

Speech: Nick Gibb welcomes teachers to international conference

It is a pleasure to be here in Lisbon at the ISTP 2018, a year on from the successful and fruitful ISTP 2017 in Edinburgh co-hosted by the United Kingdom and Scottish Governments.

Last year, we agreed to promote greater equity through commitments to ensure that:

- Every pupil has the opportunity to achieve their potential, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- We raise the status of the teaching profession; and
- Teaching is firmly grounded in high quality research.

Over the course of the last year, England has continued to make strides in these important areas.

In 2010, the government introduced the English Baccalaureate – known as the EBacc. This is a school performance measure rather than a qualification. It is designed to increase the number of pupils taking core academic GCSEs – English, maths, sciences, a language and either history or geography. These GCSEs provide pupils with the broad academic grounding up to the age of 16 that they need to be successful, whatever route they choose to pursue post-16.

Many countries represented here today will consider it axiomatic that pupils study these subjects to at least the age of 16. But in England in 2010, only 1 in 5 pupils were taking this combination of academic GCSEs. That figure is now almost 2 in 5. The government is ambitious for this figure to rise further – to 90% of year 10 pupils studying the EBacc by 2025.

Already, there are promising signs. This year, we saw the highest proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those who receive free school meals, pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language taking these core academic GCSEs.

Not only this, results show that the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers has shrunk at primary and secondary school. Since 2011, the attainment gap at age 11 has decreased by 10.5%. Whilst at 16, it has shrunk by 10% since 2011.

The government is raising standards for all pupils, but the tide is rising fastest for those who need it most.

Academies and free schools – which now make up over 70% of secondary schools and over 25% of primary schools – operate independently of local government.

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Dixons Trinity Academy – a free school based in Bradford – achieved extraordinary results with its first set of GCSEs, placing it in the 10 top schools in England for the progress achieved by its pupils. Strikingly, the progress score for disadvantaged pupils was higher than for that of their more affluent peers.

But the success of the free school and academy movement is not confined to individual schools. The growth of multi-academy trusts has seen excellence spread across schools. Multi-academy trusts are combinations of academies, from 2 or 3, to as many as 50 or 60 academies, all reporting to one group of independent trustees.

Made up of a combination of schools that have been taken out of local authority control because of that poor performance, which we call sponsored academies; and high performing schools that have voluntarily opted out of local authority control, which we call converter academies; and newly created academies, which we call free schools. These high performing multi-academy trusts demonstrate what it is possible to achieve when power is placed in the hands of high-performing, competitive trusts.

Irrespective of the history of the schools they run, these multi-academy trusts have generated excellent academic results for the pupils they serve, as they compete with other multi-academy trusts in terms of their reputation for academic rigour.

So, the clear advantage of taking schools away from local authority control, is that for the first time, schools are now accountable to their trustees rather than to bureaucracies and there is genuine competition between groups of schools which forces them to respond to the concerns of parents for higher standards of behaviour and stronger academic results.

Thanks to a forensic approach to curriculum design and the implementation of evidence-based approaches to managing poor behaviour, the Inspiration Trust and the Harris Federation – two of the best performing multi-academy trusts – have conclusively demonstrated that all pupils can achieve – whether they live in coastal Norfolk or inner-city London.

They demonstrate that neither the socio-economic context of pupils nor the historic reputation of a school need be a barrier to excellence. And – just as importantly – they provide a model for ensuring that all children succeed. As with Dixons Trinity, schools in these leading multi academy chains are characterised by knowledge-rich curricula, high behavioural expectations and evidence-based teacher-led instruction.

As well as providing the freedom and autonomy to leading free schools and multi-academy trusts, the government is determined to support and empower

teachers to raise standards in their schools. The recently closed consultation on how to improve career support and progression for teachers was designed in tandem with the profession. We will respond to the proposals outlined in that consultation – including how we can take forward plans for an Early Career Content Framework – later in the spring. And we will continue to work closely with teachers and teacher representatives on these proposals.

Another key strand of the government's work to support and empower teachers is the government's priority of reducing teacher workload. Teachers should be freed from spending hours on marking and entering progress-data, particularly when evidence suggests these do not improve pupil outcomes.

And headteachers need the security of knowing that their autonomy won't be compromised by rogue school inspectors. That is why the government – in tandem with Ofsted, the schools inspectorate – has been clear on what inspectors will, and will not, ask when they visit schools.

