, an information support service for schools, found the percentage of school leaders citing financial worry as their biggest challenge rose to 51 per cent this year, from 31 per cent in 2016.

But almost three-quarters of heads were unsure how to generate more cash.

“Not all schools will have an entrepreneurial head or school business manager,” said Micon Metcalfe, director of finance at Dunraven school in south London, “So while I applaud schools that do, should we not insist that state education be funded adequately?”

Schools based in, “for example, a council estate in Hull” were unlikely to open as a

Queen Elizabeth high school's wedding venue



wedding venue, she said.

Sheringham Woodfields School in Norfolk, which educates pupils with complex needs, set up a charitable “Friends of Woodfields” and a shop selling secondhand clothes and crafts in the town centre to raise money for the charity.

Matthew Smith, its business manager, said the school was able to convert about 30 per cent of the £45,000 to £50,000 that the shop turned over annually.

The funds have gone towards a hydrotherapy pool and mini-bus, and to help to fund a £200,000 new playground.

Not all schools have charity status for their enterprise arm. Watford Grammar School for Girls, an academy in Hertfordshire, set up a trading subsidiary

in 2014

as part of efforts to “continue working hard to ensure our commercial revenue streams can support any shortfall in state funding”, according to its company accounts.

The school gained a licence to hold “civil wedding ceremonies” in July 2015 – but when *Schools Week* enquired, a spokesperson said only one wedding had taken place.

However, Queen Elizabeth High School in Northumberland, which has held a wedding licence for 16 years, oversees 30 ceremonies a year.

The venue, which has a Victorian glasshouse in a Grade II listed building otherwise used for exams, brings in about

£30,000 to £40,000 a year.

Ryan Green, managing director of Pebble, which specialises in income generation for schools, said his business had increased significantly in the past three years with multi-academy trusts looking to expand, and the proposed national funding formula expected to prompt more schools to reassess their finances.

Lydia Heath, a spokesperson for Kells Lane Primary School in Gateshead, said it was set to lose under the proposed funding changes so was now leasing its yard to a local company running food markets.

The first in April had 28 stalls, with 33 proposed for the next. The revenue stream from the market would outstrip current income from renting rooms to a childcare group, she said.

Food also features at Wellfield School in Co Durham, where Brendie Ryle, the business manager, purchased a van and installed an oven and grills. It will sell healthy burgers in the summer.

The van will also be leased out – manned by Wellfield staff – to smaller schools that need catering.

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, warned some schools had more opportunities to generate income, and said it could “risk widening inequality rather than solving it”.

## EXAM APPEALS DIP, BUT MORE ARE UPGRADED

Appeals against GCSE and A-level results have fallen, says the exams regulator Ofqual.

In 2016 appeals relating to the qualification grades of 6,649 pupils were submitted, compared with appeals for about 7,166 grades in 2015 – a 7 per cent fall.

The dip follows a change to the way exams are re-marked. Since last year, examiners have only been allowed to change marks that “could not reasonably have been given”.

Despite the overall decrease in contested qualification grades, a higher proportion were changed this year – from 49 in 2015 (0.7 per cent) to 211 in 2016 (3.2 per cent).

The figure follows the unusually low number of changes in 2015. In 2014, when a similar number of grades were contested, a similar proportion was changed on appeal.

However Ofqual said the increase was in part due to a pilot of new grounds for appeals in geography, physics and religious studies A-levels last year, which allowed schools to appeal on the basis of an error in the marking and not just on a procedural error.

The exam watchdog is deliberating whether to expand the extra appeal grounds to other subjects and will publish a decision before the summer exam series.

## SEND pupils sidelined on work experience

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Investigates

One in three schools is not offering pupils with special educational needs (SEND) work experience, sidelining “precisely” the young people who need the most employment help.

New government figures show that 42 per cent of schools and sixth forms are not offering their SEND pupils any kind of “work-related activity”, let alone ensuring they get a formal work experience placement.

The figures have been criticised by heads at special needs schools, who say schools are in danger of failing to improve the “sickeningly low” proportion of SEND pupils in paid work after they leave school.

Eighty-two per cent of colleges do offer their SEND pupils work-related activities, compared with 66 per cent of schools, not including sixth forms. That drops to 58 per cent when sixth forms are included.

Interviewees, such as work experience co-ordinators, often told the authors of a new study commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) that “opportunities were open to all students irrespective of whether they had SEND” – but could not give examples of how they adjusted their offers to make sure they were SEND-accessible.

Jarlath O’Brien, head of Carwarden House Community School, a special needs school



in Surrey, said he found it “very difficult” to believe that mainstream schools simply found it too hard to find work experience opportunities, since all his pupils went on placements.

Pupils with SEND were “precisely the population of students” who needed to gain work experience he said, since a “sickeningly low” 6 per cent continued into paid work.

The government’s own guidance on study programmes for 16 to 19-year-olds says that all pathways, whether academic or vocational, should include “high-quality work experience”.

The requirement followed recommendations in the 2011 Wolf review of vocational education that schools should find the “right type” of work experience for every pupil and develop internship-style work placements.

But the new study, carried out by research

organisations Nat Cen Social Research and SQW, found only one in five schools (21 per cent) that offered “work-related activities” to SEND pupils also offered them a supported internship. Colleges were again more likely to offer this support.

John Riches, head of Bardwell School, a special needs school near Oxford, said all his year 12 and 13 pupils did work experience in a hotel, national retail store or coffee shop.

Schools could struggle to engage employers who might not be fully supportive or confident about placements for SEND pupils, he said. But hard work by his staff had paid off, with one pupil moving on to paid employment – “something that is sadly still rare”.

Dave Whitaker, executive principal of Springwell Learning Community, a special needs school in Barnsley, said many schools wanted to offer opportunities, but were struggling with funding.

Transport to placements, a teacher to accompany the pupil and paying for cover could rapidly escalate costs for cash-strapped schools, he said.

“I rarely find that it’s a school that can’t be bothered. It’s the practicalities of funding. You’ve got providers who aren’t set up to deal with special needs children.

“For some children, it’s almost double-funding, and that becomes very, very expensive for schools.”

## NEWS

## Have we got NEUs for you . . .

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) have voted to form a new organisation, the National Education Union (NEU). The vote has been described as "historic", with significant ramifications for schools and those who work in them. Here's our quick and easy guide to the NEU, which comes into being on September 1.

### 1. Members voted overwhelmingly for the merger

Twenty-two per cent of NUT members voted, with 97.2 per cent in favour of amalgamation. Twenty-five per cent of ATL members voted, with 73 per cent in favour. Although the turnout might seem low, the figures are considered quite high for union votes. Last year NUT general secretary Kevin Courtney was elected on a turnout of 10.7 per cent.

### 2. NEU will be a very large union, and it wants to grow more

The National Education Union will have more than 450,000 members, which makes it the largest education union in Europe and the fourth largest union in the UK. Its leaders have ambitions for growth – with plans to target new teachers

and to talk with other unions about possible merger. Kevin Courtney said on Wednesday that the NEU's door was "open to other organisations".

### 3. The new union will have two general secretaries for its first five years

Courtney and ATL general secretary Mary Bousted will lead the organisation together until 2023, before standing aside ahead of an election for a single general secretary.

"We've got five years and then there will be a new general secretary elected – and we're quite clear that we won't stand against each other," Bousted said. "It would be catastrophic to do that, it would be divisive. And besides that, we'll have had enough. We'll want to do something else by then."

Courtney added: "We're more or less the same age so by 2023 we'll be at a point where retirement will seem like a good option, and really, at that stage, the union needs to elect somebody who has been in the new union."

### 4. Co-operation with the government is on the cards, but not over grammar schools

Bousted and Courtney say the NEU will work with government on some issues, such as workload, but will not agree

to plans for expanding selection, pledging "outright opposition" to the policy.

Bousted labelled the Conservative grammar plan as "stupid" and claimed it had "no evidence behind it. I don't think it's a policy that Justine Greening wants to do; she's been landed with it."

Bousted said the union would campaign on making parents understand their children were "highly likely" to get a secondary modern education.

### 5. The union will admit unqualified teachers and support staff

The NEU will be a union of teachers and "allied professionals", which means that it will admit unqualified teachers, something the NUT currently does not allow. It will also represent school support staff and leaders, in keeping with ATL's current membership.

