**Academy and School News Update, April 8- May 9 2015**

***Documents mentioned below can be found on*** [**http://tonystephens.org.uk**](http://tonystephens.org.uk)

**NAHT Conference**

* Ofsted’s inspection system makes it easier for **schools in “leafy catchments**” to get a good or outstanding rating than schools in “challenging circumstances”, schools minister David Laws said. Ofsted’s system had to be made fairer because it would be “fatal” if the threat of bad Ofsted judgements deterred people from working in tough schools.
* Birmingham schools are facing a fresh campaign of intimidation in the wake of the **Trojan Horse scandal**, including death threats against headteachers and dead animals being left in playgrounds, it was claimed and there are petitions outside schools, objecting to teachers teaching against homophobia. School leaders were keen to move on from The Trojan Horse scandal, but were frustrated that not all the recommendations of the Clarke report produced in the wake of the scandal were being fully delivered. Recommendations about limiting the number of governing bodies one person can sit on, and preventing certain individuals from being involved in running schools, had not been acted on. “That has left the door open and allowed the resurgence of some of the key operators to try and start to intimidate some of the headteachers”. The union backed a resolution raising concerns that the recommendations of the government-commissioned Clarke report into the Trojan Horse scandal have not been fully implemented.
* The **“excessive” testing** of children at primary school will trigger an increase in mental health problems, low self-esteem and behavioural issues, school leaders warned. Delegates at the conference passed a motion that said the amount of national testing of primary-aged children was “excessive and is not good for them”. The motion called on the NAHT’s national executive to commission a study into the effects of testing on primary-aged children.
* The government has taken a **“bull in a china shop”** approach to school improvement that limits children’s achievement, the new president said. We have a ‘bull in a china shop’, quick fix, here today, gone tomorrow approach that destroys careers and limits what our kids can achieve.” He said school leaders should “fight forced academisation, wherever we see it”. Schools have become “the A&E departments of communities”. Family life was under threat, he said, because public services had been “slashed” and because for many families two incomes were “not enough to make ends meet”. “These days we’re not just educating children, we’re supporting mums and dads and putting neighbourhoods back together,” he said. Research by the NAHT revealed schools were spending £43.5 million per year on basic support such as food, clothes and showering facilities for children living in poverty. Mr Draper said the research showed a “vague promise to protect education spending” was of little use when other sources of support for families were “disappearing”.
* A survey by the Union found 26 per cent of respondents **failed to recruit** to teaching posts on the upper pay scale in the 2013-14 academic year. Some 24 per cent failed to recruit teachers on the main pay scale and 29 per cent failed to fill posts for teachers with additional responsibilities with Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR). The problem was less acute for those recruiting newly-qualified teachers, of which 8 per cent were unable to fill posts. The survey of 1,178 school leaders found that the most common reason cited for struggling or failing to recruit teachers was that the quality of applicants was not good enough.
* A motion said that there was **an “exodus”** from the teaching profession. It says “unrealistic expectations” being placed on teachers must be tackled urgently to mitigate this, and that teachers must be given an “appropriate work-life balance”.
* Schools should refuse to implement “**crazy schemes**” put forward by government ministers, the general secretary said. Heads should be “stronger” in telling the government to go “back to the drawing board” over policies that are not well thought through, as well as making use of the legal system. He also said that Ofsted’s “outstanding” grade should be abolished. He argued that the effect of the grade is “pernicious” and holds back “maverick” headteachers.  He urged schools to place less emphasis on league table measures, and to avoid changing staffing and curriculum arrangements in response to changes in league table measures. Schools must start plugging staff shortages by forming federations and sharing teachers in key subjects such as maths. The alternative to such emergency measures will be ministers stepping in to close smaller schools at a cost to both parents and staff, or an increase in the number of children being taught by unqualified teachers.
* Primary schools could miss out on tens of millions of pounds **in pupil premium** **funding** as a result of free school meals being introduced for all infants. Research by the Union has found that three-quarters of school leaders believe their school is losing out because of a drop in the number of pupils registered as eligible for the additional cash. The pupil premium – worth £1,300 per student – is dependent on parents registering their children for free school meals but since last September, all four- to seven-year-olds have been entitled to free lunches regardless of their family income, removing a major reason for parents to sign their children up for FSM. Respondents to the survey estimated that an average 12 per cent of eligible pupils were not registered for FSM, meaning that schools were each missing out on thousands of pounds of government funding.
* Calls for Ofsted to acknowledge the work of **special schools** were overwhelmingly backed by the membership; 98 per cent of members today voted in favour of a motion criticising the watchdog for failing to mention the work of special schools in its [2013/14 annual report](http://schoolsweek.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Ofsted_Annual_Report_201314_Schools.pdf).
* Delegates voted to support a motion calling on the next government to introduce a **national system of data sharing** which would involve schools being automatically informed when pupils are entitled to free school meals, and therefore pupil premium funding, rather than relying on individual parents to apply for their children.
* The NAHT and the Medical Schools Council (MSC) have joined forces in an attempt to inspire primary school pupils to enter the **medical profession**. As part of the union’s Primary Futures project, which gets people from the world of work to speak to children, volunteers from the medical profession will visit all 18,000 primary schools in the country. Medics Month will take place in October and in the summer term primary schools will be encouraged to sign up. At the same time, the MSC is running a competition for medical students to develop activities to help them realise the importance of maths, English and science.
* **New headteachers** will be able to take advantage of the wealth of experience from current and former heads in a new mentoring programme to be rolled out by the Union.

