

Education

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Anger over head's £276,000 wage packet

A primary headteacher who earns more than £276,000 per year is at the centre of a row over pay. Mark Elms, who runs a 335-pupil inner-city primary, received £231,400 with a further £45,123 in pension contributions last year. But while many parents and teachers have expressed their shock that Mr Elms is earning more than David Cameron, whose Prime Ministerial salary is £142,500, other parents interviewed by the BBC have defended Mr Elms, claiming that he “deserves every penny”. When Elms took over the school in 2001, it was earmarked for closure. But under his leadership it has earned a rating of outstanding from Ofsted.

Figures from the GMB union revealed that Mr Elms, who runs a school of 400 pupils, was paid a basic salary of £82,714 last year. But he also received in the same year more than £100,000 – £51,957 of which was back-dated pay for 2008/09 – for work on the City Challenge programme introduced by Labour to tackle underachievement in disadvantaged areas. He was also paid £10,000 in overtime for 2009-10, and a further £9,317 for overtime in 2008/09.

Another headteacher revealed as earning over £200,000 was Jacqui Vallin, Head of Southfields Community College in Wandsworth, which has expressed an interest in academy status. She recently received a pay rise of £20,594 to give her a total remuneration package of £226,381. In total, the GMB found that 11 headteachers in London earned more than £150,000. And they say that they are in contact with Barking and Dagenham Council for an explanation as to why they've not yet named the three teachers earning over £150,000 as the new rules require.

Meanwhile, Education Secretary Michael Gove has made his feelings clear on the matter. A statement from the Department for Education pointed out that, on 5 July, Mr Gove had written to the School Teachers' Review Body saying that he wanted no headteacher to earn more than the Prime Minister, following the STRB's recommendations from last year.

Comment

NUT General Secretary Christine Blower said: “While the importance of the head teacher's job cannot be underestimated, it must be remembered that teaching is a collaborative profession and it is not just one person who delivers a good education for pupils. Teachers and support staff work ludicrous numbers of unpaid hours and do not see this reflected in their pay.”

GMB Public Services Officer Ted Purcell said: “It is outrageous that a Head Teacher in a local community school should earn more money than the Prime Minister. A pay rise of over £20,000 for one head in Wandsworth is a downright disgrace and a slap in the face for GMB members now facing a pay freeze. There is a complete lack of accountability when schools are opted out of local authority control.”

ATL General Secretary Dr Mary Bousted said that headteachers had an incredibly difficult job and their pay should reflect the size of their role. However, she added: “When a headteacher is doing a ‘second job’, who is actually running their school? Any reward for the second job should go back to their school as recompense for the loss of their services, in order to fund books, equipment for pupils, and salaries for classroom based staff.”

Cancelling school building scheme ‘will cost billions’

The Education Secretary has come under heavy fire after it was revealed that the cancellation of the Building Schools for the Future scheme could cost local authorities £160 million in paperwork and legal preparation. Under Labour’s scheme, LAs were required to carry out detailed planning projects before programmes were formally approved. And a snapshot survey carried out by the LGA found that more than £161,448,000 had been spent across 67 authorities on these projects, most of which have now been cancelled. But these losses are only one of a number across the scheme. Research from TechMarketView found that scrapping the scheme could cost ICT suppliers more than £3.5 billion. In many cases suppliers were set to lose revenue from contracts that were signed several years ago. Others had successfully delivered ICT to a number of schools in the region but now faced having the contract curtailed with immediate effect. It is also believed that thousands of jobs will be lost in the construction industry.

Give *all* schools academy freedoms, says ADCS ex-President

The former President of the Association of Directors of Children’s Services has said that all schools should be given academy-style freedoms, to prevent the creation of a two-tier education system. Responding to assurances from Education Secretary Michael Gove that local authorities would be given a strategic role in overseeing all schools, Kim Bromley-Derry, said that schools and local authorities needed greater clarity on the Government’s plans. He said: “We would hope to know where the Government thinks this journey will end sooner rather than later. Why can’t the freedoms and flexibilities apply to all schools? I am relatively relaxed about local authorities becoming advocates and champions for children and families and having a more regulatory role. But not if all those other mechanisms are dismantled, because then actually we have no levers.”