### 6. Industrial action will be 'stronger' . . . but still a last resort

The NUT is traditionally more militant, the ATL more moderate. Questions hang over



Kevin Courtney

Mary Bousted

how this will be reconciled.

The larger membership will mean that any action will have a bigger impact, but proposed changes to trade union law could change the way industrial action is organised.

"It will probably be more locally based, around multi-academy trusts, around particular schools and around particular issues," Bousted said on Wednesday, claiming that it would only ever be considered "when everything else has failed".

Courtney said strike action was "not what any set of workers wants to do" but "if push comes to shove, then we're in a place where [industrial action] will be stronger."

Expert view, page 14

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## NEWS:

SCHOOLS NETWORK  
LAUNCHES MOCK  
DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

JOHN DICKENS

@JOHNDICKENSSW

Schools NorthEast is running mock disciplinary hearings to help headteachers to avoid costly employment tribunals in the face of dwindling local authority support.

A teacher is banned from the classroom once every two days, according to government figures. Most exclusions are related to allegations of sexual activity, inappropriate relationships or general inappropriate behaviour.

The complexity of the issues means that heads need "confidence in how they act in these situations", says Mike Parker, the director of Schools NorthEast.

He said the hearings were started after new heads said they needed to brush up on their legal knowledge in the "changing structure of education".

"These [HR issues] may well have been things that would have been handled with a local authority – you could have lent on their HR team.

"But as that seems to be breaking down, schools are looking more widely for support."

He described the training as a chance for heads to "see it all happen" – without it being real life. "It will focus on how to manage the situation, and how you should conduct yourself."

The first of two events was held yesterday; attendees played various roles as they followed the lifecycle of a serious HR issue.

John Roberts, chief executive of Edapt, which offers employment protection to teachers, said similar mock disciplinary events were run by organisations such as ACAS, the employment dispute organisation, but were not education-specific.

He welcomed the introduction of a more specialist form of training as education had its "own policies and employment challenges".

"Having proper experience of such procedures can have significant benefits for schools, their employees and their students."

Parker added that squeezed budgets also meant schools were wary of getting locked into costly legal disputes. "Schools have to get it right first time."

*Schools Week* revealed in February that the Great Academies Education Trust had paid £200,000 severance to a former employee during 2014-15.

The trust, which runs three schools, said the settlement was the result of a "long and complex employment tribunal case", and "offered the most economic advantageous outcome for the academy".

Graham Vials, employment associate at law firm Ward Hadaway, which is running the mock disciplinary hearings for Schools NorthEast, said heads must have an open mind during misconduct investigations, give the employee a chance to make representations, and properly document their decisions.

## Private pupils 'make a mockery' of access scheme

JESS STAUFENBERG

@STAUFENBERGJ

Investigates

A third of pupils to benefit from the University of Bristol's access scheme have been privately educated, *Schools Week* has learned.

Karin Smyth, Labour MP for Bristol South, accused Bristol University Scholars of making a "mockery" of its own outreach scheme to widen university access for talented pupils.

Smyth raised the issue with children's minister Edward Timpson after the student newspaper *Epigram* obtained the figures from the university in February.

UCAS data showed that her constituency had the lowest number of children going on to university, she said.

But Bristol, which has come under fire from other higher education institutions, has defended its right to open the access scheme to all "local students".

In an email exchange seen by *Schools Week*, the university told journalists at *Epigram* that just 67 per cent of the 42 pupils accepted on to the Scholars scheme were from state schools, despite their making up a greater proportion of pupils educated in Bristol.

All 42 were given "tailored offers" on undergraduate courses, with extra pastoral and academic support.

Bristol said in the email exchange that "priority" was given to pupils who fulfilled "widening participation" criteria.

A press release in December last year said pupils who had "overcome educational or



University of Bristol

PA/WIRE

domestic disadvantage" and who met other criteria such as "the first in their family to attend university" or "on free school meals" would be given priority.

Scholars are given a guaranteed offer and extra support; those with household incomes below £25,000 also receive financial support.

The scheme is for pupils whose potential "is not recognised in their predicted A-level results", said Lucy Collins, head of recruitment at the university.

Privately educated pupils had to fulfill one or more criteria to be selected for the programme, including being a young carer, first in the family to go to university or having a bursary, she added.

Smyth said the university failed to be "upfront" that private schools could apply to

the scheme and that prioritising pupils with certain criteria, regardless of the school they attended, would fail to reduce inequality.

"Even if a child meets certain criteria, like being on a bursary, of course private schools still have more resources and are better equipped to take advantage of those schemes.

"Whereas for more disadvantaged schools, aspirations are high but resources aren't always there."

She said all university access schemes should be scrutinised, but she wanted to help Bristol to do it better.

Timpson said universities hoped to spend more than £833 million on schemes to increase access for students this year, up from £404 million in 2009.

## SRE should be part of PSHE, say subject leaders

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Subject leaders want the government to implement compulsory personal, social, health and economics education (PSHE) at the same time as sex and relations education, and as part of one, integrated subject.

From September 2019, sex and relationships education (SRE) will become compulsory for all secondary schools, while primary schools will have to teach relationships education.

But no date has been set for the introduction of compulsory PSHE, the subject through which relationships education is usually delivered.

Justine Greening, the education secretary, has said she will create laws allowing her to make PSHE mandatory in future, but there is no timetable for its introduction.

Lisa Hallgarten, co-ordinator of the Sex Education Forum, says schools will be "absolutely appalled" if forced to introduce two different subjects at different times.

Hallgarten said her group was "really happy" SRE had been recognised as a statutory subject rather than "buried within PSHE". However, she believed PSHE should be given the same footing.

Jono Baggerley, the chief executive of the PSHE Association, told *Schools Week* that keeping SRE separate from would "damage



Caroline Lucas

its effectiveness from a pedagogical point of view and cause confusion for schools".

Historically, where SRE has been delivered well it has been taught in timetabled PSHE slots by trained teachers, according to Ofsted's latest report into the subjects.

Baggerley believes that making a broader PSHE subject compulsory will also give young people the skills to stay safe.

"When you're talking, for example, about the risks posed by people online, you also need media literacy, communication skills and the knowledge and confidence to get help if you need it."

The government will launch a "period of engagement" with schools over the content of SRE and PSHE, and has confirmed it will consult more formally this autumn.

However, the PSHE Association and Sex Education Forum are still waiting to hear how they will be involved.

Hallgarten claims the government is "100 per cent sure" it wants to deliver compulsory SRE, but will consult on "whether or not

PSHE remains the best vehicle to deliver it.

"It is not exactly clear what the parameters of the consultation are going to be, but I do not believe that they want to introduce statutory SRE in September 2019 and then carry on debating PSHE.

"We are optimistic that they will do it all in one go, because we can't believe schools would be happy to have it introduced in a piecemeal way."

In joint written evidence submitted with the PSHE Association to parliament earlier this year, the National Association of Head Teachers said PSHE was "increasingly seen as the ideal method" to deliver SRE.

The union said making PSHE compulsory would give it "parity of status with existing statutory subjects" and "should apply to the whole of the subject, not any single component of it".

The call has also been backed by the Green Party MP Caroline Lucas, who has attempted several times to introduce compulsory PSHE.

"It's vital that the PSHE curriculum is developed alongside SRE and that a whole school approach is not lost," she said. "Combining PSHE and SRE makes much more sense from an implementation and training point of view."

A government spokesperson says the engagement process will consider the content of PSHE and SRE and how to make them statutory.



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## NEWS



## EDITOR'S COMMENT

@miss\_mcinerney | [laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:laura.mcinerney@schoolsweek.co.uk)

# Life in schools is not a game of two halves

In the 1999 song *I want to be free to wear sunscreen* a voice dispenses advice it would give to teenagers leaving school.

It entreats listeners not to worry.

"Or, worry. But know that your worrying is as effective as trying to solve an algebra equation by chewing bubble gum. The real troubles in your life are apt to be things that never crossed your worried mind, the kind that blindside you at 4pm on some idle Tuesday."

Our book review this week, written by headteacher Liam Collins, reflects on the death of a student which devastated his school. One moment pupils were running on a football field, in the next one of them was gone. An unfillable hole opened in their world.

