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**197 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Dec 3-9 2022**

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**From the DfE**

* Education secretary Gillian Keegan said she “remains committed” to the aims of the schools bill – despite ditching plans to legislate in the near-future. The minister announced the controversial **schools bill “will not progress in the third session” of parliament**. This means it has been all but ditched in its current form. However, officials still plan to prioritise pushing through legislation for some “priority” proposals in separate bills, as first revealed in October by Schools Week. This means nearly all of the new proposed legislation relating to academies has been shelved. Proposals included new “academy standards”, powers to terminate academy trusts – rather than just individual schools – and allowing councils to academise all their schools. Government will look at doing as much of the academy plans as possible without new legislation, and the ongoing academy regulation review will continue. The DfE said it will still prioritise passing legislation proposed in the schools bill to remove barriers for faith schools to join trusts. It says, “A lot of the schools white paper is being implemented. It didn’t require legislation in many cases but we know there’s been interest in particular in a couple of areas around legislating for children not in school and a register, and it was definitely also a priority. The DfE still wants to introduce legislation to crack down on unregistered schools and tighten rules on teacher misconduct. The government also remains committed to strengthening regulation of private schools. One key aspect of the bill that schools require clarity on is the target for all schools to be in a strong academy trust by 2030, and how these trusts will be regulated. There are also calls for clarity on the future of policies such as the “parent pledge” and the 32.5-hour school week. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/schools-bill-what-schools-expect-next-dfe>
* **Education secretary Gillian Keegan met with the education committee.** Key points made:
* She said there was “a lot of planning going on across government to **mitigate the impact of harmful strike action**”, are there are plans to make sure that we have some mitigations in place.”
* DfE officials have been tasked with looking into the feasibility of **undergraduate apprenticeships for physics and maths teachers**
* The government won’t pursue the lifting of the ban on new **grammar schools** on her watch. She told MPs today that existing grammars were “safe in my hands” and do a “fantastic job”, but while the government will continue to allow expansion, it would focus on “making sure everybody has a fantastic comprehensive state school education”.
* Last year, education secretary Nadhim Zahawi launched a 17-member “**attendance alliance**” which was tasked with working to reduce absence from schools, and this will now continue
* Keegan was pressed about **falling government subsidies for tutoring**. Schools will have to fund 75 per cent of the costs themselves from next year before subsidies taper off completely in 2024-25. But she insisted schools had found tutoring to be a “good addition to the landscape”, adding that pupil premium funding “really has the flexibility to be able to use that money” to support things like tutoring.
* The government has announced that £400 million of the £2 billion funding increase announced at the autumn statement is for **high needs**. Fears have been expressed that the money may not reach special schools, but Keegan said we will do our very best to set the expectation that local authorities pass all of it on.
* Ms Keegan said she had an open mind on the British Baccalaureate idea as raised by the PM. Keegan said that discussions were “focused around maths to 18”. We need to look at what more should we be doing to really look at how we **can increase the proportion of young people who study maths post-16**
* On the special educational needs and disabilities **(SEND) review**, Ms Keegan said the government’s response would be published “very early” in the new year.
* When questioned about the expected landing date for the long-awaited **transgender guidance for schools**, Ms Keegan said she was not aware of an “absolute date” for publication. However, she said a full public consultation is due next year and it is expected that a first draft of the document for consultation to be published in early 2023.
* The education secretary called for a “big dose of **transparency**” with parents when teaching about **contested political issues** in schools.