We are also committed to clarifying the roles of different actors within the system, including what we call Regional Schools Commissioners, the 8 regional offices of the Department for Education. In order to provide teachers and headteachers with the opportunity to innovate and raise standards, they need to know that the accountability system within which they work is fair, transparent and – when needs be – supportive rather than punitive.

The government has played an active role in raising standards in schools and in empowering and supporting teachers. But, it is by standing back and promoting teacher voices, that the government has helped to make the most progress in promoting evidence-based teaching.

There is still a long way to go in empowering all teachers with the knowledge they need. But the success of ResearchED – a series of teacher-led research conferences founded by the teacher Tom Bennett now spanning 4 continents – shows teachers' appetite for research. Tom Bennett [wrote recently](#) about the movement of teachers who are dedicating their Saturday's to discussing and sharing research with one another. Writing powerfully and metaphorically he penned the following:

My ambition is that we start to drive this voluntary professional development, which then cascades back into schools and starts conversations that starts sparks in classrooms that catch fire and burn down dogma. That initial teacher training makes evidence its foundation (where it does not do so already), platforming the best of what we know rather than perpetuating the best of what we prefer. For new teachers to be given skills to discern good evidence from bad. For that to bleed eventually into leadership and from there into the structures that govern us.

But time and again, teachers run up against entrenched views held by those in positions of authority. For example, late last year, an academic from Durham University called the government's promotion of systematic synthetic phonics

[‘seriously flawed’](#); flying in the face of decades of evidence from around the world that phonics is the most effective method for teaching children to read. He went on to claim that drawing on scientific evidence to inform policy making in science “can be especially dangerous”.

Thankfully, the results from the PIRLS international reading tests came out within a month of these comments. This assessment of 9 and 10 year olds’ reading comprehension showed that England had risen from joint 10th place in 2011 to joint 8th place in 2016, thanks to a statistically significant rise in our average score. And low-attaining pupils had gained most showing again that the government is raising standards for all, but the tide is rising quickest for those who need it most.

These results were a vindication of the government’s evidence-based insistence on the use of systematic synthetic phonics in teaching children to read.

Too often in education, academics use their positions of authority to ignore the evidence and promote their own beliefs. For too long, education has suffered from putting belief over evidence.

As policy makers, if we are to empower teachers to pursue evidence-based approaches, we must confront the evidence as we find it, not as we would wish it to be.

So, when we come to discuss so-called ‘pedagogies of the future’, I hope that we will treat unfounded claims sceptically. Instead, we should discuss the data from PISA 2015, which showed that in all but three countries, higher levels of teacher-directed instruction led to significantly higher science results. And we should interrogate the data showing that in the majority of countries, pupils reporting higher levels of enquiry-based instruction achieved significantly worse results.

As we would expect of teachers, data and evidence should be the starting point for our conversation, not something to fit with our pre-existing conceptions.

But we must not ignore these conceptions. These too must be interrogated and the nuance explored. The caricature of teacher-led instruction as turgid and dull must be dispelled. Rosenshine’s [Principles of Instruction](#) make clear that teacher-led instruction should be interactive. These evidence-based principles suggest that teachers, amongst other things:

- ask a large number of questions and check pupil responses; and
- provide models and worked examples.

And the evidence from PISA 2015 supports these findings. According to the data, the most successful science classrooms were those where teachers explained scientific ideas, discussed pupil responses to questions and clearly demonstrated an idea.

Rosenshine’s principles, which draw heavily on cognitive science, are backed up by the PISA 2015 data.

Reflecting on the relationship between researchers and teachers in the conclusion to his 2002 essay [Classroom Research and Cargo Cults](#), E. D. Hirsch – the educationalist who has most influenced my thinking – stressed the need for this relationship to evolve.

Drawing on the comments of a colleague, he laid out his vision for cognitive science research and teaching practice to mirror the relationship between biochemistry and medical science.

In England, it is clear that schools are beginning to take this ambition to heart. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), whose General Secretary Carl Ward is here today, and PTE, Parents and Teachers for Excellence, a pressure group calling for more subject knowledge in the curriculum – and whose CEO Mark Lehain is also here – together they organised a pamphlet to support teachers to adopt a knowledge-rich curriculum.