As we went to press, a number of people lay in hospital after the attacks in London. Heads were questioning if they should bring children on trips planned for the next day. Those with pupils in the capital were frantically texting staff for the all-clear.

The problem is that while events like these can make us feel as if life is

a game of two halves – separated into the moments before an event, and the moments after – sadly, the truth is more complex. London may be safe for schools tomorrow morning but unsafe by the afternoon. A school community can be shattered by losing a member, but in time become stronger for having supported one another through such adversity. Life doesn't split into neat sequences of 'before' and 'after'. Its moments roll together with undulating ferocity.

Troubling things also don't always reveal themselves in shocking moments. Our front page this week is about a football-club sponsored free school closing due to financial unviability because it couldn't attract enough pupils. No doubt over the past three years of its operation, and the years when it was being planned, everyone involved worked as hard as they could to make the school succeed. But without higher pupil numbers, the money didn't come in. And without the money, the school can't work. No big moment of disaster caused the school to close. Instead, school

leaders realised the worrying situation was untenable and finally made the decision to go. Not so much with a bang, but with a whimper.

One other aspect of the paper this week gave me a pause for thought on the same theme. Though, at first, it may seem quite unrelated.

I was halfway into the profile interview with Andy Ratcliffe at Impetus-PEF before I learned he had studied the subject as me at the same Oxford University college. Our eras overlapped by a year although neither of us were aware of this before. Upon the discovery, we felt slightly awkward. How very 'Westminster elite bubble' – two education people, sitting in the shadows of parliament, sharing their Oxbridge background. And yet Andy, like myself, went to a struggling comprehensive in the 90s now replaced by an academy with incredible results.

His story shows that even when life changes suddenly – when a boy

from Telford finds himself at a top university – it doesn't wipe the past away. He remembers his schooling every day. It is what drives him in what he does now.

The story of our meeting is less one of elite bubbles and more the proof that social mobility never died in this country, no matter what the Prime Minister suggests. Teachers across the country, even in dire circumstances, have been making pupils like Andy and I get on and succeed long before the current parade of politicians got involved. Regardless of what future policies come, they will continue doing so.

Hence, the real wisdom of the Sunscreen song is that none of us can know the future. All we can do is learn from past mistakes, pay attention to what's happening around us now, and act with the best of intentions for what we want in the future.





## Head of Research (Foundation for Educational Leadership)

**Closing Date for Applications:** 28th March 2017 (Mid-Day)

**Interview Date:** 4th April 2017

**Contract Type:** 1 Year Fixed term Contract

**Salary:** £42,246 per annum during probation rising to £46,839 per annum

Do you have a track record of delivering outstanding academic research and successful bidding for funds?

We need an excellent researcher, who will be responsible for planning and overseeing a substantial programme of work in relation to effective approaches to pedagogical leadership grounded within our vision for education. You'll work with a range of Church education networks (including 4,700 Church of England Schools) and valued partners, such as the Cathedrals Group to design a relevant, focused and effective research strategy, identify opportunities to work with others including funders, develop strategic partners and working collaboratively with others to successfully bid for research grants.

You'll bring a strong understanding of the Church of England's vision for education and our networks. Part of your working life will have been

spent in a research organisation, where your project management, presentation and communication skills will have been developed. The key to your success in this role will be your ability to motivate and inspire stakeholder groups.

### How to Apply

To apply please visit our website for a job description and application form: [www.churchofengland.org/about-us/vacancies/nci-vacancies/head-of-research.aspx](http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/vacancies/nci-vacancies/head-of-research.aspx)

Please download and complete the application form and send to [hr.recruitment@churchofengland.org](mailto:hr.recruitment@churchofengland.org) ahead of the closing date.

For an informal discussion about the role, please contact [hr.recruitment@churchofengland.org](mailto:hr.recruitment@churchofengland.org) or telephone **0207 898 1858**

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## Evidence Based Education Head of Research Engagement

Salary: upon request  
Location: Durham

### What is it?

The Head of Research Engagement is expected to lead the development and delivery of Evidence Based Education's Research Support Partnership programmes and other research-related activities. Working with the Director of Education, the Head of Research Engagement will play a key role in Evidence Based Education's development as a trusted partner to schools, charities, universities and government departments.

### What will you do?

Key functions of this role are:

- Responsibility for the development and delivery of existing Research Support Partnerships (RSPs);
- Seeking and developing new RSPs;
- Managing the remote (office-based) support and customer care for all RSP participants (including email, phone and video conferencing);
- Assisting the Director of Education to develop system-wide research engagement training and support services;
- Developing tools (e.g., online guides) for school-based research engagement by teachers and school leaders engaged in RSPs;

### What are we looking for?

We need someone who is self-motivated, flexible, able to build relationships, bring together

diverse ideas and perspectives, and develop credibility with teachers, school leaders, policy-makers and academics around the world.

The Head of Research Engagement should have a higher degree, preferably in either Education or Psychology. Experience of teaching in either schools, FE or HE and a deep interest in using evidence to inform decision-making in education settings is also essential.

### What is Evidence Based Education?

EBE is an international education training and consultancy organisation. We train and support teachers, school leaders and policy-makers to use robust evidence to inform their decisions for the benefit of student outcomes. All our work aligns with the best available evidence on teachers' learning, and we only design programmes for scale and sustainability. EBE has very strong links with Durham University, the University of Tübingen, the Education Endowment Foundation and Cambridge Assessment. We work with education organisations all around the world, and we're based near Durham in the beautiful north-east of England.

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The **closing date** for receipt of applications for this post is **14th April 2017** and interviews will be held in the week commencing **24th April 2017**.



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## Springboard for Children Trustee

**Location:** London

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- Springboard works in schools and communities experiencing the greatest challenges.
- Springboard staff are flexible to children's needs.
- Springboard works in partnership with schools and parents and makes sure our work reinforces classroom learning.



Springboard for Children is seeking a new trustee with educational experience to join its growing board. Springboard delivers life-changing, one to one literacy intervention to primary school aged children and this trustee role is vital in supporting the charity in its service delivery.

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## Head of Business Studies

**Salary:** MPR / UPR plus TLR 2B (£4,397)

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This position is required to commence Friday 1 September 2017.

**Closing date:** Friday 31 March 2017

For further information on this position and to make an application please visit:

<https://www.educationweekjobs.co.uk/browse-jobs/greensward-academy/>

*We reserve the right to close this vacancy early should we receive an overwhelming response. All candidates are advised to refer to the job description and person specification before making an application.*

*We are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. A Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate will be required for all posts. This post will be subject to enhanced checks as part of our Prevent Duty.*

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## Teaching & Learning Leader - KS4 Mathematics

**Salary:** MPR/UPR depending on experience plus TLR 2b - £4,397.00

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This position is required to commence in September 2017 or sooner if possible.

**Closing date:** Friday 31 March 2017

For further information on this position and to make an application please visit:

<https://www.educationweekjobs.co.uk/browse-jobs/greensward-academy/>

*We reserve the right to close this vacancy early should we receive an overwhelming response. All candidates are advised to refer to the job description and person specification before making an application.*

*We are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. A Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate will be required for all posts. This post will be subject to enhanced checks as part of our Prevent Duty.*

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## Principal

**Salary Range Group 4:** Inner London L19-25, £68,107-£77,719

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# READERS' REPLY



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## RSC side-steps formal closure procedure

Louise Fisher, Barnsley

I am a former trustee of Sandhill MAT who finds the idea that a "sweetheart deal" was done by the trustees and regional schools commissioner both ludicrous and insulting.

This was not a deal "struck up" by both parties; as trustees we did not feel that we had much choice. We were told that if we agreed to this, as the RSC suggested, then the rebrokering process would be less likely to be "hostile". I would have welcomed any specific points about where we were alleged to be failing, rather than a general statement about a lack of confidence in our ability to manage. We were never given the option of taking action to retain the school, which is in a termination warning notice. We had previously had a good relationship with the Education Funding Agency, and had acted on its suggestions about how we could strengthen governance.

The letter sent to parents by the RSC informing them of the rebrokering was full of jargon, which is why the chair of governors and I stood in front of large groups of parents explaining what it really meant as many were unsure. I also started a petition, asking that the trustees be involved in choosing which trust took us over. This ended up in the local paper – and more than 200 people signed the online version; not exactly something done on the quiet.