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* Children who do not **pay attention at age 7** do less well in their GCSEs at age 16, according to [a study](http://www.jaacap.com/article/S0890-8567(15)00106-9/abstract). Researchers said the findings highlighted the long-term academic risks associated with children being distracted or not paying attention.
* **Circle time** needs to be a fixture in both primary and secondary schools, but the practice is at risk of falling out of use, according to a former government adviser. “There is strong evidence that strategies such as ­circle time are incredibly ­effective – not just for student well-being but for achievement, too,”
* Children will **do what their teachers do, rather than what they say**, new research shows. When teachers’ words and deeds conflict, children will always follow actions over instructions.
* Schools should consider **sending pupils' work abroad** to be marked to help free up teachers' time, an academic expert has suggested. She said outsourcing marking can cost as little as £2 an hour and can be "incredibly reliable”. Alternatively, headteachers could investigate newly-emerging technology which might allow work to be checked by computer.
* Schools should be judged by their results over a period of at least **five years** rather than “condemned” on the basis of just one year’s performance, according to one of country’s biggest exam boards, Cambridge Assessment.
* Some school leaders could face an “arbitrary” **pay freeze** from September under controversial salary reforms, ASCL has warned. Its analysis of STRB proposals has found that headteachers and senior leaders at the top of their pay range will be denied a 1 per cent cost-of-living increase if they happen to be at an “unlucky” spine point. However, other heads and senior leaders who are also at the top of their pay range but paid at different spine points will not be hit by the freeze, the union has said. This is because the eight “unlucky” spine points (listed below) coincide with the top levels for eight newly created headteacher pay groupings. ASCL has also urged the government to reject the STRB’s proposal to let schools give their best teachers a 2 per cent pay rise. The union said this was because the proposal would not, in practice, reward the best teachers, who would be rewarded by being moved to the upper pay range. It added that the STRB’s proposal would create an “unnecessary and overly bureaucratic” new level of assessment. ASCL has also called for the government to provide additional funding to cover increased pay awards, rather than allow them to be “an extra cost on already stretched school budgets”.

