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**164 Academy and School News and Resources Update, April 16-22 2022**

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**Climate**

* The DfE has updated its **strategy for sustainability and climate change for the education and children’s services systems**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy>
  + The government confirms its plans to accelerate the rollout of **carbon literacy training** to support at least one **sustainability lead** in every locally maintained nursery, school, college and university. The training will support settings to develop climate action plans that will bring together and drive activity to improve climate education, put in place measures to protect them against the effects of climate change, and increase climate resilience through adaptation initiatives.
  + The Education Secretary will also pledge **greater support for teaching climate change** at all levels and by 2023 there will be new requirements for further education teachers to build sustainability into their teaching.
  + Young people will also be able to **bolster their environmental education** gained in existing subjects, including changes to landscapes and urbanisation in geography, and habitats and ecosystems in science.
  + The measures are expected to build on the government’s pledge for every **new school**, and delivered under the department’s school rebuilding programme, to be **cleaner, greener and net-zero in operation**. The rollout of ultra-low carbon education buildings will also be accelerated, and by 2025 at least four schools and one college will have been built via the Gen Zero Platform that the department demonstrated at COP26.
  + The strategy also details the development of additional measures first announced at COP26. This includes the **National Education Nature Park** that will help children and young people to get more involved in the natural world. It will help the increase of biodiversity in the grounds of their nursery, school, or college by them taking small steps, such as installing bird feeders and ‘bug hotels’. Teachers will be provided with free, high-quality climate education resources as part of the Nature Park hub.
  + Children and young people will also be able to undertake a new **Climate Award** in recognition for their work to improve their environment, with a prestigious national awards ceremony held every year. The Climate Leaders Award will help children and young people develop their skills and knowledge in biodiversity and sustainability and celebrate and recognise their work in developing their skills and knowledge.
  + During 2022 and 2023, the government will work with Energy Sparks to trial the delivery of **energy management systems in schools**, providing real-time information on energy use on a “user-friendly online portal”. The aim is to have all schools reporting their emissions via a standardised framework by 2024. The installation of smart meters will “improve the accuracy” of the data.
  + Working in partnership with the Standards and Testing Agency, the DfE has said it will develop a “**sustainable assessment model**”. Nadhim Zahawi has previously said he is “considering the potential” wider use of online exams.
  + This year, the government will introduce a **new annual climate literacy survey**. The survey will “benchmark progress in improving the climate knowledge of school leavers”.
  + The paper commits to new targets for schools between 2025 and 2035 as part of the “**Let’s Go Zero” campaign**. It pledges to work with government to support schools to reach the goal through seven policy actions, including investing in training, adapting and retrofitting the school estate, improving building specifications and other measures.
  + By 2025, the DfE has said it will eradicate **single-use plastics** and “encourage the use of reusable and recyclable materials in schools”.
  + The DfE has said it will publish **annual progress reports** against the strategy, supported by the annual climate literacy survey and a number of other measures. These include:
    - a published risk assessment of flood, overheating and water scarcity of the education estate, reviewed on an annual basis from 2023
    - information on the biodiversity of schools, baselined by 2023 to allow annual progress reporting
    - data about on-site emissions, baselined by 2024, and progress against national targets published from 2025 onwards

As part of this, a **new natural history GCSE** is being launched, focusing on how pupils can protect the planet. The qualification will be available from September 2025. The DfE said the qualification would allow pupils to learn about organisms and their environments, as well as environmental and sustainability issues, “to gain a deeper knowledge of the natural world around them. Pupils will also develop skills for future careers in conservation, “from understanding how to conserve local wildlife to conducting the fieldwork needed to identify species” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-to-lead-the-way-in-climate-and-sustainability-education>

