Tony Stephens Education Support

http://tonystephens.org.uk

tonystephens856@gmail.com

07977804899

**334 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Sept 6-12 2025**

*Copyright, Tony Stephens*

***Website references are given where needed in all cases***

**http://tonystephens.org.uk**

**This term**

* Reforms on inspection, accountability, curriculum and SEND all due to be published this term:
* **Ofsted report cards,** this week See Update 134A
* **School accountability reforms**, this week Details in this Update
* **Schools white paper**, this term
* **SEND reforms**, this term
* **Curriculum review**, this term

**School accountability reform**

* **School accountability reform**. DfE has issued:
* **Support and intervention in schools. Statutory guidance on the responsibilities of local authorities and regional directors relating to schools and pupil referral units that require support or intervention**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-causing-concern--2>
* **The above follows the consultation outcome**, found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/school-accountability-reform>
* DfE has also issued “**School accountability reform: equality impact assessment**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-accountability-reform-equality-impact-assessment>
* DfE has issued “**Schools eligible for RISE intervention. Data on numbers and types of schools that are potentially eligible for improvement intervention.**” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-eligible-for-rise-intervention>

**Summary of the detail of the school accountability reform**

* Under the new Ofsted framework, schools can fall into two categories of concern – ‘special measures’ and ‘requires significant improvement’ (formerly ‘serious weaknesses’).
* Schools will be ‘special measures’ if they receive an ‘urgent improvement’ rating – the lowest grade possible – for leadership and at least one other area. A school would also be in ‘special measures’ if it got an ‘urgent improvement’ grade for leadership and safeguarding was ‘not met’.
* Government confirmed the “default” position will be for schools in special measures to face structural intervention (be it academisation or rebrokering if the school is an academy). But government said RISE teams should “assess the school’s overall situation, considering Ofsted gradings and the broader context, to develop a comprehensive improvement plan that sets the school on a positive trajectory”. And government acknowledged that “intervention can have an impact on staff workload and wellbeing and [it] will continue to work with the sector to mitigate this”. The Department still confirms that it will continue to convert the worst performing schools to academies, and expect that combined with RISE, there will be twice as many mandatory interventions on average than in the two years before the policy change.
* Schools will be ‘requires significant improvement’ if they get an ‘urgent improvement’ in any area other than leadership or a safeguarding ‘not met’. They will also fall into the category if they have an ‘urgent improvement’ for leadership only and are meeting safeguarding standards. Government confirmed it will also proceed with plans for schools ‘requiring significant improvement’ to “normally undergo structural intervention until September 2026, while RISE teams build capacity”. Targeted RISE support will then become “the default”, with structural intervention applied if schools have not achieved the ‘expected standard’ in all inspection areas after 18 months.
* The DfE is changing its definition of “stuck schools” to align with the new Ofsted framework. It initially identified around 400 stuck schools eligible for RISE support based on the definition of being graded as “requires improvement” at their most recent inspection, and below “good” at the inspection before this. However, under the new inspection system, stuck schools will be those receiving a “needs attention” rating for leadership and governance in successive inspections. The DfE said structural intervention, (this means either academisation or re-brokerages), would happen if, after two years, stuck schools have not been graded as “expected standard” in all areas. Almost 100,000 more children in stuck schools will be subject to the new school improvement teams this term
* RISE teams currently provide broader support across four areas: attainment, particularly in English and maths; inclusive mainstream practice; the Reception year; and attendance.
* Until now, Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) teams have worked with schools defined by the DfE as being “stuck”. DfE has now said that, from next September, the teams will also provide 18 months’ support to schools identified as requiring “significant improvement” in Ofsted’s new report-card inspections as above.
* The DfE has also said it will ask RISE advisers to help schools identified as having “low or concerning attainment”. The DfE said this term it will launch “informal engagement with some schools that have low or concerning attainment”. RISE advisers will meet with these schools to discuss their attainment and agree on actions, including how they will work with hubs, higher-performing schools and other support networks. The DfE will also launch a separate consultation later this term on further options for using the RISE service to address low attainment. It will seek views on which metrics should be used to target schools for support. This metric needs to “contextualise performance using prior attainment, while noting that there will be no secondary progress data in 2025-26”.
* The department says that, through RISE teams and structural interventions, it expects to intervene in twice as many schools as were covered in the two years before these policy changes. Made up of 65 advisers, selected as the best of the best in driving school standards, the teams are now due to reach more than 200,000 children in total,
* Across the spring, summer and autumn RISE cohorts, 396 academies and local-authority maintained schools have been identified for targeted RISE support. As of 31 July 2025, 377 schools remained eligible. From this term RISE teams will be nearly doubling their reach to the 377 schools.
* The DfE published data today showing that, across primary schools being targeted by RISE teams, 43 per cent of pupils met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2024, compared with a national average of 62 per cent. And the percentage of pupils persistently absent in secondary schools receiving support stands at 34.9 per cent, compared with the national rate of 25.6 per cent, it said. Suspension rate for pupils in schools receiving targeted RISE more than twice as high as in those that don’t
* Data obtained by Tes reveals **the organisations providing support in the first stage of RISE programme along with the “stuck” schools they have been matched with**. Multi-academy trusts are delivering the vast majority of school support. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/RISE-school-improvement-the-organisations-supporting-stuck-schools>
* DfE has issued “**Technical guidance on primary school accountability measures**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/primary-school-accountability>
* **School profiles**. The DfE confirmed it will go ahead with plans to develop online “school profiles to provide parents and the public with clear, reliable information” across a range of performance indicators. A pilot version will be tested this academic year, with “the aim for the service to be launched publicly in 2026-27”. They will feature the “most recent” performance data and “be closely integrated with Ofsted’s point-in-time report card[s]”. Further data will be provided to recognise “the breadth of what a school does across a range of criteria, including achievement and attendance”. Officials will investigate how information, “like provision for pupil wellbeing and a school’s enrichment offer”, will be included. They will also “explore ways” to demonstrate inclusivity within local communities. DfE added it considers it “important for there to be coverage of 16-18 institutions”, including FE colleges. It will undertake “further research in 2025-26 to explore how best to introduce similar profiles” for them, the response said.
* **The DfE has announced it will launch an online platform that will enable head teachers to benchmark their school’s performance against other, similar schools** – for example by size or deprivation levels. The tool will show Heads their school’s strengths and weaknesses across key metrics, including attainment, compared with their peers while also enabling collaboration to share best practice. This will enable “more data-driven self-improvement”. It will also “facilitate the sharing of best practice, collaboration, and connections with higher-performing schools” Testing begins this academic year and builds on the success of the government’s AI-powered attendance reports, which already helps heads identify where they’re falling behind and how to catch up.