**The eight pay grades for school leaders which would miss out on a pay rise:**

* + L18 (£58,096)
  + L21 (£62,521)
  + L24 (£67,290)
  + L27 (£72,419)
  + L31 (£79,872)
  + L35 (£88,102)
  + L39 (£97,128)
  + L43 (£107,210)
  + (Brackets denote pay at each point, as of September 2014)
* Eight in 10 teachers **do not feel valued** by society, according to a survey, which provides an insight into how low morale has sunk within the profession. Overall, 81 per cent of the workforce say the teaching profession is under-valued by the wider public, with the proportion jumping to 91 per cent among headteachers.
* Librarians, classroom assistants and school administrative staff are being retrained as teachers to try to counter the **recruitment crisis**.
* Schools have dramatically increased the number of **referrals they make to social** **services** over concerns about the abuse and neglect of their pupils, in the wake of a series of high-profile child abuse cases. Figures obtained from 46 local authorities show that almost 30,000 children were referred to safeguarding services by their schools in 2013-14, an increase of 48 per cent since 2010-11. The figure far outstripped a 19 per cent rise in referrals from other sources. The referrals were under the headings of abuse, neglect, family dysfunction and acute family stress.
* Two-thirds of primary school children are not reaching **basic levels of fitness** for their age group, research has warned. A study of 10,000 young people aged 5-11 found that 67 per cent were unable to reach targets in jumping, running and throwing – and 24 per cent fell "significantly" below recommended levels, indicating that fitness among children is a serious cause for concern. Researchers found that just 36 per cent of five- to seven-year-olds were at an adequate level of fitness, falling to 32 per cent and 33 per cent for children aged 8-9 and 10-11 respectively. Official guidelines from the chief medical officer recommend that children spend 60 minutes a day being physically active – yet only 21 per cent of boys and 16 per cent of girls achieve this. The lowest results were recorded in running challenges that tested cardiovascular endurance, indicating that many children were failing to spend enough time on vigorous activity that left them out of breath and with an increased heart rate.
* Primary schools across the UK are to be sent a copy of **Magna Carta** to help teach pupils about the legacy of the famous historic document during its 800th anniversary year.
* **Maths prodigies** should sit their GCSEs and A-levels at the same time as their classmates and not be “trained” to take exams early or fast-tracked to university, a leading maths teacher has warned. Geoff Smith, chairman of the British and International Maths Olympiads, and vice-chairman of the United Kingdom Mathematics Trust, said that accelerating children through the exam system was “a disaster” and “a mistake”. Instead, Dr Smith suggested that talented maths pupils should be given extended, complex problems to solve, building on the knowledge they had gained at school. He said: “Unusually bright people find the school mathematics syllabus undemanding. But there’s so much worthwhile mathematics to keep them happy and busy while their bodies turn into adults. School maths barely scratches the surface.”
* Headteachers have called for new **financial incentives to encourage people into teaching**, including helping to pay off student loans and offering free accommodation in areas that struggle to recruit enough teachers. ASCL says the new measures are needed to tackle a “growing teacher recruitment crisis”. It is calling for high-performing multi-academy trusts to be able to “deploy” good and outstanding teachers to schools in areas with the greatest staff shortages. These teachers should be given a “disruption payment” and their accommodation costs should be paid, the ASCL argues. The association is calling for teachers’ student loans to be paid off in some cases, “for as many years as eligible teachers remain in state-funded schools”. It says this incentive could be “targeted [at] the most severe shortage areas or subjects” and would be “a successor to the ‘golden handshake’ acting as an incentive to teach”. The ASCL is also calling on the government to consider creating a “safety net” for teacher training providers in areas of the country where recruitment is most difficult. These providers should be allowed to continue despite a shortage of applicants, because their closure would worsen the teacher supply crisis, the union claims.
* A poll carried out by **anti-bullying** charity Ditch the Label found 50 per cent of the teenagers surveyed said they had bullied somebody. Of these, 30 per cent said they did so at least once a week and 21 per cent did so several times each week. Some 27 per cent of those who admitted to having bullied someone said they had “said something nasty to somebody online”, and 27 per cent said they had “physically attacked somebody” Of the 3,600 people aged between 13 and 20 who took part in the survey, 43 per cent said they had been bullied. Of these, 51 per cent said they were bullied about their appearance and 23 per cent said bullies targeted them over high grades. Nine per cent were bullied over a disability and 8 per cent said they had experienced racist bullying and comments. Overall, 69 per cent of respondents said they had witnessed bullying. Female students appeared to be at greater risk of being bullied than their male classmates: 54 per cent said they had been bullied, compared with 35 per cent of males. All respondents were asked how they would like to change their appearance. Thirty-seven per cent said they would like to weigh less, 48 per cent wanted teeth-whitening treatment and 6 per cent said they wanted liposuction.
* One of the first **University Technical Colleges** in the country is to close due to a decline in pupil numbers and “financial challenges”, it has been announced. Black Country UTC, which is sponsored by Walsall College and the University of Wolverhampton and was only the second to be opened under the programme in 2011, will close in August. It will be the second UTC to close in the space of a year after the flagship Hackney UTC in London announced last summer that it would shut its doors to new students this August due to a fall in numbers. There are currently 30 UTCs open across England, with 20 more due to open by 2016. They offer technical, practical and academic courses to 14-19-year-olds, specialising in subjects where there are a shortage of skills.
* An exam board hopes to make its **language GCSEs** more appealing by dropping “rather uninspiring” content about pencil cases and "my school day", and teaching pupils to talk about tattoos and music festivals instead. OCR says it wants its reformed French, German and Spanish GCSEs, which will be introduced next year, to have a more “contemporary appeal”. “This entails moving away from working too long on a clichéd topic until a student is bored with it, to working on more appealing subjects, and with an all-important shift in emphasis on the skills that they can transfer across content.” It said that skills being neglected under existing qualifications included “grammatical structures such as tenses”. “Current GCSE specifications have focused on preparing coursework, which is more about the theme than learning the building blocks of a language,” “This has de-skilled students and led to ‘topic fatigue’.” OCR also wants to get rid of “inflexible vocabulary lists”. The draft new courses, which would be taught from September next year, have been submitted to exams regulator Ofqual for approval.
* A major research project is to look at how teachers can use **feedback** to improve pupils’ understanding of **maths**. The three-year study aims to build on an approach that has already been shown to raise student achievement in individual classes to see if its success can be replicated on a larger scale. Around 120 schools will be recruited to take part in the research, where teachers will deliver a series of tailored lessons to Year 7 and 8 pupils in algebra and fractions.