**From the Education Secretary**

* **Nadhim Zahawi** and DfE officials appeared in front of the Parliamentary education committee:
* Zahawi claimed the plans in his schools white paper held the key to **narrowing the attainment gap** again, referring in particular to the need to “scale” up the success of “high-performing” academy trusts.
* He agreed that **patriotism** should be “promoted in our schools unashamedly”. “Our values, British values, being taught in schools are incredibly important”, he said, adding that it was “heartening” to visit schools and see them making a “big deal” of British values.
* The schools white paper proposed new standards for academy trusts, along with **new statutory intervention powers**. “The objective is to turn around an under-performing school within five to six months.”
* The white paper pledged a right **for councils to launch MATs**, but only in areas “where too few strong trusts exist”. However Zahawi said he was “open-minded” when asked whether councils in areas with high-performing trusts would be prevented from setting up their own.
* Key planks of the government’s reforms may feature in **this year’s Queen’s Speech**, meaning they would be prioritised for legislation in the next Parliamentary year.
* The DfE is working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission on new guidance on how to **approach issues around sex and gender in schools.**
* The 55 new “**education investment areas**” are likely to replace opportunity areas
* The DfE will publish an “**operational chart” of timelines** for the delivery of reforms.
* The DfE is going to carry out a full review of the regulatory framework for MATs. Ofsted and the role of inspection will definitely be part of that regulatory review and we will be working really closely with Ofsted on that but you have to have the review first." He did not say whether this would mean **Ofsted** would directly inspect MATs.
* He defended the decision to publish **secondary school league tables** this year amid Covid disruption. He said that he would be "out there" getting the message across that this was not about finger-pointing at schools. This isn't about finger-pointing, it's about learning how do we put the resources and support the improvement where it is needed.
* Robert Halfon, chair of the Commons Education Select Committee, quizzed the education secretary on what he described as a **lack of a focus on pre-16 skills** in the government's White Paper. He told the session he believed that the White Paper should have had more on skills for pre-16, financial education, oracy, careers education and "embedding that in the school ecosystem".

**Attendance**

* **Attendance.** The reference date for this publication is 7 April 2022. Data for this **date is not comparable to dates when schools are in normal term time**. To reflect that, 78 (51%) local authorities advertised their schools being closed for the Easter break.
* Attendance in **all state-funded schools** was 89.1% on 7 Apr.
* Attendance in state-funded **primary** schools was 92.3% on 7 Apr.
* Attendance in state-funded **secondary** schools was 85.6% on 7 Apr.
* Attendance in state-funded **special** schools was 82.0% on 7 Apr. Attendance at special schools is typically lower than at mainstream settings.
* Attendance in state-funded **alternative provision** was 51.7% on 7 Apr.

Attendance of vulnerable children and pupils eligible for free school meals

* In **primary** schools, approximately 89% of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), 90% of pupils with a social worker, and 91% of pupils eligible for free school meals were in attendance on 7 Apr.
* In **secondary** schools, approximately 78% of pupils with an EHCP, 74% of pupils with a social worker, and 81% of pupils eligible for free school meals were in attendance on 7 Apr.

Workforce absence

* The estimate is that 8.2% of **teachers and school leaders** were absent for any reason from open schools on 7 Apr.
* The estimate is that 7.6% of **teaching assistants and other staff** were absent for any reason from open schools on 7 Apr.
* 18% of all state-funded schools had more than **15% of their teachers and school leaders absent** for any reason on 7 Apr.
* 46% of all state-funded schools had up to **5% of their teachers and school leaders absent** for any reason on 7 Apr.
* 12% of all state-funded schools had **more than 15% of their teaching assistants and other staff absent** for any reason on 7 Apr.
* 43% of all state-funded schools had **up to 5% of their teaching assistants and other staff absent** for any reason on 7 Apr.

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-23-march-2020-to-14-april-2022>

School leaders say the **halting of the collection of any Covid-related absence data** means "it is no longer possible to draw any conclusions from these attendance figures as to what the Covid situation really is in schools". The NAHT said, the move was "symptomatic of the government's wider attempts to try to just pretend that the pandemic is over", adding that the "'living with Covid plan' is increasingly looking like an 'ignoring Covid plan'"

**Academies and Trusts; free schools**

* The DfE has issued an **analysis of the proportion of academy trusts with a cumulative financial surplus or deficit for academic year 2020 to 2021**, with a comparison to the previous academic year. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-revenue-reserves-2020-to-2021> At the end of the academic year 2020/21
  + 97.4% of trusts had a cumulative surplus or a zero balance.
  + 2.6% of trusts had a cumulative deficit.
  + The average revenue reserve across all academy trusts was £1.48 million.
  + The average surplus balance, of trusts with a surplus, was £1.53 million.
  + The average deficit balance, of trusts with a deficit, was £318,000.
  + The total cumulative surplus across all academy trusts was £3.96 billion.
  + The total cumulative deficit across all academy trusts was £22.24 million.
  + The total net financial position of all academy trusts was a cumulative surplus of £3.94 billion.