His views echoed those of his successor, Marion Davis of Warwickshire, who announced plans along these lines to put to government during last week’s ADCS conference in Manchester, as reported in last week’s issue of *Education*.

Business Minister hints at ‘graduate tax’ to fund HE

The Liberal Democrat Secretary of State for Business has made it clear that those leaving university will in future have to pay a ‘graduate tax’, in a speech to the London South Bank University. In his first key speech on higher education, Vince Cable said that he had asked Lord Browne to investigate a system whereby students would pay for their studies through the tax system, rather than through subsidised loans. “We currently have what is misleadingly called a system of ‘tuition fees’,” he said. “Many people believe, wrongly that when students arrive at university they or their parents are required to get out their chequebooks, or wallets, and pay more than £3,000 for a year’s tuition. The idea that students are repelled from higher education by fees owes much to this erroneous belief.” He said most students paid fees by taking out a student loan, then paying that back when earning a reasonable salary. “In this sense, we already have a form of graduate tax,” he said.

Empty shops ‘are cost effective way to provide schools’

Building Consultancy EC Harris has said that empty shops could be converted into schools within five months. The firm said that they were already in discussion with parents’ groups about providing premises for free schools and it estimated that it would cost about £13 million to £17 million to create a school using an existing shell. It said that using empty retail space will be an affordable and rapid way of providing extra school space, saving a third on setting up a new building for a school. Simon Lucas, the firm’s head of education, said: “The discussion around free schools has highlighted the possibility that former shops and offices could be converted into schools.”

LITERACY

Today

The latest issue published this week!

Dr **Mike Milanovic**, Chief Executive of Cambridge ESOL, writes about the changing role of the English language.

Pat Farrington argues that more emphasis needs to be placed on meaning when teaching children how to break compound words into their constituent parts.

Dr **Andrew Shenton** looks at measurable outcomes versus the quality of experience when evaluating the school library.

Dr **Christina Clark**, Head of Research at the National Literacy Trust, reports on the findings of a national survey exploring the types of resources young people have at home that support literacy and how home resources relate to reading enjoyment, attitudes and behaviour.

Literacy Today is published by the Education Publishing Company Ltd. See below for contact details.

Cancer charity wants free sunscreen for primary kids

The Welsh cancer charity Tenovus and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health have launched a campaign to persuade the Welsh Assembly Government to provide free sunscreen for all children under the age of 11 in the country. Campaigners have launched a petition, arguing that funding sunscreen for around 250,000 under-11s would be considerably cheaper than the estimated £14 million per year that is spent treating the most serious forms of skin cancer. Julie Barratt, director of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health in Wales, said: "This is not a cosmetic measure – it has the potential to be a lifesaver. We appreciate there are difficult financial choices to be made and that there are competing priorities for the health budget. The evidence, however, clearly demonstrates that money spent now in providing free sunscreen to under 11s will be money saved later in treating skin cancer." The number of cases of malignant melanoma in Wales doubled in the decade between 1996 and 2006.

Scottish Executive ‘failing on two-hour school PE pledge’

The Scottish Labour Party has uncovered evidence that the Scottish Parliament’s pledge that all schoolchildren receive two hours of physical education a week is not being met. Figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that only 35 per cent of primary schools and 23 per cent of secondaries have reached the target since the Scottish National Party came to power in 2007. Authorities such as Aberdeenshire, Fife and North Lanarkshire do not offer two hours of PE in secondary schools, while others such as East Renfrewshire, Dundee and the Western Isles are hitting the targets. Labour sport spokesman Bill Butler said: “The SNP promised parents that their children would be guaranteed two hours PE each week with a specialist PE teacher and they have, yet again, failed to deliver.” But Education Secretary Michael Russell said that the Scottish Government, together with Cosla and local authorities, was “committed” to young people throughout Scotland receiving two hours of quality PE every week.

