

TES pulls out of FE - is schools news next?

The TES is to pull out of coverage of further education completely from this week. The TES, which has been reporting education news since 1910, when it was a page in *The Times* newspaper, became a stand alone publication in 1914. It was long considered the Bible of the education world. Its coverage of FE was outstanding when legendary journalists like Ian Nash worked for the paper as FE Editor more than a decade ago.

The news was greeted with disappointment right across the sector. David Hughes, Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges, in a letter to Jo Johnson, the new chairman of TES Global, expressed the sector's "shock and sadness" at the decision to dump coverage of further education and skills. He acknowledged that journalism was expensive and he had "seen the diversification of the TES offer grow in recent years. I wonder though, whether stepping away from editorial and news risks long term damage to the TES brand and whether that will impact on the attitude of college leaders and practitioners to TES commercial relationships, products and offerings."

The withdrawal from covering news has been a long time coming, and is a process that began over a decade ago. Numerous sources, including those working on the TES, have told *Education Journal* that withdrawal from news about schools is next. This could mean redundancy for a third of the journalists working on what has become a magazine rather than a newspaper. This is likely to happen between now and Christmas. Withdrawal from news coverage, which is expensive to produce, would fit in with the new owners view of their business as a global teacher resource company rather than a newspaper publisher.

The TES was sold by News International, the Rupert Murdoch vehicle that owned *The Times*, in 2005 and has been owned by a variety of venture capitalists ever since. While Murdoch was a newspaper man to his fingertips, and was supportive of the TES, the new owners were not newspaper people and were increasingly not interested in owning a British newspaper. TES Global, as it became, was most recently bought by the American private equity group Providence Equity Partners, in December 2018. They see the business as far more of a global data company than an English newspaper.

Education Journal will be increasing its coverage of further education and skills as a result of the move, while it will continue to cover news of schools.

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