**Latest reaction to Ofsted changes**

* **Far fewer teachers now say Ofsted’s move to ditch headline grades was ‘positive’** amid concern over the watchdog’s new inspection plan. In February this year, when Ofsted launched a consultation on its plans for report cards, three-quarters of teachers were supportive of removing single-word headline grades. But that has now plunged to just 36 per cent, a Teacher Tapp survey this week has found. The proportion of teachers who said they had “mixed feelings” over the move has also risen from 19 per cent to 44 per cent – suggesting the sector is not supportive of the new inspection plan.

**NAHT** found 91 per cent of 1,400 members surveyed in a snap poll opposed Ofsted’s new inspection approach. One-third said the new approach would have a negative impact on their wellbeing, with a further 58 per cent saying the effect would be very negative. A similar poll carried out by the **NEU** found 88 per cent of 1,577 members do not think the new regime will address the impact of inspections on staff’s mental health. 94 per cent - do not believe Ofsted inspectors will be able to reliably assess seven areas of school life through a single inspection. 91 per cent of respondents did not think schools have been given enough time to be ready.

**Professor Julia Waters**, the sister of headteacher Ruth Perry who took her own life after an inspection, told School Week: “Despite the coroner’s warning of a risk of future deaths, Ofsted and the government are once again prioritising ‘ease of message to parents’ over ‘teacher welfare’. This is reckless, dangerous and complacent.”