* Hundreds of schools will have no choice but to enter around 15,000 pupils for **extra tests** in the final run-up to their GCSEs under Ofqual plans. The exams regulator is going to ask the government to make its new National Reference Test (NRT) mandatory for a sample of 300 secondaries, every March from 2017. It will comprise of separate tests of less than an hour each in English and maths. Individual results will not be published and if the NRT works as planned it could provide Ofqual with the evidence it believes is necessary to justify rises in GCSE grades. But heads are concerned about the extra pressure the tests could put on year 11 pupils and their schools, when crucial final GCSEs are just weeks away.
* Teachers should be careful to avoid delivering lessons on **anorexia and self-harm** that act as little more than a set of how-to ­instructions for vulnerable young people, new guidance warns schools. Children as young as 5 should also be taught the importance of not keeping adults’ secrets, and learn about the ways in which people’s bodies can be hurt. The government-funded guidance for teachers offers advice on the best ways to teach and promote good mental health and emotional well-being in pupils, amid concerns of growing problems among young people. The guidelines recommend that teachers do not discuss ­eating disorders until key stage 3 and self-harm until key stage 4 – and it offers careful instructions on how to introduce the subjects.
* The education system could be overlooking some of its most talented potential leaders because of “**institutional racism**” that holds black and ethnic minority (BME) teachers back. According to the figures, 97.3 per cent of headteachers at state schools in England are white. Just 0.7 per cent of school leaders are from an Indian background and 0.6 per cent are from a black Caribbean background.
* Children with **high reading skills** at age 10 can see the effect in their pay packets more than 25 years later, a new study has found. Research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) found that a child from a low-income background who was a strong reader at age 10 would earn 21 per cent more per hour at age 38 on average than someone from a similar background with poor reading skills.
* Harlowsave, a credit union in the Essex town of Harlow, has asked local secondary schools to advertise its services to parents in a bid to provide access to loans for **prom suits and dresses**, circumventing the need to go to a payday loan company.
* Inspectors from the **Health and Safety Executive** (HSE) have investigated 293 incidents at schools since April 2011, including nine fatalities. Of those, 150 were into major incidents requiring a heightened response because of the potential of death, serious injuries or extensive property damage. More than 100 enforcement notes have been issued as a result of the visits, which require schools, or the council, as the employer, to urgently address health and safety failings or face court action. However, while the notices are published on the watchdog’s website, there is no legal requirement for schools to inform parents of the breaches. Schools have paid a total of £410,215 in fines due to failings on their premises.
* The number of recruits to **teacher training programmes** are more than 5,000 down in comparison to this time last year, UCAS figures show, and subjects such as business studies, English, geography and maths are facing teacher shortages; at the other end of the scale, there seems to be a shortage of vacancies for physical education teachers.  London and surrounding areas such as the south east and the east of England are facing a fast-approaching crisis, with almost four teaching vacancies per school in the capital. UCAS figures for April 2015, show there were 5,260 fewer people applying for teacher training positions than there was in the same month last year.
* Five of the biggest multi-academy trusts have made **non-statutory severance payments** to staff totalling £941,316 during the year to August 2014, their latest accounts reveal. The largest payments were made by United Learning, Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), Harris Federation, Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT) and Ark Schools. Non-statutory severance payments – outside normal statutory or contractual requirements – are given to staff who resign, are dismissed, or reach an agreed termination of contract.
* Increased uptake in **languages** at GCSE following the government’s English Baccalaureate reform is not boosting A-level take-up as expected. Instead, numbers are drastically falling.
* Two academies have been given millions of pounds to **build walls back** into their open-plan classrooms after claims they were causing attainment to plunge. Bexhill High Academy, in East Sussex, and St Aldhelm’s Academy, in Dorset, are believed to have been handed about £7 million from the government to redesign their buildings this summer. Both have been taken over by new academy trusts after falling into special measures.
* The largest academy chain in the country has transferred eight schools from its control, blaming their “geographic isolation”. The **Academies Enterprise Trust** (AET) has been handing over the schools to local sponsors since December. The relinquished schools are East Point Academy in Lowestoft; Childwall Sports & Science Academy in Liverpool; Oaks, Tree Tops and Molehill Copse Primary Academies, Kent; Northamptonshire’s The Duston School; and Peak and Greenfield Academies in Gloucestershire. Statements from the trust say that all eight schools were handed to new sponsors because they were “geographically isolated” from the trust’s other schools. Schools minister Lord Nash has, in the past, stated a preference for schools in academy chains to be within an hour’s drive of each other, and last year, the education select committee said academy chains performed better in geographic clusters. The trust now has 68 schools, down from 77 last year.
* **Governing boards** should work together with school leadership to “determine and articulate” a clear three to five year vision, says a [new](http://www.nga.org.uk/News/NGA-News/What-governors-and-school-leaders-should-expect.aspx) document. It says this process should lead to the identification of the key strategic priorities to drive the agenda of governing board meetings, with headteachers responsible for ensuring the strategy is delivered. Four organisations are behind this third edition of the document setting out what governing boards and school leaders should expect from each other: The National Governors’ Association, ASCL, the Local Government Association (LGA), and the NAHT. Governing bodies must have the right people round the table, an understanding of their roles and responsibilities, a good chair and a commitment to asking challenging questions, says the paper. They must also have professional clerking, good relationships based on trust, a knowledge of the school, and the confidence to have “courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people”. In return, school leaders need an understanding of governance, including the acknowledging the role of the school’s accountable body, and a willingness to provide information in the most appropriate way so that the governing body can carry out its role. They also must be willing to be challenged, have a reasonable time to devote to ensuring professional relationships are established with governors and trustees, and have the skills and understanding to develop effective working relationships with the governing board. According to the paper, the strategic role of governance and the operational role of management “needs to be clearly understood by all”. This is crucial so that “governors and trustees are not asked to, and do not try to, involve themselves in day to day management”.