**School finances**

* ESFA has issued a collection of documents, **“Local authorities: pre-16 schools funding**. Guidance, allocations and conditions of grant for pre-16 schools funding”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authorities-pre-16-schools-funding>
* The DfE has issued “An overview of **school capital funding**, who it's for, current and past allocations, how it's calculated and spending guidance”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capital-funding>
* **The£2 billion of new money from the autumn statement** will be allocated between mainstream schools and high needs funding. Local councils will get an extra £400 million for high needs budgets, to help support children with special educational needs or disabilities. Academies, maintained mainstream schools and special schools will all be guaranteed a funding boost, which will arrive from April next year. This means average funding per pupil for mainstream schools will increase by approximately five percent overall, in the next financial year compared to 2022-23. A typical primary school with 200 pupils will get approximately £28,000, and secondary schools with around 900 pupils will receive approximately £170,000. In total schools will be receiving £58.8 billion in 2024-25 – meaning in real terms we are putting more into schools than ever before.
* The DfE has issued “**How LA maintained schools and local authorities spent their funding on education, children's services and social care** in the financial year 2021 to 2022”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/la-and-school-expenditure-2021-to-2022-financial-year> In the financial year 2021-22, in LA maintained schools:
	+ Income was £24.1 billion, 1.8% higher than in 2020-21.
	+ Average income per pupil was £6,609, £325 higher than in 2020-21.
	+ Expenditure was £23.9 billion, 4.0% higher than in 2020-21.
	+ Average expenditure per pupil was £6,564, £450 higher than in 2020-21.

The number of LA maintained schools these figures are based on decreased by 3.4% in 2021-22, due to their conversion to academies.

* + 47% of LA maintained school expenditure was on teaching staff, slightly lower than in 2020-21.
	+ The proportion of schools in deficit increased slightly to 8.8%, from 8.4% in 2020-21.
	+ Average revenue balance of schools was £178,500.

LAs spent £44.1 billion on schools, other education, children’s and young people’s services in 2021-22; an increase of 6.3% from 2020-21. Of which, almost two thirds (£28.8 billion) was spent on schools; a similar proportion as in 2020-21.

In 2021-22, as schools return to more usual ways of working following the COVID-19 pandemic - which mainly affected the 2020-21 financial year - we are starting to see income and expenditure return to levels similar to 2019-20 (pre-pandemic). There have been increases in the amount of income generated by schools, although this self-generated income remains lower than in 2019-20. Expenditure on supply teachers is similar in cash terms to 2019-20, and expenditure on staff development and training, learning resources and catering have all increased from 2020-21.

In 2021-22, of the 12,221 schools that submitted CFR returns:

* 1,075 (8.8%) schools were in deficit,
* 11,077 (90.6%) were in surplus,
* 69 (<1%) had a revenue reserve of 0.

The percentage of schools in deficit increased to 8.8%, from 8.4% in 2020-21. In 2020-21, the percentage of school in deficit fell, as schools reduced their spend on areas such as supply staff and catering and school supplies. Although they also lost self-generated income such as that from lettings and catering, this was generally lower than the amount saved, therefore increasing their revenue reserve.

As schools return to more usual ways of working, spend on supply teachers, catering and supplies has increased and although self-generated income is increasing, it is not yet back in cash terms, to pre pandemic levels. This has led to an increase in the number of schools in deficit. However, the percentage of schools in deficit remains lower than in financial years 2016-17 to 2019-20. There is substantial regional variation

In 2021-22, the average **revenue balance** per school increased to £178,500 from £160,500 in 2020-21. Primaries’ balance sheets were little-changed on a year earlier, after a more significant jump the previous year. Meanwhile secondaries saw their average balances leap from £151,343 in 2019-20 to £322,615 last year, and jump again to £538,673 this year. Figures for the number of schools in financial distress show a similar pattern. The percentage of primaries in deficit has edged up 0.9 percentage points to 7.6 per cent, whereas the number secondaries in deficit dropped six percentage points to 12.9 per cent.