The common criticism is **that the inspection overhaul followed the suicide of a stressed headteacher, but the new system seems likely to create even more work and stress**

* **Ofsted is refusing to publish data showing how many people support its new report card inspection**. It received more than 6,500 responses to its consultation, 75 per cent of which were from education professionals. Twenty per cent were from parents and carers. However, the inspectorate only provided a narrative summary of the responses. Ofsted has been accused of leaning heavily on parents’ views to “force through” its “preferred” model of inspection. While withholding analysis of its consultation response, the inspectorate has published details of research it commissioned via YouGov, on parents’ reactions to report cards. The consultation report contains no quantitative data, or direct quotes from feedback. But the “what we heard from parents” section contains specific data, and seven quotes from parents, all positive. The NAHT, accused Ofsted of using “small-scale parental polling and focus groups” to “force through” its “preferred” model of inspection, rather than listening to sector concerns. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ofsted-relies-on-parents-views-as-it-forces-through-inspection-changes/> <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ofsted-refuses-to-publish-data-on-response-to-planned-reforms/>

**Early years and primary**

* DfE has issued “**Key stage 2 attainment (provisional): 2025. Provisional results for the 2025 national curriculum assessments at key stage 2**.” See https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/key-stage-2-attainment-provisional-2025
	+ In all of reading, writing and maths (combined), 62% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 61% in 2024.
	+ In Higher standard reading, writing and maths (combined) 8% of pupils, unchanged since 2023 and 2024
	+ In reading, 75% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 74% in 2024.
	+ In maths, 74% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 73% in 2024.
	+ In writing, 72% of pupils met the expected standard, an increase of 0.5 percentage points from 72% (rounded) in 2024.
	+ In grammar, punctuation and spelling, 73% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 72% in 2024.
	+ In science, 82% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 81% in 2024.
	+ Girls continue to outperform boys at the expected standard in all subjects except maths, where boys outperformed girls by 1 percentage point. The biggest attainment gap between girls and boys remains in writing teacher assessment at 12 percentage points.
	+ The disadvantage gap index has remained stable with a slight increase from 3.13 in 2024 to 3.14 in 2025.
		- In reading, writing and maths (combined), 47 per cent of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard in 2025
		- Just 4 per cent of disadvantaged pupils met the higher standard in reading, writing and maths
		- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in writing improved from 58 per cent in 2024 to 59 per cent in 2025
		- Reading attainment improved by one percentage point for both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, and attainment in maths also improved for both groups.
	+ In 2025, 24 per cent of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) provision met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined), up from 22 per cent in 2024. But only 9 per cent of those pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) met the standard - the same proportion as in 2024.
* For a **collection of previous statistics for key stage 2**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-key-stage-2>
* DfE has issued “**Early years foundation stage: exemplification materials**. To support teachers in making early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP) judgements.” See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-foundation-stage-exemplification-materials>
* DfE has issued “**Early years foundation stage profile handbook**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-handbook>
* DfE has updated “**Early years stronger practice hubs**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-stronger-practice-hubs>
* DfE has issued “**Choosing a phonics teaching programme**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/choosing-a-phonics-teaching-programme>

