

This item is a download of a page from the www.trevorbeeson.com website which was deleted shortly after I published my article [Lilac Sky Final Chapter](#). This article provides links back to the full history of the Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust and associated companies, placing a different perspective on the following, written by Trevor Beeson.

LILAC SKY FINAL CHAPTER

I founded Lilac Sky Schools in 2009, becoming a multi academy Trust in 2013. I was its Chair and CEO until March 2015.

In 2016 I became the focus of a range of press articles, including here in Schools Week. Headlines appeared suggesting that the Lilac Sky Schools Trust and I were guilty of:

".....spending public money on luxury booze....." And ".....alarming instances of financial impropriety....." as well as ".....taking advance payments for services not yet provided....."

I had previously been a successful Headteacher between 1996 and 2012 leading schools in London and Somerset. After these headlines I was virtually unemployable in my former role. Former colleagues and other readers, were left believing that I must have turned to a life of crime and that Lilac Sky was a front for the fraudulent drawing of public funds for private use. Close family and friends knew differently.

For the avoidance of doubt none of the above is true.

So what *was* going on?

Between 2013 and 2015 I was working hard alongside a large team of senior leaders, managers and Heads doing our best to help our schools flourish. By 2015 I had resigned the position of CEO, Chair and Trustee and later that year I was in hospital with pneumonia, recuperating from it for some 3 further months I was not properly back on my feet until the end of 2015.

I was therefore a bystander in 2016 when the Department for Education (DFE) & Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) began a routine audit of the Lilac Sky Trust's work. The ESFA or DFE never spoke to me, never sought my evidence, never met me, then or subsequently. During this time articles and gossip began to appear that suggested I had behaved improperly. This was an abuse of process allowing me to be implicated in supposed malpractice without being able to defend myself.

I do know however that the EFSA approached the independent auditors of the Lilac Sky Trust accounts over the period I was CEO and Chair (2013 -2015). I am in possession of a document from those auditors that states very clearly:

'We can confirm that there were no incidents of impropriety and all expenditure was properly incurred in the operation of the Lilac Sky Trust in the period 2013 to 2015 the period of time when Trevor Averre-Beeson was CEO and Chair of the Trust. As a result of our audit we can also vouch for Averre-Beeson's probity.'

So, to state matters clearly, an investigation in which I was not involved in or formally informed of, spoke to the Lilac Sky Trust independent auditors. It therefore had access

to evidence which cleared me of any misdemeanours or impropriety but appears to have chosen to ignore it.

I have raised this concern directly with the ESFA in correspondence over the last 6 months and as yet, to my real frustration, they have not been able to address this central issue with me at all.

I and several other colleagues in the Lilac Sky Trust have suffered personal and professional loss and trauma. Schools, pupils and communities had their lives disrupted needlessly. Younger professionals may fear to go into leadership for being treated in a similar way.

The 'investigation' report into the Lilac Sky Schools Trust has never been published nearly 3 years on.

Why did all this happen?

In 2004 I was enthusiastic about the Academy Programme as a means of injecting, capital, ideas and innovation into education in challenged areas. My view now is that the DFE created completely independent Academy Trusts that it had no formal control over and became terrified of financial scandals or any sniff of falling standards being seen as the Department's responsibility. Rather than admit any failings in its own support of, or supervision of schools it seeks to place the blame on "rogue" headteachers.

Why would the DFE leak reports of suspected financial misdemeanours to create a sense of wrong doing? The intention presumably is to create fear amongst Trusts as a mechanism of control. The outcome for individuals caught in the cross fire, such as myself, is disproportionate to any actual conduct. In short these episodes are often simply witch hunts. Ministers then appear in front of Select Committees and speak confidently about their "tough" stance. Former head teachers like me, are soft targets unlikely to fight back.

My vote is for 'no confidence' in a state system that treats its servants and consumers with such casual disregard. My previous experience of working with local authorities was of collaborative support and mutual respect. Once bitten twice shy, I feel that Academies should now be brought into local authority oversight to protect all stakeholders and to prevent other well intentioned leaders experiencing what I and a number of other colleagues have.

My hope is that there is a better future to come and soon.