We were let down by government agencies that should have been there to support us. The RSC appeared more interested in appeasing anonymous individuals with vexatious motives than supporting our schools. At all times, our priorities were in the best interests of the pupils.

@SOSTrfwia

RSCs seem more concerned about reputational damage to multi-academy trusts than providing any useful service to schools.

## Tories could delay vote on grammars

Stephen Fowler, Manchester

It would be interesting to know what proportion of Conservative voters would like the return of selective schooling compared with the proportion of Conservative MPs. I suggest the MPs are far more against grammar schools than those who voted for them are. If you look at the comments in the *Daily Mail* under any article about grammar schools, the vast majority of their readers (ie, Tory voters) want them.

## Wellbeing trials 'distract from education'

Dave Crathorne, Facebook

Any school worth its salt will be doing this already. A good school leader will have recognised the importance of wellbeing in their pupils, staff and parents. Stress cannot be eradicated, but you can learn how to reduce the effects.

**Samantha Alley-Mohindra, Facebook**

Simple resolution – remove pressure and stress from children. They'll have plenty in adult life. Less focus on progress and attainment, more on creativity, physical wellbeing and empathy.

**Moynihan tops the pay tables with £420,000 (that's £16 a pupil)**

**Stephen Hickman, Facebook**

When did we normalise this behaviour in the state sector!

**Nick Duff, Facebook**

Money taken away from the classroom! Appalling.

## UTCs fall behind in Ofsted gradings

@KarenOD\_MGC

I'm not against the UTC concept per se, but this ongoing waste of closures and poor provision surely points to a poor policy, badly executed?

**@RNewtonChance**

It is ridiculous that they are subject to the same accountability as mainstream schools. Great potential, rubbish implementation.

## DfE admits its flying start was too fast for some free schools

Tim Warneford, Bedfordshire

Given recent reports concerning "orphan" schools, stuck between the hard place of a local authority cut to the bone and a MAT whose appetite to risk is much reduced, just what will happen to these schools and, moreover, the pupils? How will the government accommodate the estimated 300,000 additional school places if the MATs do not absorb and expand to meet the need? The rush to free schools and grammars will not see them provide an answer. The condition of the school estate is another time-bomb that is likely to contribute to the bleak future for the sector.

## Former outstanding studio school to become sixth form

### REPLY OF THE WEEK

**Sarah Thurlby, address supplied**

Entirely as predicted. Very sad indeed for the young people caught up in Gove's failed experiment. It's now time that all the remaining university technical colleges and studio schools to become part of larger institutions. The government needs to take a position on what size of educational establishment it thinks is viable and stop creating free schools, studio schools or UTCs that are destined not to survive.

## REPLY OF THE WEEK RECEIVES A SCHOOLS WEEK MUG!



### Clarification:

In Edition 97 we reported in our Movers & Shakers column that Shaun Fenton was to be the new chair of the HMC. To clarify, he will not be in the post until 2018/19.

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## PROFILE

## ANDY RATCLIFFE

LAURA MCINERNEY  
@MISS\_MCINERNEY

### Andy Ratcliffe, chief executive of Impetus-PEF

Facebook may get stick for perpetuating “fake news”, but the social network also helps to keep the education innovator Andy Ratcliffe grounded in reality. His day job as chief executive of Impetus-PEF may involve spending the money of millionaires, he does so with an acute awareness of what it means for education.

“At the most basic level, a lot of my mates at school . . . would have had such a different set of options, and different experience had they been in a different school or part of the country.

“When I applied for this job I showed them my class photo because a lot of people on it were smart, but didn’t get the same chances, or they were expelled – a lot were expelled and we took a lot of people expelled from other schools. That’s people just being shuffled around. And it’s so wrong.

“I can’t turn my back on that. They are my mates. With the world of Facebook I see their lives. Because I was lucky, and my mum was a careers adviser and gave me a lot of help, and because I did well at school, I have been able to do things and go to different countries. But those are luxuries when picking a job. For many of my friends it’s more like ‘Is there a job? Any job?’”

For a CEO of an organisation that last year offered more than £11 million to charitable organisations working with disadvantaged young people – including £100,000 and strategic support to the Dixons academy chain in Bradford – Ratcliffe is more raw than one might expect. His Midlands accent is strong, words roll together, and he speaks with an openness unusual for someone whose background is in the civil service.

But it hits home. We meet after a parliamentary event hosted by Impetus-PEF on compulsory GCSE resits for pupils failing to achieve a C grade or above in English or maths at 16. Research commissioned by Ratcliffe found that while one in five resitters go on to achieve a pass grade over the next few years, one in five drops out of studying altogether, possibly because they must face resitting exams in subjects they loathe.

Ratcliffe wants action. At the event he highlights a series of recommendations that could help: more money to help the resitters, more variety in the qualifications on offer, more innovative teaching methods. And, in particular, he argues that GCSEs at 16 are a major problem. “Show me another country that has high-stakes exams at 16 and again at 18,” he says, to a nodding audience.

Yet, Ratcliffe had his hands near, if not exactly on, the levers that could have made such change. In the late 2000s he worked with Gordon Brown at the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit on educational policy. Why didn’t he help abolish GCSEs then, if it is such a good idea?

He looks pained. “It was a funny time. It was an amazing privilege to work on the most important issues. I worked on secondary reform, parental involvement – one of the big things we still haven’t cracked – the social mobility strategy. But where we were in the political cycle meant the chances of getting it to happen were just not there. It was a weird mix of amazing experience, but a lot of frustration.”

Life at least was “cool”, he says.

“Like going through the door at No 10 – I would be lying if I didn’t say that was pretty exciting.”

For a boy educated at a failing comprehensive, his path to Downing Street is certainly not usual. After attending Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale primary in Telford, near to

the Ironbridge itself (“it’s a great free trip for schools”), he moved to Madeley Court School, now Madeley Academy, after it was converted by Labour in 2007 as one of its first academies.

The school struggled for years. As Ratcliffe started his GCSEs, the council sought to close it. But Ratcliffe, prompted by his teachers, defended it at a public meeting.

“I did it because it was my school. I had never been to any other school. I didn’t know much. It wouldn’t even have affected me because I was in year 10 and they weren’t going to close it that quick.

“I think now that I was wrong because it was later taken over – it became Madeley Academy – and it did that in partnership with Thomas Telford School [which is outstanding] and the results got tons better really quickly. Looking back, what they’ve done since is much better.”

After school he attended a large sixth-form college, New College Telford, before going on to study philosophy,

politics and economics at St Peter’s College, Oxford. He found the jump to the elite university tough and, at one point, considered dropping out. Persuaded to stay on, he found playing on the university football team a helpful experience – “they were people with the same sort of background as me” – and eventually stayed an additional year to study for a masters.

But his experience of school hasn’t left him. “I have never believed that the people sat next to me in my class were any less capable . . . even though they were being told they were by the system.”

Working first as an academic, helping to design ways of measuring deprivation, he became disillusioned that no one in power was listening to what was wrong. So he joined No 10 hoping that would help, but found politics frustrating.

Empathising with the people involved in writing the expected white paper on expanding selective schools, he says that civil servants and advisers will be doing their best





# “It’s scary to see your spreadsheet become actual government policy”

to ensure solutions are practical and will work. “You don’t always get it right, but you do worry about it. It’s very scary to see your spreadsheet or word document become an actual government policy. It’s a big responsibility.”

In the end, he came to believe chasing power wasn’t the way to get things done. Working in Africa on charitable projects, including in Rwanda where the government introduced free primary schooling, he came to the conclusion that people getting on and developing their own solutions was more productive.

Which led him to Impetus-PEF. The organisation formed in 2013 from two charities backed by private equity groups,

such as KKR and Terra Firma, to offer money and pro-bono business support to charities aiding disadvantaged young people. It’s the sort of arrangement that irks people worried about the influence of wealthy philanthropists in schools – the trustees’ list reads like a “who’s who” of powerful financial partners.

But Ratcliffe’s down-to-earth nature and the organisations supported by the group – such as Catch 22, which works with excluded pupils, and Place2Be, which delivers mental health services in schools – makes it easy to see that this isn’t a fun club for the well-to-do.