Native speakers ‘lack grammar skills in mother tongue’

Researchers from Northumbria University have suggested that many native English speakers have trouble making sense of even basic grammar. They showed 50 adults a series of pictures, with captions such as the “the soldier was hit by the sailor”, and found that many of the adults had trouble identifying the meaning of passive sentences. The results, they say, debunk the idea that native speakers have a core ability to understand the simple grammar of their language. The researchers say that one reason for this is that less-educated native English speakers have less experience of grammar. Passive sentences occur more frequently in formal written texts, which higher educated speakers have more experience using. Researcher Ewa Dabrowska said: “These findings could have a number of implications. If a significant proportion of the population does not understand passive sentences, then notices and other forms of written information may have to be rewritten and literacy strategies changed.”

ASCL wants intelligent accountability in further education

The Association of School and College Leaders has called on the Government to overhaul a range of accountability measures for schools and colleges, in a new paper on intelligent accountability. The policy document recommends changes to inspection, use of data and school improvement partners. In particular, the report argues in favour of intelligent accountability for colleges. It points out that, while in 2004 the DfES adopted a series of measures emphasising “each school’s responsibility to manage its own improvement” and “designed to reduce bureaucracy and streamline working arrangements”, there has been no comparable development in the college sector. ASCL General Secretary Dr John Dunford said: “Schools and colleges are rightly accountable for how they spend public money and for the quality of education young people receive. However, the current accountability mechanisms are poor and often create the wrong incentives, which inevitably impact on how and where resources are focused.”

Many parents ‘unrealistic’ about their child’s student debt

The Association of Investment Companies has found that 82 per cent of parents believe that the recession is making it harder to fund their children through university, up from 73% in 2009. Its annual survey into attitudes towards student debt also found that students were proving more realistic than their parents when it came to paying off their university debt, with 34% of students predicting they would graduate with over £20,000 of debt compared to 19% of parents. The AIC said that a “worrying” 24% of parents believed their children would graduate with less than £10,000 in debt compared to 19% of students. A concerning 55% of students were worried that they would not be able to find a job on graduation, due to the effects of the recession. And some 32% of students said that they would look for a higher paid job over their career vocation to help pay off their student debt.

Role of children's commissioner to be reviewed

The Department for Education has announced that the role of Children's Commissioner for England is to be reviewed. Dr John Dunford, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, will carry out the review of the role, functions and value for money of the Children's Commissioner post, which has been held since last October by Dr Maggie Atkinson. Former Education Secretary Ed Balls had been criticised for appointing Dr Atkinson, a strong supporter of his, after the Education Select Committee declined to support the appointment. However, at the time the publicity generated by the row had the unintended effect of increasing support for the appointment from within the children's services sector. There were suspicions that Dr Atkinson's job would be in jeopardy if Labour lost the election, but Dr Dunford said that he would review the role with an open mind, talking to young people about the best way to represent them.

Ofsted chairman explains importance of 'useless' teachers

The outgoing Chairman of Ofsted has suggested that every school needs a "useless teacher". Zenna Atkins was quoted in the *Sunday Times* as saying: "I'd like to keep the number low, but if every primary school has one pretty naff teacher, this helps kids realise that even if you know the quality of authority is not good, you have to learn how to play it." In an interview on the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme, Ms Atkins added: "I think it is inevitable that every school will at some point will have a useless teacher. If you look at any population of a workforce, there are people who are under-performing and that's often a significant percentage – up to 10% of people under-performing." However, NASUWT General Secretary Chris Keates responded to the comments by saying: "Why is it that everyone thinks that teachers are fair game for kicking around and denigrating? On the basis of Ms Atkins' comments there must, therefore, be 10% of Ofsted inspectors who are useless. Let's have a public debate about that."