**Attendance**

* DfE has issued “**Statutory guidance for local authorities and schools on how they work together to identify and support children missing education (CME) to receive a suitable education**.” See [https://www.gov.uk/search/all?organisations[]=department-for-education&order=updated-newest&parent=department-for-education](https://www.gov.uk/search/all?organisations%5b%5d=department-for-education&order=updated-newest&parent=department-for-education)
* Primaries and secondaries should also take “proactive steps to address poor or irregular attendance to prevent children becoming CME”, the guidance states. It is “essential” for poor attendance to be referred to the relevant local authority at intervals agreed to by both.
* In cases where schools are concerned for a youngster’s welfare, they should “immediately consider whether a referral needs to be made to local authority children’s social care and, if appropriate, whether to call the police”.
* Schools “should” do “their own initial proactive work to locate a child at risk of becoming a CME”, before working with their council. Even when a case is referred to a local authority, they should “continue to play their role in conducting joint reasonable enquiries”.
* Schools should also “offer appropriate support to successfully integrate children … including having efficient decision-making processes for admissions in place to prevent delays”.
* Schools “must enter pupils’ names on the admission register on the first day” it and a “person with control of the pupil’s attendance have agreed” they will start lessons. If they fail to turn up on the agreed date, the school “should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child’s whereabouts”.
* Due to the importance of ensuring the records are “accurate and kept up to date”, leaders should “should regularly encourage parents … to inform them of any changes to their child’s personal details and education arrangements”.
* Where grounds are met for the deletion of pupils’ names from the admission register, as set out in the school attendance (pupil registration) (England) regulations 2024, this must be done “immediately”. Schools cannot do so retrospectively. If a child hasn’t returned within 10 school days of a leave of absence or has been away from class for 20 days unauthorised, joint enquiries between the school and council to locate them and understand their circumstances are required. When the youngster is found, both “parties must agree there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again” before their name is deleted.
* The correct removal of names from the register supports lawful exclusions, effective monitoring of pupil movements, and reduces the risk of off rolling, which puts children at further risk of missing education
* The DfE provides a “secure internet system”, called School to School, allowing leaders to transfer pupil files to the child’s next school if they move All LA-maintained schools are required to do this when a youngster goes elsewhere. The platform also contains “a searchable area, known colloquially as the lost pupil database”. Here, files can be uploaded for pupils who have left but their new school’s unknown or moved overseas. So, if a child arrives without information transferred by their last school, leaders are “strongly encouraged to contact their local authority who will be able to search the database”.
* If a council does not believe a suspected CME is receiving a suitable education, it must begin the school admission order (SAO) process. Governors from LA-maintained schools that officials are looking to name in an SAO must be consulted beforehand. This is usually done by email. If no agreement can be reached, the council must serve a written notice on the governing body and headteacher. If the school disagrees with being named in an order, it “has 15 days to seek a direction from the secretary of state”. If an authority names an academy in an SAO and the school refuses to admit the child, the council “can ask the secretary of state to direct the trust” to do so. If a direction isn’t made, the order will need to be varied.
* A new report from The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), in partnership with the Rigby Foundation, **found nearly half of parents think it is “reasonable” for a child to miss one in every ten days of school**. The think tank has called for the government to “radically expand the support for parents struggling with absence associated with complex needs, while tackling softening parenting attitudes about the importance of attendance”. The government should introduce a new mandatory attendance awareness course, similar to those for drivers caught speeding, at the beginning of a legal intervention process for unauthorised absence. The CSJ has found that absence is linked not only to poorer academic attainment, but also to crime, worklessness and lower earnings, with persistently absent pupils three times as likely as others to become young offenders within two years of leaving school, more than six times as likely to become persistently NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training), and £10,000 worse off by age 28. Educating parents on this impact should be a priority, according to the report. In addition, it suggests that non-attendance or refusal should result in the receipt of an increased fine of £200, or £100 if paid within 21 days (currently fines are £160, or £80 if paid within 21 days). See <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/newsroom/half-of-parents-think-persistent-absence-is-ok>
* **School absences “significantly contribute” to children’s mental ill health**, according to research which shows that the more times a child is absent from school, the greater the probability that they will experience mental ill health,” the authors, from Loughborough University and the ONS, concluded. work suggests that absence from school can have a detrimental effect on some young people’s mental health. It also found that young people with mental health issues had a higher level of absence from school. “But for students with mental ill health who received additional support at school, such as education, health and care plans, free school meals and Send support, the increase in absence was lessened. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/sep/09/school-absence-big-factor-child-mental-illness-england-ons-data>
* FFT Education DataLab has issued “**Is the start of term critical for tackling persistent absence?**” See <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2025/09/is-the-start-of-term-critical-for-tackling-persistent-absence/> Particularly in secondary schools, pupils who are absent in the first week of term are at higher risk of being severely absent for the whole year, particularly those with SEN. Or put another way, those with more complex needs are both more likely to be off in the first week of term and be severely absent. In any event, attendance at the start of the academic year is less of a problem than at other times of the year. More pupils are likely to take time off in the last week of term

**Reform Party conference**

* **From the Reform conference**:
	+ A Reform government would “root out” teachers who are “brainwashing” children. “When we get into power, we will root these teachers out and hold them to account.” “ There is a need to “stop schools from becoming indoctrination camps”.
	+ The nation’s education system is “broken” and dogged by a “wave of wokeism”.
	+ Reform refuses “to have our kid’s minds poisoned in schools and universities with a twisted interpretation of the history” of the UK
	+ It calls for “trades and services” to be taught in schools. There is a need to “bring a parity of esteem between vocational, technical, academic and trades” rather than “pushing everyone down the university route”.
	+ Reform’s 2024 manifesto pledged a “patriotic” curriculum in schools. This would mean lessons about an example of British or European imperialism or slavery “must be paired with the teaching of a non-European occurrence of the same to ensure balance”.
	+ It also pledged to ban transgender ideology in schools, and for the history and social science curriculum to be reviewed and audited regularly to ensure balance as “our children must be taught about their heritage”.
	+ Reform will double the number of pupil referral units.
	+ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (provision is being "hijacked by parents who are abusing the system”; some children were receiving Send provision "who don't need it"
	+ Parents are using home to school transport as "free taxi transport for their children".
	+ They want “every teacher to spend six months in a special school” during their training.
	+ The education spokesperson role is presently vacant