**Energy**

* The DfE has updated “**Energy efficiency: guidance for the school and FE college estate**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-efficiency-guidance-for-the-school-and-fe-college-estate>
* **Schools and colleges in England will be allocated a share of £500 million to spend on energy efficiency upgrades**, helping to save on bills during the winter months and manage energy consumption. The £500 million government fund to “future-proof” school buildings by making them more energy efficient has been “repurposed” from an underspend in capital money. The funding will be made available to schools through the devolved formula capital allocations in this financial year. Schools can decide how best to invest the money. They also have “discretion” to spend it on other capital projects if that is appropriate “based on local circumstances”. Estimations show that on average, a primary school will receive approximately £16,000, a secondary school will get £42,000 and a further education college group will benefit from £290,000, but actual funding will be based on a formula that includes a flat £10,000 rate and an additional sum based on weighted pupil numbers. Improvements could include installing better heating controls, insulation to reduce heat loss from pipes or switching to energy efficient lighting. This builds on the Government’s Energy Relief Scheme which is supporting schools and colleges this winter, and will run until the spring. Government says “we expect” schools to spend it “in the financial year 2022 to 2023”. This would leave maintained schools with only four months – and limited holiday periods, where many schools tend to carry out works – to plan and implement capital projects. It could also mean the same for academies, unless the DfE was referring to their different financial year to 31 August. The DfE has confirmed cash could be carried into 2023-24 if needed, however. **The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme** is also investing £1.4bn in public sector buildings, including schools, over the next three financial years, the DfE says

**ASCL** said the investment will “not pay energy bills in the immediate future”. “We are deeply concerned that the government has announced its intention to end the energy relief scheme that is currently in place to help schools and colleges meet rising costs at the end of March. “Removing this support will expose them to massive increases in energy bills that are simply unaffordable, and this will necessitate cuts in educational provision. **Funding for energy efficiency upgrades is a longer term undertaking and will not address the present crisis.**

**Attendance**

* **Attendance, w/c Nov 21**
	+ **The attendance rate** was 91.2% across all schools in the week commencing 21 November 2022. The absence rate was, therefore, 8.8% across all schools. The increase in the absence rate has been driven by illness absence, which during week commencing 21 November 2022 was 5.7%, up from 4.4% in the previous week and 2.6% at the start of term. This is in line with recent increases in rates of seasonal flu and other seasonal respiratory illnesses.
	+ **By school type, the absence rates across the week** were:
		- 7.5% in state-funded primary schools (6.2% authorised and 1.3% unauthorised)
		- 10.3% in state-funded secondary schools (7.2% authorised and 3.2% unauthorised)
		- 14.2% in state-funded special schools (11.4% authorised and 2.8% unauthorised)
	+ The data shows that **the attendance rate across the academic year to date** was 93.3%. The absence rate was, therefore, 6.7% across all schools. By school type, the absence rates across the year to date were:
		- 5.5% in state-funded primary schools (4.1% authorised and 1.4% unauthorised)
		- 8.1% in state-funded secondary schools (5.3% authorised and 2.8% unauthorised)
		- 12.1% in state-funded special schools (9.4% authorised and 2.8% unauthorised)

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools>

**ITT and teacher recruitment staff extra payments**

* **The government’s free teacher jobs board will be able to automatically copy job adverts from academy trusts’ websites** under a new scheme piloted with England’s largest chain. The DfE has revealed its teaching vacancies service has been trialling “ATS integration”, which pulls through vacancies automatically from a trust’s application tracking system (ATS) to the national website. The scheme was piloted with United Learning after trusts asked if the DfE could make it “quicker to bulk upload vacancies”, according to a blog post from outreach and engagement manager Will Bourke. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfe-teacher-jobs-board-to-copy-vacancies-from-trust-websites/>
* The DfE has issued:
* Between September and March eligible biology, chemistry, physics, computing and languages teachers can **claim back student loan repayments** made while employed as a teacher, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teachers-claim-back-your-student-loan-repayments>
* Between September and March, eligible chemistry, languages, mathematics and physics teachers can apply for **early-career payments**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-career-payments-guidance-for-teachers-and-schools>
* Between September and March, eligible chemistry, computing, mathematics and physics teachers can apply for **levelling up premium payments**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/levelling-up-premium-payments-for-teachers>
* **A dashboard showing teacher recruitment and retention challenges** in each English local authority area has been created by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). See <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/key-topics-expertise/school-workforce/teacher-recruitment-and-retention-in-england-data-dashboard/> Some key points from the dashboard:
	+ In 2020, the rate of secondary teachers leaving the state-funded sector was higher at schools with larger proportions of pupils on free school meals.
	+ Poorer-intake schools struggle to get science teachers
	+ There are huge discrepancies in the attrition rate of working-age secondary teachers leaving the state-funded sector across local authority areas.
	+ New language and computing teachers most likely to leave
	+ In 2020, the median average that schools in England spent on supply teachers per pupil was £74.40, data from the dashboard shows. However, schools in 79 local authorities spent an average of £100 or more per pupil on local authorities, while schools in six local authorities spent £200 or more on average.
* Baroness Barran of the DfE highlighted the **lack of flexibility in teaching** compared with other graduate jobs, when asked why the government is missing teacher recruitment targets. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/teacher-training-recruitment-minister-warns-teaching-lacks-flexibility>
* **All appeals made by teacher trainers who were unsuccessful in the government’s ITT market review accreditation process have been rejected**. Around a third of current providers that were unsuccessful in gaining accreditation for initial teacher training (ITT) courses during the DfE review were expected to appeal the decision. This will mean that about a quarter (70) of the current providers have been unsuccessful in their applications to be reaccredited to offer ITT courses, leaving a total of 179 now approved to continue offering courses to trainees from 2024. In addition, 21 new organisations that applied for accreditation were unsuccessful.