In this pamphlet, titled [The Question of Knowledge](#), Luke Sparkes – headteacher of Dixons Trinity Academy – explained how that school uses cognitive science to inform their curriculum planning:

A knowledge-based curriculum is about harnessing the power of cognitive science, identifying each marginal gain and acting upon it; having the humility to keep refining schemes of work, long term plans and generating better assessments.

Examples such as this show that Tom Bennett is right; teachers demanding better evidence is slowly changing education.

Thank you.

[News story: Annual Conference: Hold the date – 25th June 2018](#)

The GCA will present her annual report and new work programme at the 2018 conference at Church House in Westminster. YouGov will also announce the results of the 2018 survey and the audience will hear from a keynote speaker and senior representatives of the regulated retailers.

After the conference ends, the GCA and her team will be available to meet with suppliers and others to discuss issues in confidence.

Details of the programme are available here [2018 GCA Conference programme](#) (MS Word Document, 46.7KB)

You can register your attendance at the conference [here](#)

Press release: Blackpool, Bradford and Lake District to benefit from £15 million Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund

Three major cultural projects across the North of England will receive a share of the £15 million Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund, Arts, Heritage and Tourism Minister Michael Ellis announced today.

The fund, which was created to build a lasting regional legacy from the Great Exhibition of the North, will support diverse projects in Blackpool, Bradford and the Lake District.

A total of £4 million will help transform the vacant former Bradford Odeon cinema into a 4,000 capacity live music, entertainment and events venue.

Nearly £3.3 million will enhance the visitor experience at cultural attractions across the Lake District, the UK's newest World Heritage Site.

A further £4 million will be used to create a museum in Blackpool that will celebrate the town's history as the UK's first mass seaside holiday resort.

Michael Ellis, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, said:

"These exciting projects will provide a true cultural legacy for people across the North that increases tourism, boosts local economies and creates jobs for the future. They reflect the diversity and unique identity of Blackpool, Bradford and the Lake District and will enable them to realise their exciting cultural ambitions."

Exchequer Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

"The UK has the most vibrant cultural scene and creative industry in the world today, but we want to ensure that reaches all parts of the country and that every young person has access to cultural experiences and opportunities. That's why we are investing these resources to ensure there is a lasting legacy for the upcoming Great Exhibition of the North, driving the region's economic and cultural success."

Northern Powerhouse Minister, Jake Berry, said:

"These multi-million pound cultural investments in Blackpool, Bradford and the Lake District represent a major economic and cultural boost for the Northern Powerhouse. From converting a vacant cinema into a state-of-the-art venue to improving access to the UK's newest World Heritage site, these

investments will have a transformative effect, benefitting local communities by creating new jobs while increasing tourism from across the UK and further afield.”

Eleven towns and cities from across the North of England bid for a share of the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund, which encourages sustainable cultural and creative regeneration in the Northern Powerhouse and will benefit areas with historically low levels of cultural and creative investment.

As well as the three capital projects, a new fund providing access to finance for the cultural sector and creative industries in the North of England will be created.

Bradford Odeon – The 1930s twin domed cinema has been vacant since 2000. The redevelopment will be one of the biggest of its type in the country outside of London and will bring Bradford back on the national touring circuit. The venue, due to be run by NEC Group International, will aim to put on around 225 events to more than 270,000 people every year, creating 50 jobs in the city. The project is being led by a not-for-profit social enterprise, Bradford Live, assisted by Bradford Council.

Blackpool museum – Due to open in 2020, the museum will display artefacts, music and performances from within Blackpool and partners including the V&A, EMI Group Archive Trust and the British Music Hall Society. The museum – the biggest new museum development in the North West – is expected to attract almost 300,000 visitors a year and will be developed on the world-famous Golden Mile. It will aim to engage younger audiences in the history of Blackpool and further strengthen the town’s tourism offer.

Lake District – £3.29 million will be invested in a project to strengthen the visitor experience at Windermere Jetty, Dove Cottage, the Wordsworth Museum and Abbot Hall Art Gallery and Museum. The money will be used to enhance the visitor experience at these attractions, increase accessibility and improve exhibition spaces. The regeneration project aims to attract nearly 150,000 additional visitors, create or maintain 150 permanent jobs and boost cultural tourism to the newly designated World Heritage Site.

The projects will build on the impact of the Great Exhibition of the North, which launches in Newcastle-Gateshead on June 22. The event is set to be the biggest in England this year and will showcase the best of Northern art, culture and innovation.