See also <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/reform-on-education-all-headlines-no-policy-lines/>

**DFE reshuffle**

* **DfE reshuffle**. Education secretary Bridget Phillipson kept her role, but schools minister Catherine McKinnell, children’s minister Janet Daby and early years minister Stephen Morgan were moved out. In their place come **Georgia Gould, Josh MacAlister and Olivia Bailey** – all elected to parliament for the first time last year. While Gould replaced McKinnell, government is yet to announce roles and portfolios for the newcomers. Baroness Smith remains as skills minister, but will now be split across two government departments. For details about each of the new ministers, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/reshuffle-15-interesting-facts-about-educations-new-ministers/>

**Science**

* **The Royal Society of Chemistry annual survey finds that science teaching staff are struggling to deliver practical lessons**. Insufficient time (58 per cent), challenging student behaviour (48 per cent), and the cost of consumables and chemicals (43 per cent) were reported as the biggest challenges to delivering practical science lessons. Some 29 per cent of survey respondents cited understaffing of technicians as a barrier to practical work.

**There has also been a significant increase in UK science technicians leaving the profession** due to high levels of stress and exhaustion. Retirement, low pay and a lack of progression opportunities are also common reasons for leaving. “Many of those [technicians] remaining are expected to be everything for everybody: acting as first-aiders, doing lunchtime duties, covering classes and organising lesson cover. Technicians are expected to take on roles that are other people’s because payment is not being made for those roles to be there See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/more-science-technicians-leaving-stress>

**ITT and teacher retention; teacher CPD**

* DfE has issued:
* **Eligible settings lists for national professional qualifications (NPQs) funding**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-for-national-professional-qualifications-eligible-settings>
* **Find out if you’re eligible for scholarship funding that will pay for your NPQ course fees**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-for-national-professional-qualifications-npqs>
* **Ofsted’s initial teacher education inspection framework** provides “greater clarity and consistency” than the original proposals, providers have said. The National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) has welcomed Ofsted’s inspection plans. They especially like the revised toolkit. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/teacher-training-providers-welcome-revised-ofsted-framework>
* **New data from the OECD confirms that we are facing a teacher retention crisis, with England having among the worst attrition rates among developed nations**. Almost 10 per cent of English teachers left the profession in the most recent year of analysis, over three times the rates recorded in France and Ireland. Only three countries in the sample recorded worse teacher leaver rates [Lithuania, Denmark and Estonia]. While attrition in other countries tended to be split evenly between retirees and teachers quitting for other reasons, over 90% of teachers leaving in the UK were voting with their feet and leaving before retirement, the highest rate in the sample. See <https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/education-at-a-glance-2025_1c0d9c79-en/full-report/how-severe-are-teacher-shortages-across-countries_781f4a97.html>
* **More pupils are signing up to study economics and business studies, but recruitment of specialist teachers in the subjects is worsening**. Ministers should introduce a teacher training bursary for economics and business studies to ease a “chronic” shortage of teachers at a time when the subjects are growing in popularity. Recruitment for would-be teachers hit just 15 per cent of the government’s target last academic year (2024-25). This compares with an average of 62 per cent across all secondary subjects. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/economics-and-business-teacher-numbers-just-dont-add-up/>

**Pupil Premium**

* **Low literacy levels, poor attendance, and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are the most frequently cited barriers for disadvantaged pupils**, according to an analysis of pupil premium statements. The research findings have been published today alongside **the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)’s updated Guide to the Pupil Premium, a digital resource designed to help schools maximise the impact of their use of this funding**. See <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/using-pupil-premium> Around 2.2 million pupils - or just under a quarter of primary and secondary pupils - in England are currently eligible for PP. For 2025-26, primary schools will receive £1,515 pupil premium funding for each pupil who is or has been eligible for free school meals in the past six years; secondary schools will receive £1,075 per pupil.

**The Children’s Plan**

* **The Children’s Plan, The Children’s Commissioner’s School Census September 2025** as been issued, <https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2025/09/cc-the-childrens-plan-the-childrens-commissioners-school-census.pdf> This cover many areas of education.