**The DfE has been warned that cutting the number of teacher training providers is threatening recruitment in shortage subjects**, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem) New analysis by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) suggests that the initial teacher training (ITT) providers who have lost accreditation had been set to train about one in five of the country’s new physics teachers recruited this year. The analysis also finds that 68 of the ITT providers delivering training this year - and responsible for training 16 per cent of this year’s trainees - have failed to gain accreditation to continue provision beyond September 2024. The regions likely to be hardest hit are the South West, the North East and the East of England, which are all expected to lose more than a quarter of trainee places, according to the EPI. The EPI says that while there are 21 newly accredited providers confirmed for 2024-25, “the extent to which their capacity can counter these potential shortfalls remains unclear”. See <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/the-reaccreditation-of-itt-providers-implications-for-stem-subjects/>

**Ofsted**

* Ofsted has issued a collection of documents relating to **Ofsted's inspections of early career framework and national professional qualifications programmes**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsteds-inspections-of-early-career-framework-and-national-professional-qualifications-programmes>

**See also** <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/12/07/inspecting-the-initial-stages-of-the-early-career-framework-and-national-professional-qualifications/>

* **Ofsted is nearly two thousand inspections off the pace of its target to inspect all schools by 2025**, new figures suggest. Data submitted to the Parliamentary education committee shows Ofsted carried out 4,814 inspections between April last year and August this year. The watchdog got a £23 million funding boost in last year’s spending review to inspect all schools between April 2021 and July 2025. Latest figures show there are 21,602 state schools. Reaching the target would equate to completing an average of 424 inspections a month over the four-year period. Based on this method, Ofsted should have completed 6,784 inspections by August to keep up with the pace. It is 1,970 inspections (29 per cent) off course. See <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/31940/documents/179348/default/>
* Ofsted has issued **inspection outcomes for schools as of 30.11.22**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/monthly-management-information-ofsteds-school-inspections-outcomes>

**Strep A**

* Schools have been advised to follow government guidance on **scarlet fever outbreaks** following the deaths of fifteen UK children from strep A infections. See <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1110540/Guidelines_for_the_public_health_management_of_scarlet_fever_outbreaks.pdf> According to the UKHSA guidance, an outbreak of scarlet fever is defined as a credible report of two or more probable or confirmed cases attending the same school, notified within 10 days of each other. There should also be an epidemiological link between cases, for example, they are in the same class or year group. Where they suspect an outbreak, schools are advised to notify their local Health Protection Team (HPT). The HPT will then conduct an investigation to establish whether there is an outbreak. Infections can be spread through close contact between children and staff, as well as surfaces such as table tops, taps and handles. Good hand hygiene should also “be enforced” for all pupils and staff, including through a programme that encourages children to wash their hands “at the start of the school day, after using the toilet, after play, before and after eating, and at the end of the school day. The guidance also notes that scrapes, bites and wounds provide “a portal of entry for the organism” so these should be thoroughly cleaned and covered. Staff and parents at the school should be reminded that children and adults with scarlet fever should not return to school until at least 24 hours after starting treatment with an appropriate antibiotic.