“I’m hard-edged about it,” Ratcliffe says, “On the pure

numbers, people think social mobility is a massive abstract problem. But if you want to halve the achievement gap in GCSEs, all you need are six more pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds passing per school. That’s hard. Because it’s always hard to get more kids to pass. But it doesn’t seem to me to be impossible.

“Look at the organisations we work with. They are small, they are getting going, but you can see what a difference they can make in young people’s lives. That’s the same for great teachers and great schools. We’ve just got to get the environment right so the good people succeed.”



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## OPINION



# HELENE GULDBERG

Psychology lecturer, Open University

## Stop talking about a mental health crisis in schools

**The Department for Education has announced plans to run wellbeing trials in schools, but we should beware of too much talk of a “mental health crisis” in schools or it risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophesy, says Helene Guldberg**

If young people are repeatedly told they have a disorder when they face challenging emotions and experiences, is it any wonder that many internalise a sense of victimhood and powerlessness, and therefore lose their capacity to cope?

Part of the problem is over-diagnosis. In his 2013 book *Saving Normal*, American psychiatrist Allen Frances warns of the dangers of labelling everyday emotions as “disorders”, a situation that has resulted in more and more people being deemed to be mentally ill.

Frances was chair of the taskforce that created the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV* (DSM-IV), the book that psychiatrists use to track and describe mental disorders and conditions. His team expanded the number of disorders and changed the diagnostic criteria to include a wider variety of behavioural and emotional challenges.

Frances is particularly concerned about the consequent exponential increase in the diagnosis of psychiatric conditions in children, writing: “We have now moved from diagnostic inflation to diagnostic hyperinflation.”

Take attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This diagnosis is applied so promiscuously that 10 per cent of children in the US are given the label. In the US, boys born in December are 70 per cent more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than boys born in January.

The reason diagnosing ADHD is so problematic is that it essentially is a description of immaturity, including symptoms such as “lack of impulse control”, “hyperactivity” or “inattention”. Boys born in December tend to be the youngest in their school year group (in the US) and thus they are more likely to be immature. In the UK, the youngest children in a school classroom are born in August, and so here, August-born kids are more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD. We have medicalised immaturity.

We need to ask ourselves whether we are helping or hindering the younger generations by increasingly encouraging

them to view difficult emotions and challenging behaviours and life-experiences through the prism of mental illness. The normal range of emotions experienced by adolescents have become problems requiring professional support.

Life is not a bed of roses; we will all feel deeply unhappy at times. Growing up can be hard. For children and young people, relationships can cause immense heartache. But through heartache, we strengthen our character and deepen our understanding of our emotions and other people.

Our role should be to help children to put

“**We all feel deeply unhappy at times**”

their difficulties in perspective, not to present them as “disorders”. We should help young people to understand that we can work through difficulties.

Children and young people will only develop resilience through facing up to and negotiating challenges and learning to handle a range of emotions – jealousy, envy, shame, humiliation, anger, disappointment, fear, anxiety, even dread. If children are to develop “grit”, adults need to stop presenting these everyday emotions as “disorders”, as something children need protecting from.

But, above all, by exaggerating the prevalence of mental disorders those who really do need help, who suffer from debilitating emotional or behavioural disorders, are increasingly losing out. If already sparse Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) resources are diverted from more targeted intervention to an ever-increasing proportion of children, those children whose levels of difficulties substantially restrict their capacity to function socially may suffer further.

So let’s stop talking about a “mental health crisis”. It could become a self-fulfilling prophesy. We need to be vigilant and ensure that the children who desperately need psychiatric support get it. But let young people work through everyday problems and emotions without encouraging them to see themselves as mentally ill.

**Helene Guldberg is author of *Reclaiming Childhood: freedom and play in an age of fear***



# HOWARD STEVENSON

Director of research, School of Education  
University of Nottingham

## Union merger will combat ‘divide and conquer’ strategy

**The education system is set up to encourage teachers to compete, not collaborate – but the merger of the ATL and NUT will help to change that, says Howard Stevenson**

The decision taken by members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) to amalgamate into a single union, the National Education Union (NEU), is significant and historic. It is a recognition that times are changing, and that teacher unions are changing too.

The trend towards union mergers and amalgamations is long established in other occupational sectors. For unions in manufacturing the imperative to consolidate has been driven by deindustrialisation, while public service unions have had to face up to the pressures of privatisation and contracting out. Teachers have not faced similar pressures and remain one of the most unionised groups of workers in the economy; their unions have not had to face up to decisions many others confronted several years ago.

That situation seems no longer tenable. The English school system has become hugely fragmented, with a plethora of different types of schools and a multiplicity of employers. Schools are encouraged to act like businesses, driven by the twin pressures of Ofsted and the need to compete against each other. A report by the global teacher union confederation, Education International, describes England (and Chile) as the “emblematic cases” of an ideological commitment to the neoliberal reform of state education and a push towards marketisation and so-called business solutions.

Teachers in schools in England live with the consequences of these reforms. The most obvious manifestation is an out-of-control workload, whereby teachers work 19 per cent longer hours than the OECD average. However a discredited system of performance-related pay, a series of top-down and botched curriculum reforms and the downgrading of qualified teacher status also attest to a profession under pressure. The resulting teacher supply crisis forms part of a wider systemic crisis, currently exacerbated by swingeing funding cuts.

Teacher unions have continually sought to challenge these developments. However, this has been difficult because the neoliberal policies that now underpin English state education have always sought to use system fragmentation to undermine the collective

voice of organised teachers. (Kenneth Baker, the education secretary who introduced these reforms, was, for example, quite explicit about the anti-union intentions of the 1988 Education Reform Act). The introduction of league tables and competition were intended to undermine traditional solidarities and to make teachers compete against each other. In the race to the top of global league tables teachers have found themselves in a race to the bottom in terms of working conditions and job satisfaction.

“**A collective voice is needed more than ever**”

However, system fragmentation has been compounded by the division of teachers into multiple, and competing, unions. This has made it easy for governments to exploit differences and to drive through unpopular change.

The amalgamation of the NUT and the ATL opens up the possibility of turning the tide on these experiences, and may signal a wider, global move towards teachers uniting and organising against the pressures they face. For example, last year in New Zealand the teacher unions that represent primary and secondary teachers campaigned together in unprecedented joint action to resist government plans to marketise the school system. The unions retained (and still do) their separate identities, but to all intents and purposes, campaigned as a single organisation. The result was a total climbdown by the NZ government – it is the sort of victory against government policy that teachers in England have only dreamed about.

The winds of change are blowing. What Finnish academic Pasi Sahlberg has called the “global education reform movement” has driven up workloads and undermined teachers’ professional judgment. System fragmentation has deliberately sought to weaken teachers’ collective voice. Teachers increasingly understand that if they are to reassert their professional agency, and reclaim their professionalism, they must overcome, not compound, the drive to fragmentation.

Teachers need a collective, and genuinely independent, voice more than ever. That voice is just about to become louder.

**To define "high challenge" is almost impossible, says Heather Fearn. Teachers must use their expertise to ask themselves what actions will best move their class forward "further, faster" at any time**

**W**hat does high challenge teaching look like?"

"Easy: make the work harder."

"OK, another question – what is harder work?"

"Er . . . more difficult?"

"And what is the nature of more difficult work?"

"[now trying desperately to break out of synonym soup] I suppose work that moves pupils on further and faster . . ."

"And how does the work achieve this?"

"Umm . . . by being highly challenging?"

We were asked the first question at one of our regular trust curriculum and assessment group meetings. Perhaps aware that playing with synonyms wasn't going to take us any nearer to a useful definition, we didn't spend time on this game!

We were also unlikely to attempt to define challenge by using descriptions of good summative performance. This was because our prior discussion had revolved around the key insight in Daisy Christodoulou's new book, *Making Good Progress*. She questions the widely-held but fairly unexamined assumption that we can effectively use summative descriptions of performance (for example, descriptors of the sort we might find in a mark scheme or taxonomy) to define progression (including what provides high



## HEATHER FEARN

Curriculum director, Thetford Academy, Norfolk

### What does high challenge teaching look like?

challenge) in the classroom.

In so doing she explains that we simply confuse "the description of a phenomenon with its explanation". Sure, an observer with subject expertise could decide a class must have been challenged because of the high quality of their work, but if we define high challenge by *what it achieves* (described in summative level descriptions) we move no closer to defining what *teaching* that challenge looks like or what *tasks* provide the challenge that will lead to great performance in a summative assessment. Giving our own pupils these summative descriptions of their academic *destination* also moves them no closer to understanding the *route* to get there.