**See the document for the full comparison with the previous year**. The average trust had £1.48 million in reserves, up by more than a quarter from £1.15 million in 2019-20. The average trust’s reserves amounted to 12.9 per cent of their income in the year to 31 August 2021, up from 11.4 per cent the previous year. The net £3.94 billion combined reserves trusts enjoyed marked a sharp improvement on the £3.13 billion recorded in 2019-20. 70 trusts reported deficits, with a combined black hole of £22.4 million – but this was down from £42.1 million a year earlier. Part of the growth in reserves could also reflect academies’ growth, with a 3.9 per cent jump in academy numbers during the year. Trust numbers fell by 2.4 per cent, as the average trust grew in size from managing 3.5 schools to 3.7.

Partial school closures, exam cancellations and other scrapped activities **saved trusts significant sums amid the pandemic**. New grants also helped offset Covid’s extra costs and better-off trusts tapped donors. However some of the rise could be attributed to delayed construction projects leaving funds unspent, as well as increased academisation and trust growth.

**Data for maintained schools published in December showed a similar picture**, with Covid fuelling an unlikely turnaround in their finances. DfE figures showed the biggest annual decline in schools in deficit since records began in 2003, dropping from 12 per cent of schools to 8.4 per cent. It remains significantly higher than the 2.6 per cent of academy trusts in deficit. Trusts and councils use different financial years however, with maintained school figures covering the year to 31 March 2021 rather than to 31 August. The average maintained school’s revenue balance jumped from £110,690 in 2019-20 to £160,490 this year. See <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/la-and-school-expenditure/2020-21>

* ESFA has issued “**Academies and dedicated schools grant: recoupment**” Information about how we calculate the adjustment of the dedicated schools grant allocation. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-and-dedicated-schools-grant-recoupment>
* **Grammar schools** are discussing forming multi-academy trusts (MATs) between themselves amid fears that having to join non-selective schools could force them to water down their admissions policies. The government said it wanted all schools to be in or be moving towards joining a MAT by 2030 in its Schools White Paper, published last month. But the leader of the Grammar School Heads Association (GSHA), Mark Fenton, said grammar schools are concerned that if they were to join a MAT, the trust board would have the power to change their admissions policy "in a way which could be seen as altering the character of the school, such as by significantly lowering the qualifying score".
* Ofsted has issued “**Pre-registration advice notes for free schools**, studio schools and university technical colleges 2021”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-registration-advice-notes-for-free-schools-studio-schools-and-university-technical-colleges-2021>

**NTP**

* From September, all £349 million of NTP tutoring income will go **directly to schools,** for them to decide how to spend it. In addition, **three smaller tenders have been published for quality assurance and training of tutors from September until August 2024**. These reveal how DfE wants to ensure training is available to at least 25,000 people in 2022-23 and 20,000 in 2023-24. This will cover both schools-led tutors and academic mentors. The training will be mandatory for those new to the role, except for qualified teachers. The chosen provider will also deploy a maximum of 3,600 academic mentors per year, with a minimum recruitment figure of 1,500. Tender documents also reveal there is likely to be up to 300 academic mentors who have passed recruitment this year, but have not yet been deployed to schools. The quality assurance of the tuition organisations tender is worth £2.4 million while the training contract is worth £7.4 million. The final contract for recruiting and deploying academic mentors is worth £7.9 million. Bidding closes on May 23, with the contract expected to start on July 22.
* ESFA has updated “**School-led tutoring: guidance and tracker tool**” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-led-tutoring-conditions-of-grant>
* The DfE has updated “**School-led tutoring grant**”. How schools and academy trusts should plan and deliver the national tutoring programme's school-led tutoring to help pupils catch up on missed learning. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-led-tutoring-grant>

**ITT, teacher recruitment and Early Years Teachers**

* The DfE has issued “**Induction for newly qualified teachers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic”**. Guidance about additional funding for those currently undertaking induction. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-induction-for-newly-qualified-teachers> The DfE has extended the time period for schools to receive a one-off payment to support newly qualified teachers (NQT) whose training has been disrupted by Covid. Under the updated guidance, all state-funded schools that have or had an NQT who completed their induction between the summer term of 2021 and the spring term of 2022 will receive the cash to "further support" their development. Previously, the DfE said the money would be available to schools with NQTs finishing induction last summer. As before, schools will receive up to £1,500, which will cover an additional 5 per cent of time off timetable (equal to 44 hours) for the 2021-22 academic year.

