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**152 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Jan 22-28 2022**

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**Attendance**

* **The DfE is seeking views until Feb 28 on proposals to improve the consistency of school attendance support and management**. See <https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-attendance-policy-and-strategy-team/school-attendance-improving-consistency-of-support/> The DfE proposes:
  + New rules requiring all schools have and publicise **attendance policies**, boards and governors having to scrutinise them, and trusts having to provide training and share best practice.
  + **Councils** would face new central thresholds for enforcement that limit discretion and regional differences, and must convene and advise schools.
  + Academy rules would be tightened to make clear only “exceptional circumstances” warrant **authorised absence**, bringing the rules for granting leaves of absence in academies in line with other state funded schools.
  + A clearer more **consistent national framework for the use of attendance legal intervention**, including a new regulatory framework for issuing fixed penalty notices for absence, with plans to “modernise” rules over attendance and admissions registers and information-sharing “in due course”.
  + Another consultation is planned “in the coming weeks” on long-promised plans for a **register of children not in school**.

The number of pupils **persistently absent** increased to 501,642 in secondary schools in autumn 2020, compared with 454,167 in 2019, not including non-attendance in covid circumstances. The latest data shows a **radically different approach to sanctions across the country**, with some local authorities issuing no fines in 2020/21, while others issued over 1,500. The **Children’s Commissioner** is working with a number of local authorities to review interrogate their data and step up efforts to support children that are persistently absent from school.

* Schools are being asked from 26 Jan to **sign up to a new daily attendance data collection trial.** Data will be gathered directly from school registers, reducing administrative work and potentially helping schools, academy trusts, local authorities and central government spot and address system-wide issues more quickly if the trial is successful.  The Department’s automated daily data collection trial will run over the coming months to assess:
  + The quality of the data being collected and how well it allows the government to understand and manage sector-wide attendance trends;
  + The potential for it to replace other forms of attendance data collection to reduce burdens on schools; and
  + How the data can be made available to schools, trusts and local authorities to help them identify and manage local trends and issues.    At all times the Department will manage the data collected in compliance with data protection laws, and the Department’s own data protection policies.

The trial will be run by edtech firm **Wonde,** which will ask for schools’ agreement to share daily pupil-level and attendance data with the DfE. It will then be **automatically extracted from their management information system**s, with “no daily action” by schools required. The DfE said the data would not be used for decision-making or to make judgments about what constitutes a school causing concern. It will also **not be used for inspection**, decisions around academisation or moving schools in and out of trusts. Instead, “termly census data will continue to inform these decisions”.

* **Attendance as of Jan 20**

**Headlines**

A record high of **one in 25 pupils were off school last week**. **Pupil absence owing to Covid has jumped by 100,000 (30 per cent) in two weeks,** with 415,000 pupils in state-funded schools absent. Nearly a quarter of state schools said they had **more than 15 per cent of teachers and leaders absent last week**, up from 18 per cent on January 13, and just 8 per cent at the start of the academic year.

* + **Attendance in all state-funded schools** was 87.4% on 20 Jan, down from 88.6% on 6 Jan.
  + Attendance in state-funded **primary** schools was 89.1% on 20 Jan, down from 91.0% on 6 Jan.
  + Attendance in state-funded **secondary** schools was 85.9% on 20 Jan, same on 6 Jan.
  + Attendance in state-funded **special schools** was 78.4% on 20 Jan, down from 82.0%on 6 Jan.
  + Attendance in state-funded **alternative provision** was 50.8% on 20 Jan, down from 53.9% on 6 Jan.

**Attendance of vulnerable children and pupils eligible for free school meals**

* + In state-funded **primary** schools, approximately 88% of pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), 88% of pupils with a social worker, and 88% of pupils eligible for free school meals were in attendance on 20 Jan. Attendance rates are lower than on 6 Jan when 90% for pupils with an EHCP, 89% of pupils with a social worker, and 89% of pupils eligible for free school meals were in attendance.
  + In state-funded **secondary** schools, approximately 81% of pupils with an EHCP, 75% of pupils with a social worker, and 82% of pupils eligible for free school meals were in attendance on 20 Jan. Attendance rates are higher than on 6 Jan when 74% for pupils with an EHCP, 69% of pupils with a social worker and 73% of pupils eligible for free school meals were in attendance.

**Covid related absence**

* Coronavirus (COVID-19) related pupil absence in **all state-funded schools** was 5.1% on 20 Jan, up from 3.9% on 6 Jan.
* Among pupils absent for COVID-19 reasons, the main reasons for absence on 20 Jan were: pupils with a **confirmed case** of COVID-19 (3.9%), and pupils with a **suspected case** of COVID-19 (0.6%).