**Group A streptococcus (GAS)** is a common bacteria that can cause infections such as scarlet fever and impetigo. The most serious infections linked to GAS come from iGAS. Cases of scarlet fever are currently above what is normally seen at this time of the year. Latest UKHSA data shows that in the week commencing November 14, there were 851 cases reported, compared to an average of 186 in the same timeframe in preceding years. While iGAS is still uncommon, there has also been an increase in children developing this infection this year. So far this season, which began in mid-September, there have been six deaths recorded within seven days of a diagnoses in children under 10. In a DfE blog, parents were told to keep children off school if they suspect they have strep a and contact their doctor. But it added that if there was “no reason for children to be kept at home if they are well”, even if there are confirmed or suspected cases in the school. See <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/12/07/strep-a-and-scarlet-fever-what-are-they-and-what-are-the-symptoms-information-for-parents-schools-colleges-and-early-years-providers/> This says there are some circumstances where a school or provider may need to contact their local UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) healthcare protection teams (HPTs) for advice. Further information for staff on how and when to do this can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/managing-outbreaks-and-incidents> An Outbreak Control Team (OCT) could be sent in by UKHSA in some cases. This includes if there is a scarlet fever outbreak while chickenpox and flu are circulating at the school, the outbreak does not appear to subside within three weeks, hospitalisations are reported or an iGAS infection is reported. Additional control measures that might be considered in these cases include deep cleaning. Reports emerged of antibiotics being given out as a “blanket prevention measure” in primary schools where there have been cases of strep A. But the UKHSA guidance states that only in “exceptional” circumstances, such as reports of hospitalisations, would an OCT consider antibiotic to prevent clinical infections or the progression of infection to disease. Local health protection teams can give antibiotics to groups of children where there has been a Strep A outbreak.

**RSE**

* **Nearly one in four (23 per cent) RSE teachers do not feel sufficiently trained to teach the subject effectively**, according to a poll by the SafeLives charity. The complexity of RSE, added to “a notable lack of training, resources and time” means that delivery of RSE is “patchy and inconsistent”, a report published by the charity states. A quarter of RSE teachers said they were selected to teach the subject based on capacity and less than four in ten (39 per cent) were in a dedicated role. Just over half (52 per cent) of students surveyed said RSE classes give them a good understanding of toxic and healthy relationships, while less than half (46 per cent) said they feel confident about who to talk to if they or someone they know is experiencing abuse. When asked which topics they thought were taught well, there were no topics that more than half of all students agreed were taught effectively. The topics taught the best were sexual health and safe sex (48 per cent) and consent and how to communicate it (46 per cent), according to students. Regarding gender issues, the majority of LGBT+ students surveyed (61 per cent) disagreed that LGBT+ relationships are being threaded throughout RSE, as is legally required by the guidance. Additionally, only half (52 per cent) of young people surveyed say they have been taught about gender roles and gender equality. See <https://safelives.org.uk/press-release-RSE-Report>