* The DfE has issued “**Changes to statutory induction for early career teachers** (ECTs)”. Information on the 2-year ECT induction and how it replaces the old 1-year newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction, including the early roll out of the reforms. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/changes-to-statutory-induction-for-early-career-teachers-ects>
* Nearly half of primary heads are considering **taking on fewer early career teachers** because of issues with the reforms, with new mentors working at weekends to complete training. Polling by Teacher Tapp has uncovered just 14 per cent of early career teachers and nine per cent of mentors think the training is a good use of time. Most say it has added “a lot” to their workload, with one training provider admitting mentors are completing training in the evenings and on Sundays. It also found nearly half of mentors were not given additional time to work with teachers, with one in five leaders saying they were not giving extra time for the role. The mentor time-off timetable is funded by government and is a statutory duty. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/early-career-framework-risks-heads-snubbing-new-teachers/> for more detail on the problems schools are experiencing
* The DfE has issued “**Postgraduate initial teacher training targets: 2022 to 2023** Annual target for the number of trainees to start postgraduate initial teacher training in the 2022 to 2023 academic year, in England, by subject”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/postgraduate-initial-teacher-training-targets-2022-to-2023> The DfE has raised its recruitment targets for trainee teachers, saying it expects a post-Covid exodus of existing staff. The government estimates 32,600 people will need to start post-graduate initial teacher training courses in the next academic year to meet schools’ needs the following year. The figures mark an increase of 1,570 teachers on last year’s targets, including 855 more at primary and 715 at secondary. For next year, target numbers have increased for physics, computing, English, modern languages, geography, history, and design & technology. Modern languages saw the biggest jump in targets, up 42.2 per cent to 2,140 trainees. Recruitment targets have been cut for maths, biology, chemistry, classics, art & design, business studies, drama, music, physical education, and religious education. Recruitment has been capped for physical education in 2022-23, but targets can be exceeded for other subjects. The DfE said targets were based partly on pupil number projections. The primary population is expected to fall 1.7 per cent in 2023-24 and secondary numbers to grow by 1.5 per cent, a slower rate than previous years. But it also factors in expected “short-term increases in post-pandemic leaver rates” and economic growth forecasts.
* Research, for the Gatsby Foundation, looked at the **£2,000 retention payments offered to some maths and physics teachers between 2018 and 2020**. Handing new maths and physics teachers’ retention bonuses makes them 23 per cent more likely to stay in the profession after two years, the study found. The study backs up international studies, but US research indicates retention slips to normal levels once recipients’ payments end. But the study also found more than one in five early-career teachers receiving the salary top-up still left the profession, with experts noting the high salaries available elsewhere to in-demand maths and science graduates. The government faced criticism after announcing a rehashed version of retention payments last year, after scrapping the previous scheme in 2020. It promised up to £3,000 tax-free for maths, physics, chemistry and computing teachers, but not language teachers, though details remain unclear. The white paper said the cash was for new teachers working in disadvantaged schools, including 55 “education investment areas”. See <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/retention-payment-summary-paper.pdf>
* The DfE has updated “**Statistics: initial teacher training**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-teacher-training>
* The DfE has updated an overview and directory of **subject knowledge enhancement courses** for lead schools and initial teacher training (ITT) providers. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-knowledge-enhancement-course-directory>