Government halts introduction of new research framework

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has announced a review of the impact part of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), currently being piloted by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), is a new system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. Speaking to the Royal Institution, Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts said that the implementation of the new framework would be delayed by one year "so that HEFCE and its devolved counterparts can review whether there is a way of assessing impact that is methodologically sound and acceptable to the academic community". Mr Willetts said: "The surprising paths which serendipity takes us down is a major reason why we need to think harder about impact. There is no perfect way to assess impact, even looking backwards at what has happened. I appreciate why scientists are wary, which is why I'm announcing today a one-year delay to the implementation of the Framework."

Events and conference round-up

Aspect Annual Conference – 16 and 17 July 2010, Leeds

The Association of Professionals in Education and Children's Trusts is holding its annual conference.

Email: info@aspect.org.uk

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Course for Primary Children

July 26th – 28th 2010, Venue: University of Greenwich, London

This course is part of the International Primary Curriculum Summer School but is relevant for schools not implementing the IPC as well as those that are. It is designed to provide specific support to both Beginning

and Developing-level practitioners working with EAL learners. It will be a combination of practical, ‘hands on’ ideas and principles to help you work with these young learners and will provide opportunities to explore and discuss the challenges of engaging EAL learners effectively. For more information go to www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com or contact Laura Phillips at laura@greatlearning.com Tel: (0)20 7531 9696

**Special Education Needs (SEN) Course for Primary Children
July 26th - 28th 2010, Venue: University of Greenwich, London**

This course is part of the International Primary Curriculum Summer School but is relevant for schools not implementing the IPC as well as those that are. The course includes developing an understanding of behaviours and barriers to learning, an overview of SEN and approaches in support and intervention, ideas for involving and encouraging parents in supporting their child, and provides opportunities for networking and sharing of best practice with other teachers and SEN leaders for learning. For more information go to www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com or contact Laura Phillips at laura@greatlearning.com Tel: (0)20 7531 9696

Learning in schools – A competency curriculum that delivers and assesses the PLTS (Personal Learning and Thinking skills) – 22 September 2010

Venue: Campaign for Learning, 19 Buckingham Street, London, WC2N 6EF

Learning in schools – Learning for the 21st Century – 12 October 2010

Venue: To be confirmed

Learning in schools – Raising the bar – how to achieve ‘outstanding’ teaching and learning in your school – 10 November 2010

Venue: Campaign for Learning, 19 Buckingham Street, London, WC2N 6EF

Learning in schools - Raising the bar – how to achieve ‘outstanding’ teaching and learning in your school – 8 December 2010

Venue: Campaign for Learning, 19 Buckingham Street, London, WC2N 6EF

For more information and to book a place on a Campaign for Learning event please visit

www.campaignforlearning.org.uk or contact Katie Bloom Tel: 020 7766 0010

Email: kbloom@cfllearning.org.uk

Document round-up

The Association of School and College Leaders published *Policy Paper 68: Intelligent Accountability in Practice* on 16 July 2010. This report argues in favour of intelligent accountability for colleges. It points out that, while in 2004 the DfES adopted a series of measures under the banner of the New Relationship with Schools, emphasising “each school’s responsibility to manage its own improvement” and “designed to reduce bureaucracy and streamline working arrangements”, there has been no comparable development in the college sector. £4. Email: info@ascl.org.uk

The Family and Parenting Institute published *The UK Family Friendly report card 2010* on 11 July 2010. This report warns that the high cost of raising a child could push many households into poverty. www.familyandparenting.org/Filestore//Documents/Our_work/Policy/ReportCard.pdf

Ofsted published *Twelve Outstanding Providers of Work-based Learning* on 14 July 2010. The report showcases twelve outstanding work-based learning providers that excel at providing apprenticeships, NVQs and other vocational qualifications for young people and adults. Ref: HMI 100112.