So we cannot define what high challenge teaching looks like by describing more successful outcomes. Perhaps we can reach a better answer by identifying the sorts of tasks that do move children on "further, faster" as being "high challenge". On the face of it this seems quite straightforward: "I will

give my history class tasks that require them to really struggle with difficult concepts and explain those ideas in increasingly analytical extended writing."

But this definition is flawed in several ways:

**1. Challenge varies by subject** Increasingly analytical extended writing won't provide the requisite "high challenge" in maths. The tasks that push pupils vary enormously by subject. It seems the moment I use specific tasks to define challenge I have to abandon any non-subject specific description of high challenge.

**2. It goes beyond tasks** Surely in history the range and specificity of the knowledge students deploy (a key summative descriptor of quality) will depend in part on the quality of teacher explanations? I'm going to have to abandon the attempt to define "high challenge" just through what pupils do.

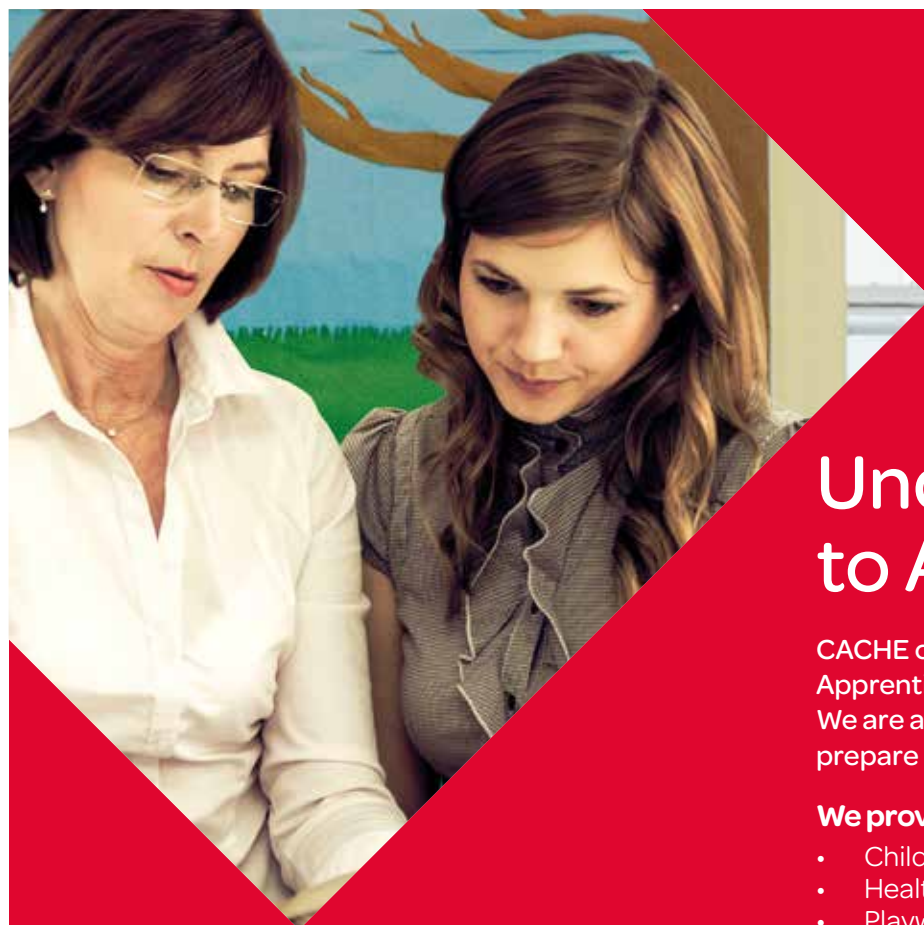
**3. Challenge ≠ struggle** Does moving pupils

"further, faster" have to involve "struggle" or difficulty? I'm very familiar with direct instruction programmes for literacy and maths and they are highly successful, despite being designed to introduce new learning in easy, incrementally tiny steps. Working memory theory from psychology suggests cognitive overload is a threat to learning when tasks are complex.

**4. It's about the process** My description of a "high challenge" history task is not specific enough anyway. It is still really a summative description of success. What prior work would make success in this particular task more likely? As Christodoulou points out "the process of acquiring skills is different from the product".

The term "high challenge" is often unhelpfully associated with the experience of struggle. Perhaps a class will feel challenged as they grapple with a complex text, assimilate detail or force themselves to knuckle down and learn when they aren't in the habit of revising. However, a strong teacher explanation of a difficult concept and its use in different contexts might feel painless. The important practice of learning times-tables to automaticity might even feel too easy.

I've realised that it is impossible to meaningfully define "high challenge". Summative descriptions simply define the outcome and the suitability of tasks is entirely context-dependent. Teachers must use their expertise to ask themselves what actions will most efficaciously move their class forward "further, faster" at any given time.



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## REVIEWS

TOP BLOGS  
OF THE WEEK

To view individual blogs visit  
[www.schoolsweek.co.uk/reviews](http://www.schoolsweek.co.uk/reviews)



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

### A teacher in life and after death

By Penny Rabiger (@Penny\_Ten)

My first choice this week dates from May last year, but I only discovered it recently (the joy of Twitter – the good stuff comes round again). It is a timeless and powerful piece by Penny Rabiger, a tribute to her mother who died in 2015, donating her body to medical science. She begins by describing a service of thanksgiving at Southwark Cathedral, held in honour of those who choose to do this, that leads her to reflect on her mother's troubled life and the fact that her commitment to her art and to teaching – including as a parent – reflected what was most vibrant and dynamic about her. This is moving, sensitive and compelling writing.

### Why I (largely) left teaching behind

By Kev Bartle (@kevbartle)

Headteacher Kev Bartle reflects on why, despite being a dedicated and enthusiastic teacher, he moved into leadership where, inevitably, he teaches far less and his sphere of influence and responsibility is much broader. Why he chose this route is, he thinks, "probably the most important question of all". Why would anyone who loves being in the classroom choose to rebalance their professional responsibilities in this way?

Bartle discusses how he manages the balancing act within his school, before going on to consider his motivation for moving to headship, where an effective school leader can support every teacher to do the best job they can. In this

lie the rewards of leadership. This is valuable reading for leaders at all levels.

### Seven things to learn from a bad boss

By Susan Ritchie (@susanritchie)

Kev Bartle is, I suggest, an exceptional headteacher; inevitably, throughout our careers, we learn a good deal from the strongest leaders we meet. However, we can also learn a considerable amount from the negative leadership role models we encounter. Here, Susan Ritchie suggests seven ways in which poor leaders can teach us lessons that may serve us well in the future. As she says: "It wasn't until I worked for a bad boss that the value of great leadership was bought home to me."

### #4countries Post-Brexit

By Kenny Pieper (@kennypieper)

Kenny Pieper describes educators from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales coming together to debate educational issues within and across these four countries. This is a positive, affirming piece that recognises the commitment and energy that can help us to rise above the challenges we face. As Pieper acknowledges: "what was striking was that after the initial moans and groans about our respective education systems, the pride and joy we felt about the job we do every day in our communities shone through in every conversation". The experience was clearly empowering; the participants left the event with even "greater resolve and determination to go back to our schools with a rebooted energy to continue to fight to enhance the life of the children we serve".

### Choose life

By Hannah Gregory (@SMPedagogy)

A #digimeet on the platform @staffrm was held to mark International Women's Day. Here a number of writers debated various issues and shared their experiences, focusing on the #IWD17 theme #BeBoldForChange. If you visit @staffrm you can access all the stories by searching for the #IWD17 hashtag. This is one example. Hannah Gregory's beautifully written piece emphasises how our choices determine our life's path, but they also reflect who we are and what we believe in.

"Choose to say no. Or yes. Choose the freedom to decide for yourself, choose confidence. #beboldforchange. Choose life."



## BOOK REVIEW

### The Clouds that can Surround a School: Responding to and managing a critical incident

By Shane Moran

Published by Troubador

Reviewed by Liam Collins, head, Uplands Community College, East Sussex



In September 2015 the worst thing imaginable happened in my school. One of our students was playing football with his friends when he started to feel short of breath and collapsed. Two members of staff started CPR until local GPs arrived. Then the first-response paramedic. The air ambulance followed. Luke's mother arrived and howled, caught between going to her son and staying out of the professionals' way. Staff looked on, hopeless. He was taken to hospital and pronounced dead the next morning.