**Public examinations**

* Ofqual has issued “**Statistics on the number of appeals against results for GCSEs, AS and A levels and Project qualifications for November 2020, January 2021 and summer 2021 exam series**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/appeals-for-gcse-as-a-level-and-project-2020-to-2021-academic-year> There was a sharp increase in the number of appeals against GCSE and A-level results in 2021 after students were allowed to challenge the academic judgement involved in teacher assessed grades used last year The key details regarding the number of appeals made for GCSE, AS and A level, and Project qualifications for the 2020 to 2021 academic year in England were:
  + Overall, 17,610 of the 6.1 million grades certified for GCSEs, AS and A levels were challenged (0.3% of all grades certified)
  + Overall, 6,200 of the 6.1 million grades certified for GCSEs, AS and A levels were changed as part of an upheld appeal (0.1% of all grades certified)
  + One appeal may cover several grades and the number of appeals received for GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2020 to 2021 was 16,090. Of these appeals 5,770 (36% of appeals received) were upheld
  + The most common ground for an appeal for GCSE, AS and A level was ‘Unreasonable exercise of academic judgement: determination of grade’
  + For Project qualifications in 2020 to 2021 there were 105 appeals received, covering 130 grades, 0.3% of the 52,100 grades certified for projects in 2020 to 2021
  + Most upheld appeals, for all qualifications covered, resulted in a grade change.
* Only 29% of teachers working with pupils due to sit GCSE or A levels this year say they **have covered more than 90% of the curriculum content.** Research evidence from the NEU has revealed concerns about a lack of preparedness ahead of this summer’s exam season because of the disruption to learning caused by the pandemic and on-going problems with pupil and staff absence. While 15% said most pupils would cover all of the required content and a further 14% said most pupils would cover 90-99% of the content, a significant number – 25% – believe that two-thirds or less of curriculum content has been adequately covered, including 6% who said that most pupils would cover less than half of the curriculum.
* Schools are becoming "increasingly desperate" over Covid-related exam **invigilator shortages**, and are training staff to step in and oversee next month's assessments. The National Association of Exam Officers (NAEO) has published advice tomorrow to help schools struggling to recruit enough trained officers. See <https://www.thenaeo.org/>
* Ofqual has issued a collection of documents in “**Guide for schools and colleges 2022: GCSEs, AS and A levels**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulating-gcses-as-and-a-levels-guide-for-schools-and-colleges-2022>
* Ofqual has issued:
  + “**AEA qualification-level conditions and requirements**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/aea-qualification-level-conditions-and-requirements>
  + “**GCE qualification-level conditions and requirements**”. Rules and regulations for reformed AS and A levels, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-and-requirements>
  + “**GCSE (9 to 1) qualification-level conditions and requirements**”. Rules and regulations for all GCSEs (9 to 1), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-qualification-level-conditions>
  + “**Project qualification-level conditions and requirements**”. Rules and regulations for all Project qualifications, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/project-qualification-level-conditions-and-requirements>
* Headteachers are planning to set up **separate isolation rooms so pupils with Covid symptoms** can take their exams, as “ambiguous” guidance forces them to find their own solutions. As free testing has now ended, heads fear the rules leave them and pupils playing a guessing game as to whether they may have Covid. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/heads-plan-covid-isolation-rooms-so-symptomatic-kids-can-take-exams/>

**Early years and primary**

* STA has updated “**Reporting to parents at the end of key stages 1 and 2**” See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reporting-to-parents-at-the-end-of-key-stages-1-and-2>
* **Primary-school offers** are usually made on 16 April in England and Wales. But because of the bank-holiday weekend, councils sent offer letters on Tuesday, 19 April. See <https://inews.co.uk/news/education/primary-school-admissions-2022-how-to-appeal-your-child-misses-out-today-1582197>
* The DfE has updated “**Early years foundation stage profile return 2022: guide**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-return-2022-guide>