***A copy of this document can be found on the above website, Documents –Latest Documents***

* A mother has won a delayed reception place for her daughter **born in August**, putting further pressure on other admissions authorities to allow children to enter school later. Last week, Staffordshire County Council relented and, after media reports of the case, allowed four-year-old Olivia Dutton to take a place in a reception class rather than making her go straight into year 1 at the start of the next academic year. Olivia’s mother, Rosie, used her legal right to delay Olivia’s school start, arguing that she was not ready for school having only turned four a few weeks before the school year started.
* A new sponsor has stepped in to support the leaders of a multi-academy trust after its four schools were put in special measures within a week. But a deal for the Community Academies Trust to permanently take over the Telford schools from **Telford Co-Operative Multi-Academy Trust** (TCMAT), has yet to be signed off.
* The Seckford Foundation Free Schools Trust wrote to the parents of its schools last month to explain an **additional week will be added to the October half-term** this year for its three schools. Principal Robert Cawley, in the letter, said: “Overall, the trust aims that by having a two week half term, students will be more refreshed to learn achieve and make progress in the second half of term leading up to Christmas.” He said the move was motivated by aligning the schools’ term structure to those of independent schools.
* The University of **Cambridge** is gathering views on plans to bring back entrance tests – 29 years after abandoning them. If the proposal goes ahead, all school pupils applying to the university would need to sit the test.
* A search for **free school sites** in a north London borough has ended with a proposed school for 700 pupils folding and another forced to delay opening for a year. Gateway Academy and Gladstone School were both supposed to open in Brent in September last year, but both have struggled to find suitable sites
* There is a new focus in the new Ofsted framework on inspectors looking at how schools ensure pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves **healthy** through exercising and healthy eating. This will be as part of the overall judgement on personal development, behaviour and welfare. As now, inspectors will visit the canteen to sample the atmosphere and culture linked to pupil behaviour, however there will be no forensic analysis of menus on offer.

***See an explanatory letter on the above website, Documents-Latest Documents***

* Plotr exists to help young people discover the **world of work**. It gives free support to both teachers and parents, and it help employers and young people connect. This summer, Plotr is running Careers and Enterprise Roadshows in five regions across England for careers practitioners, teachers and school and college leaders Delegates will have the opportunity to hear about latest government policy post-election, meet employers and Plotr partners and, attend workshops supporting the development of careers education services. Details can be found at <https://www.plotr.co.uk/educator-zone/careers-roadshow-events-uk-plotr/>

* ASCL has produced  [a simple guide](http://www.ascl.org.uk/utilities/document-summary.html?id=FA9E9DFD-23D1-48F0-9FC42354B97BA139) on the current **routes into teaching**.

***A copy of this document can be found on the above website, Documents –Latest Documents***

* From September, all schools will be able to set their **own terms and holidays**. Newspapers have suggested that around 60 per cent of heads will use that power to help parents avoid holiday surcharges.
* Ofsted has published its latest **School Inspection Update magazine**

***A copy of this document can be found on the above website, Documents –Latest Documents***

* Teenagers are being unfairly labelled as sex offenders for sending explicit messages or **sextexts** to each other, campaigners have said. They say criminalising 16- to 18-year-olds for sending explicit pictures to one another shows how disconnected the political establishment is from changes to technology and social values. A teenager younger than 18 who takes a nude picture of themselves using a cameraphone is guilty of the serious offence of creating child pornography. This is the case even if they are over 16, the age of sexual consent.
* Registration is now open for those with at least five years' senior leadership experience and a recognised and registered teaching or social care qualification to **become an Ofsted Inspector**. R[egister online](http://www.ofstedhmi.co.uk/) from April-May at <http://www.ofstedhmi.co.uk/> .
* It is possible to apply to be an **external adviser to Ofqual**. See <https://www.gov.uk/apply-to-become-an-external-advisor-to-ofqual>
* The international accountancy firm [PricewaterhouseCoopers](http://www.theguardian.com/business/pricewaterhousecoopers) (PwC) plans a radical move to **ditch A-level results** for recruiting graduates because of the unfair advantage given to independent school pupils.
* Small rural schools face possible **closure** given that they may struggle to meet the new costs of NI and pension increases, free lunches etc
* Up to one in five infants in some parts of England have missed out on their top **choice of primary school** this year, with the picture even worse in some parts of London. However, strenuous efforts by local authorities to add more classrooms appear to have headed off a serious shortage of places. Based on figures compiled from 108 local authorities on national offer day, nearly 87% of more than 600,000 parents were offered their first choice of primary school for their children – a marginal fall compared with 2014 despite a pronounced increase in the numbers applying. Nationally, the rise in the number of children applying to start school – [caused by a spike in the birth rate in recent years](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23618487) – has placed great pressure on councils to meet demand for reception classes for four- and five-year-olds. But fears of widespread shortage appear to have been averted, with around 80,000 children missing out on their first choice, a figure similar to last year’s.
* The **working lives of teachers** have become “unbearable” because of constant monitoring and as a result they are quitting in such numbers that the profession is heading for a crisis, according to an open letter to *The Independent* signed by 1,200 teachers. The letter calls for more support and warns that politicians have made teachers’ working lives “increasingly difficult and for many, unbearable” and that “a constant fear of being judged to be failing” was “bleeding the profession dry”. Teachers who signed the letter, organised by the ATL, warn that schools are heading for a teacher supply crisis as more teachers leave and the Government fails to recruit enough new trainees. They call for the next Government to urgently reform the schools inspectorate, arguing that teachers cannot work under the “constant monitoring of Big Brother Ofsted”. Teachers need to be supported, not punished, they argue.