**Welfare of children and young people**

* For an article on examples of **how different schools are dealing with the mental health problems of students**, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/mental-health-how-schools-are-dealing-with-the-new-normal/>
* Government has “not grasped” the **child mental health services “crisis**”, says a House of Lords committee who warn landmark legislation has “failed” to improve young people’s lives. The Children and Families Act 2014 legislation has “largely sat on the shelf” and “languished” as a result of poor implementation, inadequate scrutiny and “incessant churn” among ministers. Lords are “deeply concerned” about the state of CAMHS, adding “they are in crisis. This is a grave threat both to the success of individual provisions of the act and to its overarching aim of enhancing the lives of children and their families”. “The government, in allowing the services to deteriorate to this level, has shown it has not grasped the importance and severity of this problem.” Lords said important early intervention, to reduce high-cost interventions later down the line, “remained absent across many of the areas we looked at, threatening the stability of families and the health of children and young people”. The special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system is “failing many children”. See <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/581/children-and-families-act-2014-committee/>
* Worsening health in Britain has led the number of new **disability benefit claims** to double in the past year, according to a report. The recent increase in recipients had taken place across medical conditions and ages, with **the fastest rise among teenagers,** where claim rates have tripled. See <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/dec/06/cost-of-living-keeps-depression-rates-above-pre-pandemic-levels-says-ons>
* **Albanian children are being subjected to racist bullying** in UK schools because of the debate surrounding arrivals by small boats, the country’s ambassador in London has said. See <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/dec/07/albanian-children-facing-racist-bullying-uk-asylum-row>
* There are now 100,000 more **girls playing football** than there were five years ago, according to an annual survey of children’s fitness by Sport England, which also found secondary school girls are more active than they have ever been. Overall, **children’s activity levels** have recovered to pre-pandemic levels, but the Active Lives survey revealed that not all groups have made the same progress, with children aged seven to nine lagging behind, their activity levels still 4.5% below where they were before Covid. More than 777,000 girls had played football in a formal setting in the week of the survey, the results suggest, with numbers playing informally – for example, having a kickabout in the park or against a wall – up by 200,000 since 2017. The survey findings, based on responses from more than 100,000 children aged five to 16, show 47.2% – equating to 3.4 million children in England – were active, meeting the chief medical officer’s guideline recommendation of taking part in sport or physical activity for at least 60 minutes a day. This is an increase of 219,000 children compared with 2020-21, which is positive progress after the decline in physical activity caused by the pandemic. However, Sport England says it is “troubled” that so many children still fall short of the recommended level of physical activity, with 2.2 million active for less than 30 minutes a day on average. The survey also found that activity among black boys remains low. Despite an increase on last year’s levels, the number who are active is 7.7% lower than pre-pandemic. Inequality is a key factor, with 42% of children from low-income families meeting recommended daily levels, compared with 52% from high-income families. Despite the success of girls’ football, the gender activity gap between boys and girls persists, with boys 5% more likely to be active than girls. The survey found that more children and young people are getting active to help with their mental wellbeing, and many of the activities they are choosing take place in group settings, including team sports, dance, gym or fitness. See <https://www.sportengland.org/research-and-data/data/active-lives>

**Industrial action**

* **School teachers and leaders have been urged to “stand together” and vote for strike action after the “disastrous teacher recruitment figures”.** The general secretaries of the NAHT, NEU and NASUWT have written a joint letter, with TUC backing, to members urging them to return votes in current industrial action ballots. All three unions are balloting members over strike action, with voting set to close in January. “At this critical moment, now is the time to stand together and send a clear and unequivocal message that the teaching profession demands better,” they write. “Please complete your union’s ballot paper and get your ballot paper in the post box today to strengthen our demand for a better deal for teachers and school leaders.”

**Early years and primary**

* **Seven in 10 nurseries and preschools in England will have no option but to increase their fees** without additional financial support from the government towards rising energy costs, according to a survey. The sector is warning the energy crisis could be “a nail in the coffin” for many settings, with more than one in 10 saying they will be forced to close permanently without an extension to the government’s energy bill relief scheme. A six-month energy price cap for businesses has been in place since the beginning of October to help industries manage rising gas and electricity costs, with a separate six-month cap for households, but both are due to end in March 2023. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/dec/02/nurseries-england-warn-fees-rise-energy-crisis>
* For examples of **successful use of the NTP at primary schools**, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ntp-tutoring-can-work/>
* **MPs and peers tasked with completing a year 6 Sats exam have scored lower results on average than the country’s 10-year-olds**. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/dec/06/mps-and-peers-do-worse-than-10-year-olds-in-math-and-english-sats>