**On SEND** it says Education, health and care plans (EHCPs) should be restricted to pupils “whose needs sit across all three sectors”, i.e education, health and care, with other levels of plan created for those with one or two needs, a report from the children’s commissioner has said. But no child with an existing plan should lose their plan”, given “just how long and how hard those with existing plans have fought to obtain them” The report called for a new approach to SEND, with all support provided through a “children’s plan”. This should be supported by a “single national threshold” for assessment of needs, rather than allowing councils to set their own criteria.

The survey found on **other education areas**:

* The experiences and progress of children with SEND was a top concern for 53 per cent of primary schools and 40 per cent of secondary school
* For implementing EHCPs, the “main barrier in both primary (69 per cent) and secondary schools (72 per cent) was funding not matching need, with a lack of specialist staffing cited as the second biggest barrier”.
* As well as being evidenced based, interventions set out in children’s plans “should not be at profit-making providers
* Children have a wide range of additional needs outside of the classroom, but schools don’t always know what they are
* Schools are worried about problems beyond the school gate. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was a top four concern for 70% of primary schools and 78% of secondary schools. More than half of primary and half of secondary schools view child safety online as a top four concern.
* School's responses to children’s challenges vary. Schools have different views of the support they should provide. Some want to be doing more
* Schools’ provision is often delivered through external partners but this raises cost and quality issues
* Leaders want more support staff
* There is much concern over attendance

**Other recommendations** include…

* A “clear statement of ambition for all children”, with concrete goals to reduce absence and meet every child’s needs. The new vision “should be backed by clear accountability with school and local level data for attendance, engagement, attainment, and progress being published”
* A “broader conception of need based on a new definition of ‘additional needs’”. This “should include a broader range of needs, including safety, pastoral, health and learning needs”. A new additional needs framework should detail “different levels and types of need and what is expected of schools, and wider services”
* Extra help for schools to deliver targeted and specialist support where needed, and deepen their role, impact and orientation in communities
* Delivering opportunity locally – Local Opportunity Mission Delivery Boards
* A new funding premium for additional needs and inclusion, giving schools with high levels additional funding. Create a “core offer from all schools”, with funding to access high quality pastoral support and key professionals and services
* Offer children who aren’t “school-ready” by the end of reception a children’s plan and an additional year in reception
* An “overarching framework” for alternative provision which outlines how every child will receive support. “No child should be excluded to home. There should be a day one right to alternative provision”

**PFI**

* **Vital construction work on schools involved in England’s biggest PFI deal could be left incomplete, despite a council pumping in £3.5 million of its own money to fill a funding shortfall**. Local authority chiefs in Stoke paid out the extra funding as they signed off on an extension for the work to be completed by a PFI company, just months before its contract was due to end. Whilst the council has committed to inject this significant amount of additional funding into the project to ensure that as much of the remaining work will be completed, there is no guarantee that all works will be completed within the £3.5 million. With 43 PFI deals across England set to end in the next seven years, experts say the **case underlines the need for councils to adequately prepare for expiry**. For details, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/councils-ill-prepared-for-end-of-pfi-deals/>

**School uniform**

* Almost every child in England spends about 195 days a year in uniform. But **the widespread use of uniforms has a hidden cost: most of them are made from polyester, the synthetic, petroleum-derived fibre that is one of the world’s most significant environmental pollutants**, leading some to question our reliance on it, and whether it is a suitable fabric in which to dress children. In common with other petroleum-derived plastics, polyester is not biodegradable. “Washing causes each item of clothing to shed tiny strands, or microfibres, which are carried down the drain and into water systems,” “Microplastics are particularly hard to remove from the environment and are easily ingested by organisms across the food chain.” Researchers have estimated that synthetic textiles are responsible for 35% of the microplastics in the planet’s oceans. Durong the debate on the Children’s Bill in the House of Lords, peers tabled amendments that would ban the use of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl Substances (Pfas) or “forever chemicals” and polyester in school uniforms, but look to be defeated by the government. There is a demand also that cotton is used fir school uniforms rather than polyester. See <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/sep/06/what-is-in-childrens-school-uniforms>