www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Wales Audit Office published *Capital Investment in Schools* on 14 July 2010. This report claims that many school buildings in Wales are still in a poor state following “weaknesses” in the management of the investment programme.

www.wao.gov.uk/assets/englishdocuments/Capital_investment_in_schools_eng.pdf

Research round-up

Three research journals came into our office this week. *Gender and Education* (Routledge, Vol.22 No.4) contains the article ‘Attitudes of parents of young men towards the inclusion of sexual orientation and homophobia on the Irish post-primary curriculum’, by Orla McCormack and Jim Gleeson of the University of Limerick. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* (Routledge, Vol.62 No.2) contains an article on tutors, discourse and pedagogy in work-based learning for young people, by Ron Thompson of the University of Huddersfield. The article presents research findings on practitioners working with young people on Entry to Employment programmes in the north of England. *Research in Post-compulsory Education* (Routledge, Vol.15 No.2) contains the article ‘A whisper of an academic identity: An HE in FE perspective’ by Denis Feather of the University of Huddersfield. The article considers conceptions of the term ‘academic identity’ amongst lecturers delivering higher education business programmes.

Media Watch

On Sunday, television producer and screenwriter Phil Redmond wrote an article in the *Guardian* on the findings from the 4Children Knowsley Youth Commission’s report *Working towards Unlocking the Potential of Young People*. He said that, despite the fact that the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley, where Mr Redmond grew up, was officially classed as the worst council ward in the UK, young people in the area were brimful of hope and aspiration, “but let down by neglectful national politicians”. He wrote: “Knowsley kids are getting a rough deal, really, yet they remain optimistic, enthusiastic, aspirational and, incredibly, the happiest kids in the UK. That is the main finding of the report.”

Mr Redmond said that, at the age of 12, the educational attainment of young people in Knowsley sat alongside or above the national average. Yet by 18, educational attainment was below the national average, “meaning that all that individual ability, that potential community resource, is being lost”. He said that part of the problem was “the way we measure ‘success’, through rigid national educational benchmarks”. He said that the Government had to stop setting Knowsley’s young people up to fail by only judging them on a narrow set of indicators.

On Tuesday, the *Telegraph* reported that parents had been told to stop giving their children lunch boxes full of fizzy drinks and crisps, or to pay for them to have healthier school dinners instead. The School Food Trust said parents were hampering efforts to cut obesity in children by sending them to school with junk food that was not available in dinner halls. Rob Rees, chairman of the School Food Trust (SFT), said the best solution would be for parents to pay for their children to eat healthy hot meals in canteens rather than giving them lunch boxes. He also suggested chocolates, crisps and sugary drinks could be banned in packed lunches altogether by tightening the rules on what children can bring into school. Stricter measures on what can be included in school dinners were implemented by the SFT following a campaign by Jamie Oliver five years ago, but Mr Rees said many middle class parents remain unconvinced that packed lunches are less healthy than canteen meals.

Vince Cable’s announcement yesterday that he had asked Lord Browne to add consideration of a graduate tax to his review of university funding made the lead front page story in today’s *Guardian*. Dr Cable was interviewed about the plan on BBC2’s *Newsnight* last night. The increase in university applications made the front page in today’s *Daily Telegraph*.

Latest Issue Out Now

Children's Services Weekly

Edited by Chris Waterman, Children's Services Editor of *Education Journal*

Like its sister paper *Education*, the new *Children's Services Weekly* is a free weekly electronic newspaper. It reports on the work of local authority children's services departments, the DCSF, the youth service and health and criminal justice issues that involve young people. To receive your free copy by email every week just email us at csw@educationpublishing.com

Education on holiday

With the academic year now coming to an end, *Education* is also going on holiday. This will be the last issue for a while, as we do not publish during August. *Education* will return in September. For all our readers, we hope you enjoy the summer break.

Education

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