**Education news for schools**

* **Daily worship in schools** should end, according to some teachers and education experts who have branded the legal requirement “archaic” now that England is not predominantly Christian. The 2021 census revealed last week that for the first time fewer than half the population in England and Wales described themselves as Christian, while 37% said they had “no religion” Currently, all state schools are legally required to provide an act of “collective worship” that is “broadly Christian” every day. Many heads admit privately they no longer stick to this, preferring to run fewer religious assemblies more relevant to their diverse student bodies. A spokesperson for the DfE said there are no plans to review this law. She said: “Collective worship encourages pupils to reflect on the concept of belief and the role it plays in society. Schools are able to tailor their provision to suit their pupils’ needs.” See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/dec/03/schools-call-for-end-to-archaic-daily-worship-following-uk-census-results>
* **Oak National Academy** has launched a survey to ask teachers across the country for their views on how to improve its provision. Teachers can respond to the online survey until 23 December this year, see <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdrmV05D8pNmSRkaxzIGfKbsg6-kuZU4M3ksURvg-Ouafvmqg/viewform> As well as responses from the survey, Oak said subject experts would support the development process in the first procurement cycle. It is understood that recruitment for subject expert groups will be launched in the new year, with members appointed in spring 2023. Oak’s new resources will be rolled out from September 2023.
* Ofqual has issued “**Letters to teachers and students about arrangements for GCSEs, AS and A levels and vocational qualifications in 2023**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-letters-arrangements-for-exams-and-assessments-in-2023>
* A**s many as 500,000 children do not have a book of their own at home**, with dire consequences for their literacy development. National Literacy Trust (NLT) figures show that one in 15 students aged eight to 18 do not own a book. This rises to one in 10 children from disadvantaged backgrounds, a figure that has gotten worse since last year (when it was one in 11). Furthermore, one in three children on free school meals have fewer than 10 books at home, compared to one in five of their peers. The charity has launched a Christmas appeal to raise funds to get books into the hands of children who need them most and to raise literacy levels in the poorest communities. See <https://literacytrust.org.uk/support-us/fundraising/christmas/>
* For the latest **Ofqual: rolling update**, recent updates regarding regulated qualifications, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-rolling-update>
* **Far fewer disadvantaged pupils than expected received tutoring under the NTP last year**, ministers have revealed after a freedom of information request. Sixty-five per cent of the tutoring provided under the tuition partners’ arm – the key catch-up route run by Randstad – was supposed to reach disadvantaged pupils. But internal performance reports suggest just 49 per cent of tutoring reached pupil premium pupils, hitting as low as 30 per cent in the north east.

**Academies and trusts**

* A new government schools task force led by Baroness Barran is set to launch in the new year aimed at **simplifying financial reporting and data requirements on academy trusts**. The academies minister is to hold a first meeting with sector bodies and unions including the Confederation of School Trusts (CST), the Institute of School Business Leadership (ISBL) and the Association of School and College Leaders, as well as several trust chief executives, in early January. The group will aim to help the DfE understand which financial oversight requirements imposed on trusts by it and the ESFA are either hard to understand or difficult to comply with. The task force has been launched to help inform work being carried out by ESFA reviewing the current financial practices and requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook, as well as its reporting and data provisions
* ESFA has updated “Guidance to help local authorities and academies account for **national non-domestic rates (NNDR)”.** See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-non-domestic-rates-accounting-guidance>
* For an article, “**The schools bill is dead, so where next for academies**?”, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/the-schools-bill-is-dead-so-where-next-for-academies/>

**School management**

* The National Governance Association (NGA) has launched a **career pathway for governance professionals working in schools and academy trusts**. The pathway is a free online resource hosted on NGA’s website. See <https://www.nga.org.uk/News/NGA-News/December-2022/NGA-launches-free-to-access-governance-professiona.aspx>
* For the latest **ESFA Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-7-december-2022>
* The DfE has issued “**National tutoring programme calculator tool: 2022 to 2023**. Work out how much your school will need to contribute and track information during the academic year 2022 to 2023 to add to your year-end statement. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-tutoring-programme-calculator-tool>
* For the **Education Support December Newsletter**, see <https://mailchi.mp/edsupport/your-october-newsletter-3175367?e=e7e9149d14>

**Post 16**

* The DfE has issued “**National Leaders of Governance for further education: national leaders**”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-leaders-of-governance-for-further-education-national-leaders#](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-leaders-of-governance-for-further-education-national-leaders)
* The DfE has issued “An overview of **capital funding for post-16 education** providers, the type of funding available, what it can be used for and when to apply”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fe-capital-funding>
* ESFA has updated “**Coronavirus (COVID-19) 16 to 19 tuition fund**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-16-to-19-tuition-fund>

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