## New research reveals a 55 per cent rise over 5 years in the number of **girls** experiencing emotional problems suggesting more needs to be done to address the issue

* **Creationism** is still taught in dozens of faith schools despite Government threats to withdraw their funding. 54 private schools are still being funded by local authorities, while continuing to teach that the Earth began with Adam and Eve. Only 14 of the 91 schools teaching creationism have had their funding withdrawn,
* Schools who ask parents to pay for A-level and GCSE **exam appeals** risk discriminating against poorer pupils, says the ATL - Exam boards charge up to £48.60 for each re-mark.
* As from May 6 2015, **NASUWT**:
  + Members are instructed to refuse to comply with any marking and assessment policy which generates excessive workload and/or has not been agreed with the NASUWT.
  + Until such time as a policy agreed with the NASUWT is introduced, members will mark and assess pupils in a manner consistent with the principles set out in the Union’s guidance.
* **Grammar schools** claim they are being forced to axe courses, make teachers redundant and could face closure as a result of resources being diverted to low-achieving pupils. Headteachers claim that selective schools – as well as comprehensives in more affluent areas – are the big losers in a funding regime where the focus has shifted towards children from deprived families.
* Headteachers will be offered training in how to prevent pupils from being drawn into **extremism**, following a recent string of high-profile cases of students being radicalised. The series of seminars will take place over the summer and has been organised by ASCL in response to what it described as "widespread concern over the impact of extremist propaganda on young people" and new counter-terrorism legislation.
* An Ofsted inspector said that a school, could only score a “requires improvement” rating for **pupil behaviour** because its previous exam results had not been good enough. But analysis has found that nearly a third of schools inspected this year have scored a higher grade for behaviour than attainment Since January 1, 669 inspection reports have been published for primary, secondary, all-through and special schools,. Of those, 70.46 per cent were given the same grades for attainment and behaviour. But in 28.65 per cent of cases, the behaviour grade was better than the achievement grade. Further analysis of the 448 schools receiving a grade 3 for attainment shows that more than half of them scored a grade 2 for behaviour.
* Schools should adopt **“gender neutral” uniforms** to make them lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) friendly and inclusive, and end bullying, a teacher training specialist has said.
* A **Foundation Code for CEIAG** has been developed, and is fully supported by ASCL, AoC, 157 Group, ATL, AELP, PPC and SFCA who represent schools, colleges and independent learning providers across England. By working collectively and collaboratively to produce this new Code, the above mentioned associations have, for the first time, taken real shared ownership of the values and behaviours needed to deliver high quality CEIAG that will lead to better outcomes for young people.

***A copy of this document and associated guidance can be found on the above website, Documents –Latest Documents***

* September sees this stronger focus than ever on a school's approach to healthy eating. Ofsted inspections will consider how schools promote an ethos and culture of health and wellbeing in all aspects of school life. Free support is available to start the transformation of **school food provision** and culture. As an action in the School Food Plan, the DfE is funding expert organisations to help primary and secondary schools improve the quality and take up of school meals. Visit [**www.schoolfoodplan.com/takeup**](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/takeup) and register for support.

**Appendix**

**2015 Conservative Party manifesto; plans for education**

We will:

* *ensure a good primary school place for your child, with zero tolerance for failure*
* *turn every failing and coasting secondary school into an academy and deliver free schools for parents and communities that want them*
* *help teachers to make Britain the best country in the world for developing maths, engineering, science and computing skills*
* *create 3 million new apprenticeships and make sure there is no cap on university places, so we have aspiration for all.*

We know what works in education: great teachers; brilliant leadership; rigour in the curriculum; discipline in the classroom; proper exams. We believe that parents and teachers should be empowered to run their schools independently. We believe that teaching is a highly skilled profession, and that we need to attract the best graduates into it. And we believe that there is no substitute for a rigorous academic curriculum to secure the best from every pupil.

**We will drive up standards in your child’s school.**

We will start by introducing tough new standards for literacy and numeracy in primary schools. We will expect every 11-year-old to know their times tables off by heart and be able to perform long division and complex multiplication. They should be able to read a book and write a short story with accurate punctuation, spelling and grammar. If children do not reach the required standards in their exams at the end of primary school, they will re-sit them at the start of secondary school, to make sure no pupil is left behind. We will require secondary school pupils to take GCSEs in English, maths, science, a language and history or geography, with Ofsted unable to award its highest ratings to schools that refuse to teach these core subjects.