This includes:

* 52,000 pupils with a **suspected case** of coronavirus, 0.6% of pupils on roll in open schools, down from 1.3% on 6 Jan when there were 102,000 suspected cases.
* 322,000 pupils with a **confirmed case** of coronavirus, 3.9% of pupils on roll in open schools, up from 2.0% on 6 Jan when there were 159,000 confirmed cases.
* 19,000 pupils **absent from open settings due to attendance restrictions** being in place to manage an outbreak or exceptional circumstances related to COVID-19, 0.2% of pupils on roll in open schools, up from 0.1% on 6 Jan when there were 7,000 attendance restrictions cases.
* 17,000 pupils **absent from open settings due to isolation** for other reasons, 0.2% of pupils on roll in open schools, down from 0.3% on 6 Jan when there were 25,000 cases in isolation for other reasons.
* 5,000 pupils were required to **remain at home or isolate** in line with government guidance, 0.1% of pupils on roll in open schools, down from 0.3% on 6 Jan when there were 21,000 cases required to remain at home or isolate in line with government guidance.

**Early years**

* On 12 January, 85% of children who were **booked to attend** open early years provision attended the setting, slightly up from 84% on 5 January.

**Workforce absence**

* The estimate is that 9.0% of **teachers and school leaders** were absent from open schools on 20 Jan (with 4.5% absent for COVID-19 related reasons), up from 8.6% on 6 Jan.
* The estimate is that 9.4% of **teaching assistants and other staff** were absent from open schools on 20 Jan (with 4.7% absent for COVID-19 related reasons), up from 8.9% on 6 Jan.

**Levels of workforce absence in education settings**

**Teachers and school leaders**

* 24% of all state-funded schools had more than 15% of their teachers and school leaders absent on 20 Jan, compared with 18% at the start of term on 13 Jan, and 8% at the start of the academic year on 16 Sep. The increase has largely been driven by the increase in workforce absence in state-funded primary schools.
* 36% of all state-funded schools had up to 5% of their teachers and school leaders absent on 20 Jan, down from 44% at the start of term on 13 Jan, and down from 65% at the start of the academic year on 16 Sep.

**Teaching assistants and other staff**

* 21% of all state-funded schools had more than 15% of their teaching assistants and other staff absent on 20 Jan, compared with 16% at the start of term on 13 Jan, and 6% at the start of the academic year on 16 Sep. The increase has largely been driven by the increase in workforce absence in state-funded primary schools.
* 33% of all state-funded schools had up to 5% of their teaching assistants and other staff absent on 20 Jan, down from 39% at the start of term on 13 Jan, and 60% at the start of the academic year on 16 Sep.

**Early years settings**

* For the week commencing 17 January an estimated 93% of early years settings were **fully open**, with a further 5% partially open. On 12 January 13% of **paid staff in open group- or school-based settings were absent** from work due to COVID-19-related reasons, and 85% of **children booked into a place** attended a setting.

**Covid issues**

* The DfE has now committed to deliver up to 9,000 **air cleaning units** to early years, schools and colleges across the country to improve ventilation in classrooms – up to 1,000 more than originally promised. Since the government launched its application process, 1,265 education settings have made accepted applications to receive an air cleaning unit, out of 1550 applications, (18% rejected). Special schools and Alternative Provision have already received the air cleaning units they applied for, while all other settings with valid applications will receive them as planned from the start of February.
* The DfE has issued guidance for schools and further education (FE) providers on the **initial supply of coronavirus (COVID-19) home testing kits** for pupils, teachers and staff. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-kits-for-schools-and-fe-providers>
* The DfE has issued summary findings from its survey of **the use of CO2 monitors**, and data on applications for air cleaning units. Findings
  + 96% of settings that responded to the survey confirmed they had begun using the CO2 monitors provided by the Department
  + Of those settings that had begun using the monitors: 95% confirmed they were able to use them to identify when ventilation in a room needed to increase
  + 12% of settings using the monitors reported sustained high CO2 readings of 1500ppm and above – the majority of these were able to remedy this through quick fixes, e.g. opening windows
  + 3% of settings using the monitors reported sustained high CO2 readings of 1500ppm and above that could not be remedied through quick fixes or remedial building
* ESFA has updated “**Coronavirus (COVID-19) mass testing funding for schools and colleges**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-mass-testing-funding-for-schools-and-colleges>
* Schools in some parts of the country are being asked to **keep staff and students wearing masks in communal areas** despite it no longer being recommended by the government nationally. Public health directors in more than half a dozen areas of England have called for this measure to remain in place because of concern over Covid rates locally.

**Infections and vaccinations**

* According to data for England, the rate of new cases for every 100,000 people fell from 1,430.4 among 60- to 64-year-olds in the rolling seven-day period to 1 January, to 529.3 in the rolling seven-day period to 19 January. However, they rose from 941.6 to 2,384.1 for **children aged five to nine** during the same period, and from 1,230 to 1,909.7 for **children aged 10 to 14**. One intervention available for some children is vaccination. However, according to the latest data from the UK Health Security Agency, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1048531/Weekly_Flu_and_COVID-19_report_w3.pdf> uptake of **first doses has been slowing**, with 52% of children aged 12-15 having received at least one Covid jab. See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/25/child-covid-infections-are-rising-in-england-is-low-vaccine-rate-a-factor>
* The Office for National Statistics has revealed that in the week ending 15 January, the **Covid infection rate increased in primary school-aged pupils** with 8.1 per cent testing positive, up from 7.7 per cent two weeks beforehand.
* The DfE is to distribute a total of £8 million in funding from NHS England to **support secondary schools with the in-school vaccination programme** for young people – hosting NHS vaccination teams and passing on materials about vaccination. Further information will be provided to schools shortly with further details on how the NHS funding for vaccination support will be distributed. The funding for schools to continue to support the vaccine programme will provide secondary schools, special schools and alternative provision with a one-off payment of **£1,000 with an additional uplift based on pupil numbers.**