**NASUWT conference**

* NASUWT has vowed to “**mobilise” its members for national industrial action** if the government fails to “restore” teacher pay. (62 per cent) said they would support a joint day of strike action with other education unions in support of pay increases. Around four in 10 members (42 per cent) said they would support more than one day of joint strike action over the issue. 80 per cent said NASUWT should focus on campaigning for all teachers to get the same percentage pay rise, regardless of their experience. Just 28 per cent said that the union should prioritise campaigning for teachers' starting salaries to rise to £30,000. NASUWT voted through an emergency motion, warning ministers they could face strike action if they do not boost pay. It comes after the NEU voted at its conference to hold an indicative ballot of members if the government reaches an “inadequate” pay settlement. NASUWT said the government’s decisions had “slashed teachers’ real terms pay by at least 19 per cent since 2010”, and called for increases for all teachers of 12 per cent in 2022, 10 per cent in 2023 and 8 per cent in 2023. Like the NEU’s motion, NASUWT’s motion stops short of demanding a formal ballot for strike action. However, it instructs the union’s executive to “mobilise members for national industrial action, up to and including strike action. More than one in six teachers are prepared to take strike action over the government's decision to freeze their pay, the survey by the NASUWT suggests.
* From **NASUWT surveys of members**:
* More than seven in 10 female teachers have experienced **misogyny** in schools, according to a new survey by the NASUWT. Nearly half of the female teachers surveyed (45 per cent), who said they had experienced misogyny, reported that a member of their school's senior leadership team were to blame, and 42 per cent said other teachers were the culprits while 58 per cent said pupils were the perpetrators. One in 20 said the misogyny had been posted on social media and, of those, Facebook, WhatsApp and TikTok where most commonly mentioned as the platform used. Another 30 per cent of those surveyed reported experiencing misogyny from their headteacher and 27 per cent from pupils' parents. When it came to career and job opportunities, four in 10 teachers believed misogyny led to a lack of promotional opportunities, and more than a quarter (27 per cent) believed it prevented them achieving higher salaries. Just under half of respondents who said they reported misogyny to their school said no action was taken and one in five teachers (20 per cent) said they were not believed or that their claims were dismissed. Members have also raised concerns about the influence of “incel” subculture on teenage boys, (the term incel is used for men who define themselves as unable to get a romantic or sexual partner and express online hostility and resentment towards those who are sexually active, particularly women). A was passed calling on the national executive to lobby government for misogyny to be recognised as a hate crime. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/apr/16/female-teachers-misogyny-schools-culture-sexual-harassment-classrooms-incel>
* 91 per cent said **class sizes** were having a 'negative' or 'significant negative' impact on pupils' progress and attainment, while 90 per cent said the same for pupils' behaviour. And 75 per cent of those responding said the number of pupils in their classes had increased over the past five years. Conference passed a motion calling for governments and administrations across the UK to introduce maximum class sizes in all key stages. In addition, schools are cramped not just because of bigger class sizes but because pupils themselves have got bigger, according to teachers. Children are “crammed” into chairs and desks that are too small, and have to put their feet in the aisles. Part of the problem is cramped school buildings, many of which date to the 1970s, the conference was told
* 35 per cent, said they were so "disillusioned" by their pay they wanted to **leave the profession**, and 21 per cent said they were so angry about pay they felt industrial action was necessary. 89 per cent, said that they were somewhat or very worried about their financial situation. Seven in 10 teachers had considered leaving their job over the last 12 months, with nearly half stating that their pay was affecting their intention to leave. 54 per cent of teachers had cut down on food spending and 40 per cent had reduced spending on essential household items. Over one in 10 said they had to take a second job to make ends meet while 1 per cent said they had had to use a food bank.
* The union president highlighted how teachers worked through the pandemic crisis in "overcrowded and dangerous" conditions, protected from the virus only by "fig leaf mitigations"; she praised teachers as the "**forgotten heroes**" of the pandemic. She added that pupils had been "denied the order, discipline and care of regular school attendance" and increased mental health problems were impacting teachers in terms of behaviour. She called for teachers to be better protected against the quick fixes of politicians, malicious allegations and "social media abuse that should not be tolerated in a civilised society".
* Conference voted to campaign for educators to have **limits set on their working hours,** as well as for the union to campaign to promote teachers' rights to a work-life balance. Delegate after delegate took to the platform to condemn the increase in **workload** and describe the devastating impact on health and wellbeing. In the survey, 62 per cent said that their workload had "increased significantly" over the past 12 months, while 91 per cent said their workload had increased. Full-time teachers said they were working 57 hours per week on average, with 15 of these worked outside the normal school day. 84 per cent, reported that over the past 12 months their job had adversely affected their mental health. Of those who said their mental health had been impacted, over half, (52 per cent), said that workload was the most important factor in this.
* **Parents now feel they can access teachers 24 hours a day**, seven days a week, and have got into the habit of firing off “aggressive and accusatory” emails at any time of the day or night, the conference heard. Many teachers had been told to download apps such as ClassDojo, which link families and teachers, the annual conference of the NASUWT teachers’ conference heard on Sunday. But while such technology was useful during lockdown to keep in touch with children and families who were learning remotely, teachers now fear they are expected to be available to parents at all times. The union said that teachers had the right to “disconnect” at the end of the working day and called for the return of home-school agreements so that parents understand what they can – and cannot – expect from teachers.
* **Almost half of UK teachers, many of them triple-jabbed, have tested positive for Covid in the last term**, according to a union survey. Despite government insistence that it is “business as usual” in schools in England, 48% of teachers said they had tested positive during the spring term. In addition, nearly 30% said their school had been forced to close or send home either classes or year groups because of an outbreak of Covid. More than a quarter (26%) of those who took part in the poll of 4,000 members said they had felt under pressure to go to work even when they believed they had Covid-19 symptoms. Meanwhile, just under a third struggled to access free tests. Almost one in three (29%) teachers polled said there had been a Covid outbreak declared at their school or college in the past term, but only half (53%) of those who took part in the survey were confident their setting had an outbreak management plan in place. Just over 7% of those who responded to the survey – about 260 NASUWT members – said after having Covid-19, they were asked to return to school prior to the sixth day of absence after a positive test. Three out of five (59%) said they had felt generally under pressure to return to school when ill, and 28% said they did not feel that their school or college had managed their health and safety well. Covid also needs to be seen as a long term problem. “We need to recognise that two, three, four years down the line we are still going to be dealing with that time bomb from the mental health aspect of our teachers.”
* The **general Secretary** in his speech said:
* There should be a scrapping the **link between teacher performance and pay**.
* The DfE was "wasting" money by **propping up "failing" academy trusts** and said that the government needed to "call time" on trust boards and supply agencies that are "on the take and who believe they can get away with it". In 2019-20, the DfE gave away £31 million to 81 academy trusts, and added that the DfE was "writing off millions of pounds of unrecoverable debts arising from incompetent management within these trusts. As classroom teachers' salaries have been cut, the number of academy trusts paying at least one individual above £150,000 increased by 71 per cent in just one year.
* “If the government can find the money to "write off £8.7 billion of debt from dodgy PPE procurement", "bail out failing academies to the tune of millions", and "give lucrative contracts to companies like Randstad", then "they can **find more money for teachers and for education**".
* Urgent government action is needed to help schools tackle **far-right extremism**. The general secretary, said the union was "alarmed by the incidence of far-right extremism and hate crimes in the UK. Schools are not immune, as children and young people are often exposed to hate speech on social media and elsewhere. Anti-racism must be central to the curriculum and schools and colleges must also be supported and equipped to provide a curriculum that challenges all forms of bigotry, prejudice and hatred. Pupils researching topics for history projects online can be exposed to extremist content and Holocaust denial; extreme far-right material could be accessed by pupils "24/7 with a few swipes of their phone. Children can accidentally come across this material whilst innocently researching for school projects. Conference voted for the union to lobby governments to invest in new international education programmes to promote diversity, and to produce training for members to help them challenge far-right nationalism
* For full details of the **issues discussed at the conference**, see <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/news/press-releases.html>