**We will ensure there is a good primary school place for your child, with zero tolerance of failure**

We plan to invest at least £7 billion over the next Parliament to provide good school places. And we will let our best headteachers take control of failing primary schools, by expanding the National Leaders of Education programme.

**We will turn every failing and coasting secondary school into an academy, and deliver free schools if parents in your area want them**

We will continue to expand academies, free schools, studio schools and University Technical Colleges. Over the next Parliament, we will open at least 500 new free schools, resulting in 270,000 new school places. And we will introduce new powers to force coasting schools to accept new leadership. Any school judged by Ofsted to be requiring improvement will be taken over by the best headteachers – backed by expert sponsors or high-performing neighbouring schools – unless it can demonstrate that it has a plan to improve rapidly. We will continue to allow all good schools to expand, whether they are maintained schools, academies, free schools or grammar schools.

**We will continue to protect school funding**

Under a future Conservative Government, the amount of money following your child into school will be protected. As the number of pupils increases, so will the amount of money in our schools. On current pupil number forecasts, there will be a real-terms increase in the schools budget in the next Parliament. We will continue to provide the pupil premium, protected at current rates, so that schools receive additional money for those from the poorest backgrounds. We will support families by providing free meals to all infants. And we will make schools funding fairer. We have already increased funding for the 69 least well-funded local authorities in the country, and will make this the baseline for their funding in the next Parliament. We will not allow state schools to make a profit.

**We will back your child’s teachers**

In the next Parliament, we will expect every teacher to be trained not just in how to tackle serious behaviour issues, but also in how to deal with the low level disruption that stops children from learning properly. This generation of teachers is already the best-qualified ever. In future, we will recruit and keep the best teachers by reducing the time they spend on paperwork, introducing bursaries for the most in-demand subjects, paying good teachers more, further reducing the burden of Ofsted inspections and continuing to encourage the growth of Teach First. We will increase the number of teachers able to teach Mandarin in schools in England, so we can compete in the global race. We want teachers to be regarded in the same way as other highly skilled professionals, so we are supporting the creation of an independent College of Teaching to promote the highest standards of teaching and school leadership.

**We will lead the world in maths and science**

We aim to make Britain the best place in the world to study maths, science and engineering, measured by improved performance in the PISA league tables. To help achieve this, we will train an extra 17,500 maths and physics teachers over the next five years. We will make sure that all students are pushed to achieve their potential and create more opportunities to stretch the most able.

**We will protect children**

Every child deserves a warm, loving home, and to feel safe online and at school.. We have made progress in reforming our adoption system, but there is more to do. We will introduce regional adoption agencies, working across local authority boundaries to match children with the best parents for them. We will continue to raise the quality of children’s social work, by expanding training programmes, such as Frontline, and creating new opportunities to develop the next generation of leaders in the field. We will continue to tackle all forms of bullying in our schools. And we will stop children's exposure to harmful sexualised content online, by requiring age verification for access to all sites containing pornographic material and age-rating for all music videos.

**We will improve skills training**

We will continue to replace lower-level, classroom-based Further Education courses with high quality apprenticeships that combine training with experience of work and a wage. We will ensure there is a University Technical College within reach of every city. We will abolish employers' National Insurance contributions on earnings up to the upper earnings limit for apprentices under the age of 25. And we will roll out many more Degree Apprenticeships, allowing young people to combine a world-class degree with a world-class apprenticeship.

**We will improve Further Education**

We will continue to improve Further Education through our network of National Colleges, which will provide specialist higher-level vocational training in sectors critical to economic growth. We will publish more earnings and destination data for Further Education courses, and require more accreditation of courses by employers.

**We will ensure that if you want to go to university, you can**

From September, we will abolish the cap on higher education student numbers and remove an arbitrary ceiling on ambition. Our reforms to university funding mean you do not have to pay anything towards tuition while studying, and only start paying back if you earn over £21,000 per year. We will ensure the continuing success and stability of these reforms, so that the interests of both students and taxpayers are fairly represented. We will introduce a national postgraduate loan system for taught masters and PhD courses. We will ensure that universities deliver the best possible value for money to students: we will introduce a framework to recognise universities offering the highest teaching quality; encourage universities to offer more two-year courses; and require more data to be openly available to potential students so that they can make decisions informed by the career paths of past graduates.

**We will ensure that our universities remain world-leading**

We will maintain our universities’ reputation for world-class research and academic excellence. Through the Nurse Review of research councils, we will seek to ensure that the UK continues to support world-leading science, and invests public money in the best possible way. And we will encourage the development of online education as a tool for students, whether studying independently or in our universities

# Seven things that a Conservative government will mean for schools – the TES view

### **1. Tighter budgets**

The biggest issue facing schools in the near term is funding, with [**prime minister David Cameron ruling out a real-terms increase**](https://www.tes.co.uk/news/school-news/breaking-news/cameron-schools-will-face-real-terms-funding-cuts-under-tories) in school spending back in February. Instead, he pledged to ring-fence per-pupil spending, a move that is likely to lead to an overall cut in budgets. [**The Institute for Fiscal Studies suggested that schools could face cuts of up to 12 per cent**](https://www.tes.co.uk/news/school-news/breaking-news/schools-could-face-cuts-12-cent-says-institute-fiscal-studies)once rising pupil numbers and increased national insurance and pension contributions are taken into account.