It left a community devastated.

No one mentions this type of crisis when you become a head, but you know it is a reality. You are aware of the crisis management procedures, but you just hope it never happens to you.

This book is a fantastic resource for school leaders, setting out in simple terms how to respond to such an event and, even more importantly, how to prepare. Each chapter has a clear focus, helping readers to reflect on how they would respond to each element of the critical incident.

The human fallout from such an incident should never be underestimated, nor how each individual will cope. Shane Moran develops this throughout his book, starting with "recognising when you get 'walloped'". He advises you to look around to understand those who are "frozen" and those who start to show signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As he points out: "regardless of its nature, a critical incident has a strong effect on all those at the centre of it".

For me, the hardest part was the advice on being prepared. Just reading the book brought the whole incident in my school flooding back. But Moran is right that being prepared for any incident is vital – and is

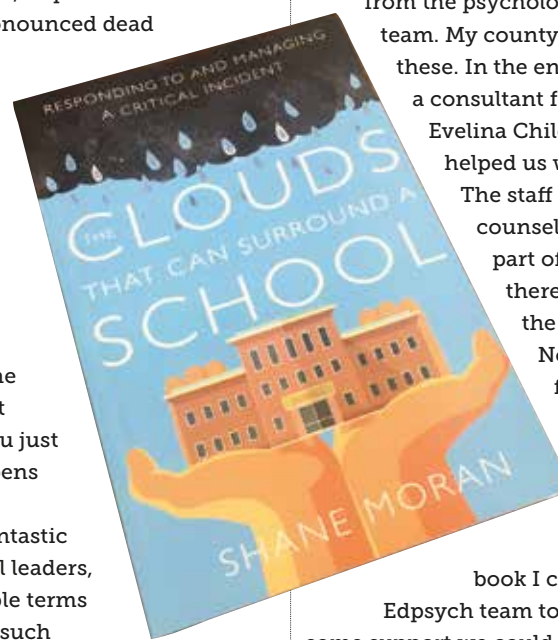
just as important for your senior leadership team as it is for you. He lists job roles, probable levels of leadership to fulfil them and what staff will be responsible for. At the end are a number of useful scenarios for you and your team to work through, even if you would rather think of anything else.

What are the issues? Well with the book absolutely none, but for a head working in a secular school in England, lots – mainly because Moran is writing from the perspective of the Irish education system and a religious school.

I have no doubt of the comfort of prayer and the support that a school chaplain can offer, but there is no such person in 60 per cent of schools in England. More worryingly, there are long lists of support structures that just don't exist here.

The book explains that critical incident management includes: defusing; therapy intervention; debriefing; containment of grief and emotions; time out; briefings from the psychological support team. My county offered none of these. In the end the police and a consultant from the brilliant Evelina Children's Hospital helped us with debrief groups. The staff could get six counselling sessions as part of their contract, but there was nothing for the students. No advice. No wider support for families or friends. Most disturbing was the lack of support for Luke's family. After reading the book I contacted the local Edpsych team to see if there was some support we could access for the staff and students, only to be told it is a bought-in service. . .

In short, this is a really useful book that gets you thinking in the right ways. But it also exposes the complete lack of support that we as a nation give our teachers and students in times of crisis and for that, it made me weep . . . again.



### Next week

Mind Their Hearts:  
Creating Schools and  
Homes of  
Warm-Heartedness

By David Boddy

Reviewed by Harry  
Fletcher-Wood

We now await the government's grammar school white paper. There is a tussle of views: will it be before the pre-election campaign period starts or will ministers wait until after Article 50 and the union conferences? (Or, perhaps, will they use those two as cover and slip it out in the middle, thus proving they don't like the policy much at all?)

While the future is unknown, the story of past education white papers is not.

The first "white paper" was created in 1922 by Winston Churchill in response to conflicts in Palestine, but an education paper did not appear until 1943. *Educational Reconstruction* was a somewhat optimistic title given that Britain was still deeply entrenched in war, but it was the precursor to the 1944 Education Act that introduced state grammar schools. According to the paper it did so because "courses must be available to suit the needs and aptitudes of different types of pupil or student".

However, it is noticeable that the paper briefs against the use of tests – unless necessary. It reads: "In the future, children at the age of about 11 should be classified not on the results of a competitive test, but on an assessment of their individual aptitudes largely by such means as school records supplemented, if necessary, by intelligence tests, due regard being had to their parents' wishes and the careers they have in mind."

Even more interesting is that grammars are not pushed as a social mobility tool for getting kids to university. Actually, the

## THE PAST WILL MAKE YOU SMARTER



### IT'S ALL THERE IN BLACK AND WHITE

LAURA MCINERNEY

white paper aims to do the opposite!

It states that "too many" able children are educated in a way that prepares them for university and "too few find their way into schools from which the design and craftsmanship sides of industry are recruited". In 1943 the great concern was rebuilding the nation once the war finished. In many ways, it's a bit like trying to build a nation that will need a lot of skills once it leaves Europe!

Between 1943 and 1992 there were only three more schools-related white papers – all by Conservative governments. In 1974, *Education: A Framework for Expansion* proposed increases in the school leaving

age. *Better Schools* in 1985 laid the pathway for relaxing local authority control, and *Choice and Diversity* in 1992 ushered in Ofsted.

That's one paper every 16 years, on average. For the past two decades, however, things ramped up. Since 1997 there has been a white paper every 2½ years, on average. When Justine Greening's grammar school paper is released that will drop to one every 2 years and 2 months.

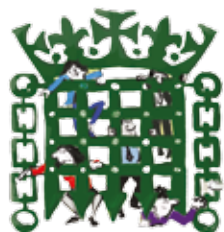
The names of papers have also become jazzier. Labour started off sensibly with *Excellence in Schools* (1997) and *Schools: Achieving Success*, but by 2005 titles had morphed into pseudo-marketing. Labour's



last-ditch attempt at showing credibility on education policy under Gordon Brown was the particularly painful *Your child, your school, our future* paper, which makes it sound as if Brown was trying to secure his own seat on the throne on the backs of other people's kids and jobs. (Which, frankly, is precisely what the policy was designed to do.)

More astonishing than the names is the similarity of some of the language. In 2005, Labour proposed a "national schools commissioner". It also said it was putting academies "at the heart" of its school plans and that it wanted to see "more setting by ability".

We must now wait to see what the next chapter of this history will be called.



# A week in Westminster

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

## THURSDAY:

Pub. Hic.

## FRIDAY:

Dame Rachel de Souza, chief executive of the Inspiration Trust and one of Michael Gove's "superheads", was namechecked today in his latest article for *The Times*.

In return, she took to Twitter to praise the former education secretary: "Thank you @michael Gove for your kind mention in *Times* comment piece today. I miss your relentless driving vision & leadership in education," she tweeted with no hint of irony.

As ever-punchy tweeter @SchoolDuggery commented, it might be best for them to get a room.

## SUNDAY:

Another former education secretary made headlines when Nicky Morgan joined former deputy PM Nick Clegg (remember

him?) and Labour's former shadow education secretary Lucy Powell in *The Observer*, writing that grammars are not "part of the answer to tackling social mobility".

All of which reminds WiW of a recent run-in between *Schools Week* editor Laura McInerney and Clegg. Bumping into one another at a radio show, Clegg urged Mc to ask the Conservatives what mandate they had for expanding grammars. "It was in their manifesto." "Really?" Clegg said. "Yup, I think they were planning to trade it with you if you won. But, err, you didn't." Awks.

## MONDAY:

The revolving door between top accountancy firms and Whitehall has always been a matter of concern but, sadly, we won't be able to find out the true extent of talent-sharing between the Department for Education (DfE) and firms such as PwC, Deloitte, Ernst and Young, *et al*.

When pressed in a parliamentary written question, education minister Caroline

Dinenage claimed the DfE held "no central record" of any such secondments as they could "be agreed by individual managers and may not always be notified to the central HR team".

So if you work at the DfE, stick a jacket on your chair and if anyone calls asking where you are, tell them you're on secondment. How can they check if you're wrong?