**School management**

* The DfE has updated guidance for schools on **writing statutory end of year reports for parents**. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-reports-on-pupil-performance-guide-for-headteachers>
* April is **Stress Awareness Month** .Education Support has got tips and advice for managing stress, and new materials to put up in the staffroom. Its free and confidential helpline, is also always open, 08000 562 561. See <https://us1.campaign-archive.com/?u=30cbf2f9b409acb0456c1869a&id=f080632e2d&e=e7e9149d14>
* The DfE has issued “**Schedule of Accommodation tools for schools and colleges**”. Tools and templates to help identify the internal spaces needed in mainstream schools and colleges. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mainstream-schools-schedule-of-accommodation-tools>
* The DfE has updated **pre-election guidance** for schools and multi-academy trusts. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-election-guidance-for-schools-and-multi-academy-trusts>
* The DfE has updated the collection of documents in the manual, “**Buying for schools**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-for-schools>
* For the latest **ESFA Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-20-april-2022>
* Almost seven in ten primary school heads say they **did not receive enough catch-up cash this year**, with many forced to cut support staff and trips and raid pupil premium funding to make ends meet. Polling by the NFER for the Sutton Trust found 68 per cent of primary leaders said catch-up funding was insufficient, with four in ten saying it was “very insufficient”. In comparison, just one in four secondary leaders said they didn’t get enough. Fifty-one per cent of primary leaders and 28 per cent of secondary heads said they had been forced to cut back on teaching assistants, while 35 per cent of primary and 31 per cent of secondary heads reported cutting other support staff. Other leaders reported cutting back on IT equipment, trips and sports and extracurricular activities. One in five leaders said they had cut spending on teaching staff. 38 per cent of primary leaders and 25 per cent of secondary heads had to use pupil premium to plug gaps elsewhere in their budgets. See <https://www.suttontrust.com/news-opinion/all-news-opinion/feeling-the-squeeze-catch-up-and-cost-of-living-crisis-impacting-schools/>

**University issues for schools**

* Students are advised to **be “more relaxed” about the reputation of the universities they want to attend**, after new research revealed they could be better off graduating with a good degree from a less prestigious university than with a lower-class degree from a selective institution. The report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that graduates in England with first-class or upper second class (2.1) honours degrees had higher average earnings by the age of 30 than those who finished with lower second-class (2.2) awards, regardless of institution – meaning that degree class was often more important than institutional reputation. Figures in the report also suggested it was less difficult to obtain a higher-class degree outside selective universities with competitive entry requirements, despite those universities tending to award a larger proportion of 2.1s and firsts. See <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/16031>
* The DfE has issued “**Financial benefits of good university grades**”. Analysis of the impact of different degree classifications on the earnings returns of graduates. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/financial-benefits-of-good-university-grades>