However, in an interview with TES before the election, [**education secretary Nicky Morgan said school spending would be properly addressed**](https://www.tes.co.uk/news/school-news/breaking-news/nicky-morgan-and-tristram-hunt-speak-tes-campaign-trail) in the next spending review.

### **2. Higher stakes**

In its bid to "get tough" on school standards, the Conservative Party has vowed to take a "zero-tolerance" approach to failure, stating that any school judged to be in need of improvement by Ofsted[**will be forced to become an academy and taken over by new leadership**](https://www.tes.co.uk/news/school-news/breaking-news/cameron-under-fire-self-serving-attacks-coasting-schools), unless it can show it is improving. The party will also introduce powers to "force coasting schools to accept new leadership" unless they can illustrate that they are raising standards.

### **3. New legislation**

Mr Cameron and Ms Morgan pledged before the election to introduce a new education bill early in the new Parliament; [**the education secretary said the new legislation would focus mainly on childcare and early years**](https://www.tes.co.uk/news/school-news/breaking-news/nicky-morgan-and-tristram-hunt-speak-tes-campaign-trail), promising a period of "stability" over the next five years.

### **4. More tests**

One of the Conservatives' stand-out policies announced ahead of the election was the proposal to make pupils who failed to reach expected standards in English and maths at key stage 2[**take a new "resit test" in the spring or summer term of Year 7**](https://www.tes.co.uk/news/school-news/breaking-news/tories-plan-resit-tests-secondary-schools-year-7s), to help them catch up with their peers.

### **5. A (slightly) different Ofsted**

Like Labour, the Conservatives pledged to reform the schools inspectorate, and there were even[**rumours that the party intended to bring the watchdog in-house,**](https://www.tes.co.uk/news/school-news/breaking-news/conservatives-deny-plans-bring-ofsted-within-dfe) but they were quickly quashed. Unlike Labour, however, the Tories do not intend to work towards the more popular reform of greater peer review when inspecting schools. Instead, they will rely more heavily on data collection in a bid to "reduce the burden" of Ofsted inspections.

### **6. Compulsory EBac**

The Conservatives have [**pledged that all students should enter the English Baccalaureate at GCSE**](https://www.tes.co.uk/news/school-news/breaking-news/tories-make-ebac-compulsory), stating that every Year 11 pupil should sit exams in English, maths, science, a language and history or geography. The party also said that any school that "refused" to offer the EBac would be unable to be judged "outstanding" by Ofsted.

### **7. More free schools (and grammars?)**

Mr Cameron pledged to open[**"at least" 500 new free schools over the next five years**](https://www.tes.co.uk/news/school-news/breaking-news/tories-free-school-plan-would-blow-%C2%A34bn-hole-budget-lib-dems-claim), and will continue to expand the academies programme. However, the party's manifesto also states that it will allow all good schools to expand, "including state maintained, free schools, academies and grammar schools”. One of the Ms Morgan's first tasks will be to decide whether to allow the Weald of Kent grammar school in Tonbridge to open an “annexe” 10 miles away in Sevenoaks. If she does assent, this could pave the way for more grammars to open across the country.

**Misc issues raised**

* “Ofsted needs to take more account of the situation some schools are in and whether they have the capacity to improve,” Ms Morgan said. “What I want to see is teachers knowing that, if they take on a school in a **challenging environment**, that will be reflected in their career progression. “Some people think it will count against them, when actually what I want to say is, ‘No, you stepped up to the plate, you did the right thing and that will be recognised.’ ”
* The Conservatives have denied rumours that they are planning to bring **Ofsted** into the Department for Education as an executive agency, should they come to power after the election. The party has pledged to make Ofsted inspections less onerous for schools. The Conservatives have said they will reform Ofsted to use more data, arguing this would allow it to be less reliant on inspections.
* David Cameron promised 30 hours a week of **free childcare** for three- and four-year-olds. The prime minister pledged that existing childcare provision would be doubled, saving parents £5,000 a year.
* **Phonics checks** could be brought forward for brighter pupils under a future Conservative-led government, Nicky Morgan has said. She was going to “go away and look at” whether the controversial checks for six-year-olds could be sat earlier by more able children.
* The future of GCSEs and A levels in **minority languages** such as Polish and Turkish would be guaranteed under the newly-elected Conservative government, Nicky Morgan said “I am making a clear commitment that the next Conservative government will guarantee the future of GCSEs and A-levels in subjects like Polish, Gujarati, Panjabi, Bengali and Turkish.” The Conservative party would launch a consultation within the first month of a new government on the best way of securing the future of the qualifications.
* David Cameron wants there to be a **UTC** in every city

**Tony Stephens**