Notes to editors: The bids were coordinated by Local Enterprise Partnerships in Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Humber, Lancashire, Leeds City Region, Liverpool City Region, North East, Sheffield City Region, Tees Valley, and York, North Yorkshire and East Riding.

For further information contact Rebecca Evans on 020 7211 2210.

News story: Innovate UK: first Council announced

The Innovate UK stand at Innovate 2017 – future, growth, global.

Innovate UK has announced the members of its first Council, who will advise and make decisions on Innovate UK's operations as it becomes part of [UK Research and Innovation](#).

With a specific focus on innovation, they will:

- provide leadership in their field of activity, including prioritising budgets within their delegated remits and developing delivery plans
- ensure a pipeline of skilled specialists and other roles that are essential to the sustainability of the UK's research and innovation capacity
- engage with the innovation and business community to develop ideas, raise awareness and share strategic outputs
- encourage and facilitate collaborative work across the 9 Councils to build strategic relationships

Range of expertise and experience

The members are:

- Sir Harpal Kumar, who will serve as Senior Independent Member through his role as UK Research and Innovation's Innovation Champion and work closely with the board
- Dr Arnab Basu MBE, Chief Executive, [Kromek Group plc](#)
- Baroness Brown of Cambridge DBE FREng FRS (Julia King)
- Professor Juliet Davenport OBE, Chief Executive, [Good Energy](#)
- Dr John Fingleton, Chief Executive, [Fingleton Associates](#)
- Priya Guha, Ecosystem General Manager, [RocketSpace UK](#)
- Dr Elaine Jones, Vice President, [Pfizer Ventures](#)
- Professor John Latham, Vice-Chancellor of [Coventry University](#)
- Sir William Sargent, Chief Executive, [Framestore](#)
- Stephen Welton, Chief Executive, [Business Growth Fund](#)

Innovate UK's funding is awarded to businesses of different sizes across a wide range of industries, and the Council's membership reflects that.

They have a range of expertise and experience in research and innovation across business, entrepreneurship, investment, technology development, economics and business impact evaluation, with different characteristics and professional backgrounds.

Champions of business-led innovation

Chief Executive of Innovate UK, Dr Ruth McKernan said:

As UK Research and Innovation begins its work, the Council of Innovate UK will have a vital role to play. They will champion the vital role that business-led innovation and the commercialisation of research play in driving economic growth and increasing productivity.

The important duties of the Council means that we need people who are up to the task. It's fantastic that the role has attracted people of such high calibre from a diverse range of backgrounds. We look forward to them taking on the task with enthusiasm and passion.

The Council replaces Innovate UK's governing board. Members will serve between one and 3 years.

[Press release: UK's 'first ever' successful prosecution for false company information](#)

Kevin Brewer, a businessman, incorporated John Vincent Cable Services Ltd in 2013, making the former Business Secretary Vince Cable MP a director and shareholder without his knowledge. The company was dissolved and taken off the company register after Companies House took action.

Brewer, 65, then formed another company in 2016, Cleverly Clogs Ltd, making Baroness Neville-Rolfe – the Minister with responsibility for Companies House – James Cleverly MP and an imaginary Israeli national, Ibrahim Aman, all directors and shareholders without their knowledge. Companies House dissolved the company and took it off the company register.

Brewer, from Ullenhall in Warwickshire, was ordered to pay over £12,000 after he pleaded guilty to filing false information on the UK's company register at a hearing in Redditch Magistrates' Court last Thursday 15 March.

This is thought to be the first time a company director has been successfully prosecuted for falsifying company information under laws which came into force in 2009.

A Companies House spokesperson said:

Deliberately filing false information on the register is a serious offence and people who have been found to have knowingly done this can face prosecution.

Business Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

This prosecution – the first of its kind in the UK – shows the Government will come down hard on people who knowingly break the law and file false information on the company register.

Companies House works hard to protect and continually upgrade the company register, identifying potentially criminal activities and working closely with law enforcement bodies to help bring those perpetrators to justice.

The company register is operated by Companies House and contains information about company addresses, accounts, and those who own and run companies. There are nearly 4 million companies on the UK's company register and the vast majority of these companies use the register lawfully.

- Brewer pleaded guilty to breaking section 1112 of the Companies Act 2006, which sets out the criminal offence of providing false information on the company register.
- Brewer was fined £1,602 and ordered to pay costs of £10,462.50 and a Victim Surcharge of £160.