**School management**

* **Schools are facing compensation claims from distressed staff who have been told they face increased risk of identity theft after their personal details were “compromised” in a cyber-attack over the summer**. Investigations have been launched into whether criminals have seized the names and addresses, and phone, national insurance and passport numbers of staff. They follow a “malicious” attack on the software supplier of Single Central Record (SCR). The company says it manages more than 350,000 staff records at 1,500 schools. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/staff-want-compensation-after-summer-cyber-attack/>
* **Student demand to study Mandarin in UK schools outstrips supply by seven to one**, the British Council has warned. A report says that thousands of young people are missing out on Chinese language and cultural education because of a major gap between student interest and access. The report shows that while 37 per cent of UK students might be interested in taking Mandarin if it were available, only 5 per cent currently can. The opportunity to learn Mandarin is not equally distributed across students from all backgrounds. Even in comparison to other languages, the disparity in Mandarin provision between independent and state schools is particularly dramatic. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/secondary/demand-study-mandarin-outstrips-supply>
* For the latest **DfE Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfe-update-10-september-2025>
* **More than half of RAAC-affected schools and colleges are either fully free of the dangerous concrete or on the path to removal**, government has successfully removed all RAAC concrete from 52 schools with targeted grant funding. A further 71 schools with RAAC are in the process of being rebuilt under the School Rebuilding Programme. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-progress-fixing-crumbling-schools-and-hospitals>
* **If you took the 100 mainstream schools with the highest proportion of disadvantaged students and the lowest proportion of students with English as an additional language (EAL), only 7 have a positive Progress 8 (P8) score**. These 100 schools serve predominantly white, working-class communities where disadvantage stands at 41.1 per cent or above (the national average is 25.7) and EAL is at 9.2 per cent or below (the average is 21.4). If you extend the data to include 150 schools - this time with disadvantage at 39 per cent or above, and EAL at 10.8 per cent or below - a similar picture emerges. Of these 150 settings, just 11 have a positive P8. It seems P8 “doesn’t recognise that pupils from different backgrounds make different rates of progress”, and thus has flaws as a measure. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/secondary/progress-8-impossible-white-working-class>
* DfE has updated “**Subject content, aims and learning objectives for French, German and Spanish GCSEs from 2024**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-french-german-and-spanish-subject-content>
* DfE has once again updated its **Complete the school census** manual. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>
* **LocatED will move into the DfE by April 2026**. LocatED was established in 2017 to support the delivery of education settings across England including buying, developing, and managing sites for schools and colleges as well as strategic property advice to government and education bodies to help build a more efficient education estate. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/located-join-dfe-to-drive-school-building-improvements>
* For the **Education Support September Newsletter**, see <https://mailchi.mp/edsupport/your-october-newsletter-9372161?e=4c833362b8>
* **Pupils are behind more than half of so-called “insider” cyber attacks on schools**, often for fun or as part of dares, analysis by the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) has found. The ICO’s analysis of 215 data breaches caused by insider attacks in education settings between January 2022 and August 2024 found 57 per cent of incidents were caused by students. A further 30 per cent of incidents were caused by stolen login details. The vast majority of these incidents were caused by students (97 per cent). Of the 215 data breaches, the ICO found nearly a quarter (23 per cent) were caused by poor practices, like staff accessing or using data without a “legitimate need”, devices being left unattended or students being allowed to use staff devices. A further 20 per cent of incidents were caused by staff sending data to personal devices. See <https://ico-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/insider-threat-of-students-leading-to-increasing-number-of-cyber-attacks-in-schools>
* A management information system (MIS) outage at a major supplier has left schools unable to pay suppliers, run after-school clubs and respond to safeguarding concerns between September 4 and 9. Leaders say the problems with the **Bromcom system** have also left them without access to timetables and prevented them from completing everyday tasks within working hours – with one MAT boss calling the situation a “car crash”. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/mis-outage-leaves-schools-in-the-lurch/>
* **Ofqual has issued number of results** issued for GCSEs, AS and A levels, vocational and technical qualifications included in performance tables (applied generals, tech levels, technical awards and technical certificates), and the technical qualification (TQ) components of T Level qualifications. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-results-in-england-summer-2025>