**Education news for schools**

* The Chinese piano virtuoso **Lang Lang** is to set up ‘piano labs’ in UK schools with a project that will set up state-of-the-art “piano labs” across the nation. Each lab will have 20 to 30 keyboards. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/apr/18/chinese-virtuoso-lang-lang-to-set-up-piano-labs-in-uk-schools>
* The government has **hired a team of advisers in a bid to improve standards in special educational needs and disability (SEND) services** for children and young people in local areas where inspections have flagged serious concerns. The DfE said the 13 advisers have been given £90,000-a-year contracts to work with councils to develop "robust, realistic and achievable plans". The 13 government SEND advisers will work in areas where inspections have found concerns. The contract for SEND advisers to support local councils started this month and runs for 12 months, with the option to extend for another 24 months.
* Nine in 10 teachers want **media literacy** to be an explicit part of the national curriculum, according to research findings. Many teachers said media literacy was already being included as part of their school's curriculum, with 47 per cent saying it was included as part of computing lessons and 35 per cent saying it was included as part of personal, social, health and economic education. But 10 per cent said it was not included as part of any subject and 23 per cent said they did know if it was. A report published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Media Literacy calls for media literacy skills, such as fact checking and the creation of digital media, to be integrated into the English national curriculum. It says it is "crucial" that children and young people are educated to "identify sites to trust" and "appraise the content of what we read". It also calls for the concepts of disinformation, misinformation and malinformation to be included in the curriculum. See <https://www.thestudentview.org/updates-events/mps-form-group-to-safeguard-children-from-fake-news/>
* LGBT+ young people’s charity “Just like Us” has launched a new platform with free school resources covering EYFS through to KS4. Resources include ready-to-go lesson plans, assemblies, form-time activities, videos and posters. The platform has been launched ahead of **School Diversity Week**, the UK-wide celebration of LGBT+ equality happening in thousands of primary and secondary schools this 20-24 June. See <https://www.justlikeus.org/home/get-involved/school-diversity-week/>

**Student welfare**

* **Instagram** is failing to remove accounts that attract hundreds **of sexualised comments** for posting pictures of children in swimwear or partial clothing, even after they are flagged to it through the in-app reporting tool. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/apr/17/instagram-under-fire-over-sexualised-child-images>
* **Councils in England are paying more than £1m a year for a single place in privately run children’s homes**. Private providers have been accused of making “obscene” profits out of some of society’s most vulnerable children, as local authorities reveal they are being quoted as much as £50,000 a week (£2.6m a year) for one child. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/apr/18/english-councils-pay-1m-per-child-for-places-in-private-childrens-homes> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/apr/18/how-can-it-cost-20k-a-week-to-look-after-one-child-a-care-home-manager-explains>
* The education secretary has rejected calls for a ban on ​parents ​**smacking children** in England. Nadhim Zahawi said he ​did not ​want to “end up in a world where the state is nannying people about how they bring up their children​”, but senior Conservative MPs called for ​a​ parliamentary debate on the issue after ​the children’s commissioner​ for England​, Dame Rachel de Souza, supported a ban. De Souza ​said she wanted England to ​follow the examples ​set by Wales and Scotland in banning ​adults from hitting children​. A ban​ was supported by experts and charities, including the NSPCC, and by the Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders.

**Post 16**

* ESFA has issued “**16 to 19 allocation data: 2021 to 2022 academic year**”. Allocation data for 16 to 19 institutions funded by Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for the 2021 to 2022 academic year. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2021-to-2022-academic-year>
* ESFA has issued:
* “**16 to 19 education: financial support for students**” Advice for institutions on the financial support young people may be able to access to help them participate in education and training. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-financial-support-for-students>
* “**16 to 19 Bursary Fund audit guide for local authorities: 2022 to 2023** academic year”. A non-mandatory audit guide for local authorities to gain assurance that institutions are administering the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund correctly. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-bursary-fund-audit-guide-for-local-authorities-2022-to-2023-academic-year>
* ESFA has issued “Information and guidance on **higher technical qualifications** (HTQs)” See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/htqs> and “Higher Technical Qualifications: **provider delivery toolkit**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/higher-technical-qualifications-provider-delivery-toolkit>
* The DfE has updated “Find out what **T Levels courses** include and how they work with other qualifications including grading and UCAS point”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels>

**Tony Stephens**