On the subject of accounting, a simple maths question trotted out by Labour's education spokesperson Angela Rayner is increasingly putting education secretary Justine Greening and her schools minister Nick Gibb on the defensive.

As *Schools Week* reported after the budget, £320 million isn't much for 140 free schools or 70,000 places. Rayner spotted the discrepancy and raised it three times.

When Greening failed to answer her questions in parliament this week, Rayner boomed that it was "time for a resit".

When Greening insisted there was more funding coming in the next parliament, Rayner pressed on with a second jibe.

"If David promised to protect school

spending per pupil and Justine's new funding formula cuts spending per pupil in more than 9,000 schools, what does that make Theresa?"

## TUESDAY:

A letter landed on academy leaders' desks today telling them that budget forecasting returns have to be done twice this year. Wooohoo! Everyone loves more paperwork.

Thankfully Peter Lauener, head of the Education Funding Agency, did admit his organisation had perhaps made things a little harder than they need to be. So at least there's that, eh?

## WEDNESDAY:

A sad day in Westminster. Our words go out to all caught up in it. We care about you much more than we ever let on.

CHECK OUT @SCHOOLSWEKLIVE FOR LIVE TWEETS OF WESTMINSTER EVENTS

# School Bulletin *with Sam King*

If you have a story you'd like to see featured in the school bulletin, email [samantha.king@schoolsweek.co.uk](mailto:samantha.king@schoolsweek.co.uk)



## Call for more dwarfism-friendly books

FEATURED

## ACTRESS BACKS ALUMNI NETWORK

**A**dwarfism charity has teamed up with two children's authors in an effort to combat stereotypes.

The Restricted Growth Association (RGA UK) hopes its Spread the Word campaign will increase the number of books in school libraries that positively portray those with dwarfism.

The charity is encouraging school libraries to stock books such as *We Are Giants* by Amber Lee Dodd and *Strong and Mighty Max* by Kristina Gray to help to introduce children to dwarfism and disability in a positive and realistic way.

The books both feature characters directly impacted by dwarfism; *Strong and Mighty Max* is for early years and key stage 1, *We Are Giants* for readers aged 9-plus.

The chair of RGA UK, Gillian Martin, said: "There is an urgent need to address depictions of dwarfism, in our media and popular culture, which too often misrepresent members of our community as people out of myths, fairytales, and fantasy novels.

"Kristina and Amber have done wonders to help us to achieve this and we are very proud to support their books, which should be in every school library across the country."

Kristina Gray added: "For a child who is born with a rare condition, there is no greater feeling than picking up a storybook and finding out that the main



Children in the dwarfism community celebrate Dwarfism Awareness Month



character is just like you."

Both authors will be available for school visits, and example email templates, letters, tweets and Facebook posts have also been made available on the RGA UK website to help people to spread the campaign's message.

Martin added: "Introducing children to



dwarfism and disability – of all sorts – at a young age helps them to become familiar with and accommodate difference and diversity, which we believe should be celebrated and embraced."

Restricted growth – or dwarfism – is commonly defined as having a final adult height of 4ft 10in or less.

Birmingham-born actress Julie Walters (pictured) has backed a campaign to build alumni networks in state schools in the city.

Education charity Future First hosted a Back to School Week event last

week in Birmingham, which the government has identified as lacking in careers support. Former students returned to their old schools to deliver careers workshops and offer advice to current pupils.

The event took place at Kings Norton Girls School, Ark St Albans Academy and Holyhead School.

Groups of ten to thirty pupils across year groups 8, 9 and 12 received career tips and motivation techniques, and had their skills and strengths analysed.

Commenting on the week-long event, Walters, who went to school in the city, said "Taking alumni back to support current state school students, whatever field they want to enter, is a fantastic idea.

"The world of work is a difficult place and the more support teenagers have in navigating the move from school to work and broadening their jobs horizons, the better. I'd urge everyone to sign up to support their former state school."



PA/WRM

## Design challenge attracts 200 pupils



The lucky winners

**S**eventeen pupils from schools across the UK have taken home top accolades in Alu D&T Challenge, a national competition challenging youngsters to create sustainable products using aluminium.

The challenge was developed by the aluminium industry to give pupils design challenges in categories such as transport, building and packaging.

This year's fields included vehicle of the future, garden building for a creative homemaker and new packaging.

Open to 11 to 14-year-olds, the challenge attracted more than 200 entries, with the final 17 chosen by specialists from the

aluminium industry, engineering and architecture.

The winners each took home £100 in vouchers, as well as a 3D printer for their school. Prizes were also awarded to runners-up and finalists in each category.

Judge and sponsor Nigel Gibbon of Hydro Aluminium, said: "The enthusiasm and talent these young people show for designing products that will benefit society and protect our environment is so uplifting.

"I hope we have inspired some future engineers, designers and materials scientists who will make a difference to industry in the future."



Mud, sweat and tears

Bruern Abbey pupils hop the fence

## Getting back in touch with nature...

**Y**ear 7 pupils from several prep schools recently took part in the first "rough runner challenge".

Hosted at independent boarding and day school Rendcomb college in Gloucestershire, the challenge attracted more than 100 pupils from seven schools who took on the 2.5km cross-country obstacle course.

It led them through a forest trail and over hay bales, before crossing the River Churn twice and ending in a purpose-built mud slide.

Eleven-year-olds from Dean Close, Kitebrook House, Bredon, Castle Court, Daneshill, Bruern Abbey and host school

Rendcomb took part, with Kitebrook House taking home the girls' team trophy, and the Dean Close boys achieving both the fastest team and individual times.

Rendcomb's head of college, Rob Jones said: "This event is precisely what Rendcomb is all about: team work, comradery, adventure and overcoming challenges.

"Getting back in touch with nature and the great outdoors is vital, now more than ever, as there are so many technological distractions around us."

After the event, Archie Beresford-Davies, a year 7 pupil from Daneshill, said: "It was the best Friday I have ever had".

# MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

**Oliver Martindale** has been appointed headteacher of Lyndhurst Junior School in Portsmouth.

In March last year Lyndhurst became the first UK school to join the King's Group Academies Trust, which runs British international schools in countries that include Panama, Spain and Latvia.

Martindale has been acting head since January, following the retirement of Margaret Beel. He was appointed permanently at the beginning of this month.

He joined Lyndhurst as vice-principal two years ago, having previously worked as a deputy head at a primary in Wiltshire. He is also a specialist in maths, and has worked across Portsmouth developing maths mastery classes.

Martindale says his vision is "for our children to leave us literate and numerate, hardworking, able to communicate, confident in themselves and compassionate.

"We work hard to provide a creative and challenging curriculum to build children's skills, confidence and self-esteem."

Two schools in the Ebor Academy Trust have appointed new headteachers.

The trust, which was established in 2013,



Oliver Martindale



Caroline Towler



Bev Fletcher

has 12 schools across the north and north-east of England.

**Caroline Towler**, who was Ebor's director of teaching and learning, takes over at Brotherton and Byram Community Primary Academy in West Yorkshire.

She has also held the posts of vice-principal at Robert Wilkinson Academy in York and deputy head at Brayton CE

Primary in North Yorkshire.

She says she will explore working collaboratively with pupils, staff and the community, following on from her previous work at the trust.

"Learning should be about discovery,

where children are fully engaged, sparking curiosity and allowing them to explore for themselves.

"It will be a privilege to lead such a fantastic team. The school has been on an incredible journey and I know that there are exciting times ahead for the whole school community."

She starts her new job after Easter.

Brotherton and Byram's former head, **Bev Fletcher**, takes over at Camblesforth Community Primary Academy.

She says she has a passion for science, and has collected two Rolls-Royce awards for projects she has undertaken to develop teaching and learning of science and outdoor education.

Speaking of her appointment, she said: "Having the opportunity to now be headteacher at Camblesforth is very exciting and I cannot wait to work as a team with staff, children, parents and community to continue to grow as a school."

She also takes up her new job after Easter and says she hopes to create a culture of "mutual respect, honesty and trust".

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](mailto:news@schoolsweek.co.uk)

## A new primary school website - for the price of your old one?

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## SCHOOLS 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

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

Difficulty: **EASY**

### Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty: **EASY**

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

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

Solutions: Next week

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

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.