**Health and welfare of children and young people**

* **Up to one in four vapes confiscated in secondary schools in England contains the synthetic drug “spice**”, according to a study. Vapes are often marked as containing THC - the active ingredient in cannabis - despite actually containing spice, a more dangerous and cheaper substance. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/1-in-4-vapes-confiscated-schools-contained-spice>
* **The unforeseen impact of chatbots on mental health should be viewed as a warning over the existential threat posed by super-intelligent artificial intelligence systems**. “These AIs, when they’re engaging with teenagers in a way that drives them to suicide – that is not a behaviour the creators wanted. That is not a behaviour the creators intended.” See <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/sep/08/chatbots-mental-health-warning-super-intelligent-ai-nate-soares>
* Ofsted has issued a collection “**Details of joint inspections (JTAIs) by Ofsted, Care Quality Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services and HM Inspectorate of Probation**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/joint-inspections-of-local-area-services>
* Ofsted has issued “**Guidance for joint targeted area inspections (JTAIs) of the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment.**” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-targeted-area-inspections-of-the-response-to-child-sexual-abuse-in-the-family-environment> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-targeted-area-inspections-to-focus-on-child-sexual-abuse-in-the-family-environment>
* **Girls who play after-school sport in the UK are 50% more likely to get top jobs later in life**, according to research, which reveals that the boost is equivalent to a university degree. Despite this benefit, girls are far less likely to play sport than boys, with 11- to 18-year-olds each missing out on 1.4 hours a week, or 280m hours annually, with 340,000 more girls excluded due to cost and lack of local access, according to the research. One in three girls surveyed for the report said boys had access to a wider range of sports. The research found that women who played extracurricular sport as children were much more likely to reach senior professional roles. It attributes this benefit to the resilience, confidence and adaptability that sport builds, with women who play sport almost a third more likely to handle pressure well and bounce back after hard times, and a fifth more likely to enjoy trying new things. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/sep/11/girls-who-play-after-school-sport-in-uk-50-more-likely-to-later-get-top-jobs-study-finds>
* **Councils have been told to honour the Armed Forces Covenant – pledging fair treatment for military families – amid “frequent” cases of service children left without a school place because of SEND failings**. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) wrote to local authorities earlier this year, it has emerged, to raise how children with complex needs were “frequently” unable to find a school after a service-related move. Military families sometimes must relocate every two to three years when the serving parent’s posting changes. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/now-the-armed-forces-flag-send-system-failures/>

**Education news for schools**

* DfE has issued **“Information on all academies, free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges (UTCs) open in England, and those in the process of opening.**” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-academies-and-academy-projects-in-development>
* Ofsted has issued “**Area SEND inspections: information about ongoing inspections**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspections-information-for-families>
* **Bridget Phillipson speeches**:
	+ At launch of children’s plan, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-speech-at-launch-of-the-childrens-plan>
	+ To TUC, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/bridget-phillipson-speech-to-tuc-conference-2025>
* For the latest **SedEd Best Practice Bulletin**, see <https://email.sec-ed.co.uk/q/12Jpfhcqths5zQf3Z76VLiXr/wv> This includes “**An A to Z guide for new teachers”**
* SecEd has given links to “**Your Guide to Running Parent Teacher Conferences in 2025**” See mail@email.sec-ed.co.uk
* For the latest **SSAT** newsletter, see hello@contact.ssatuk.co.uk
* For the **Education Endowment Foundation (EEF**) newsletter, see newsletters@eefoundation.org.uk

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
|  |

 |

**Post 16**

* DfE has issued:
* **Guidance to help higher education providers understand T Levels and support students applying to their university**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-level-resources-for-universities>
* **Details of mathematical and scientific content in T Levels to help higher education providers understand the concepts covered in different qualifications**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-content-in-t-levels-guidance-for-higher-education-providers>
* **Employer support fund for T Level industry placements**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employer-support-fund-for-t-level-industry-placements>
* DfE has issued “**16 to 19 Bursary Fund guidance**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-guidance>
* DfE has issued “**Complete the Care to Learn and 16 to 19 Bursary Fund for defined vulnerable groups funding claim**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-care-to-learn-and-16-to-19-bursary-fund-for-defined-vulnerable-groups-funding-claim>
* DfE has issued “**Qualifications accepted as meeting the minimum English and maths requirements for apprenticeships**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-and-maths-requirements-in-apprenticeship-standards-at-level-2-and-above>
* **UK jobs and skills will be the driving force behind making the country a defence industrial leader** under a new strategy to be launched next week.
* £182 million boost for defence talent pipeline, delivering on economic growth through the Plan for Change.
* In-demand defence technical skills to be boosted through five Defence Technical Excellence Colleges, offering new opportunities into defence jobs.
* Landmark Defence Industrial Strategy set to back British business and adopt innovation lessons from Ukraine.

For full details, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-skills-boost-at-the-heart-of-transformative-new-defence-industrial-strategy>

* DfE has issued “**List of the qualifications that attract the high value courses premium in the 16 to 19 funding formula**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualifications-attracting-high-value-courses-premium>

**Tony Stephens**