**Heads from secondary, primary and special schools gave evidence to the education select committee**

* **On the government’s catch-up programme**:
  + School leaders described accessing the **National Tutoring Programme** as a “**bureaucratic nightmare**” and instead wanting the money to come directly to schools to boost catch-up. The NTP portal was “very difficult”
  + The NTP is really **variable and quite inconsistent**. Some people were very good in terms of their specialism but they weren’t necessarily very good with children. Particularly children who need a particular style of engagement because they aren’t very able or had connectivity issues or a whole host of things with deprivation
  + **Some tutors didn’t have the recent training** to be “as effective” on early reading catch-up
  + They were "dissatisfied" with the programme in relation to its **SEND** support
  + Schools that have **trained their own staff to mentor students**, rather than engaging with the programme, have made "better progress".
* **On general points:**
  + It is impossible to get **supply teachers**
  + Some of the **retired teachers** being asked to return to the classroom may not have “the most recent CPD”., and in any case there have not been many of them
  + There has been a “significant rise” in **referrals of students to mental health services,** with in-school pastoral team being “swamped” and waiting lists for external services were sometimes three years long.
  + The **adaptations brought in for GCSE and A-level students** this summer do not “go far enough”.
  + They called for an easing of the "strict" criteria that allowed schools to apply for more cash to **support increased workforce costs** via the Covid workforce fund

**Student safety and welfare**

* The **draft online safety bill** would not stop the sharing of "insidious" images of child abuse and violence against women and girls, MPs have said. The Commons culture committee warned the government its proposed legislation is not clear or robust enough. Content which is currently technically legal, such as deepfake pornography, still needs addressing, they said. But the government said the bill will make the UK "the safest place in the world to be online". See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-60103156>
* Funded by the Home Office and in collaboration with DfE, SWGfL and the Marie Collins Foundation have launched the **Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service,** <https://swgfl.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-support-service/> For an article on “**What is harmful sexual behaviour**?”, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-spotting-the-signs-in-children-and-young-people/>
* New data on the government’s **free period product scheme** shows the value of products being ordered increased by almost a quarter (23%) in 2021 to £3.4 million compared with £2.8 million in 2020. The number of environmentally friendly or reusable products ordered increased from less than a third in 2020 (30%) to almost half (48%) of all products in 2021.In total, 13,822 individual organisations (68% of all those eligible) have ordered free period products since the scheme began in January 2020, helping reduce stigma around menstruation. This includes 94% of secondary schools and 90% of post 16 organisations. The government is encouraging more primary schools to order products, with less than two thirds (61%) of primary schools currently engaging in the scheme. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/94-of-secondary-schools-provide-free-period-products-to-students> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-scheme-management-information>
* The ONS has issued a report into the **education and social outcomes for students receiving free school meals** in England. At age 25 years, just 23.0% of FSM recipients who attended school in England had earnings above ​the Living Wage compared to 43.5% of those that didn't. Female FSM recipients face a double hit with just 18% of females who received free school meals earning above the Living Wage, whilst 27% of males did so. Further, significant regional variation was also found in the North-East: only 20% of former pupils who received free school meals earning above the Living Wage. Worryingly the report also showed that 29% of FSM recipients had no earnings recorded at 25 years, compared with 15% of former pupils who did not receive free school meals. The report says that of those with no earnings, “It is possible that they are still on a payroll system but not actively working for a company, for example because they recently left a job, are taking unpaid leave, or are employed on a zero hours contract.” See <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/articles/educationsocialmobilityandoutcomesforstudentsreceivingfreeschoolmealsinengland/initialfindingsonearningsoutcomesbydemographicandregionalfactors>

**Tes Wellbeing Report 2022**

* New figures published today by Tes show 38 per cent of school staff in the UK say they **feel confident in their role**, compared with 79 per cent reported last year when a similar survey was published. The new **Tes Wellbeing Report 2022** also reveals that 67 per cent of teachers in the UK agree that their **workload is unmanageable**. This is three times higher than when staff were asked the same question just over a year ago. The new report says teachers being required to teach online, often for the first time, and having to create teacher-assessed grades after exams were cancelled could be factors that have led to a drop in confidence among the school workforce. Poor communication in the workplace was also identified as a factor leading to low confidence, whereby unmotivated staff may begin to question their own abilities. Key findings include:
* **Self-belief** among school staff has taken a major blow, with now only 38 per cent of UK respondents saying they feel confident performing their role, compared with 79 per cent in the 2020 survey.
* 67 per cent of UK teachers said their **workload is not manageable** - much higher than the international average of 36 per cent across the survey.
* Almost half of school staff said they feel they **don't have a voice** about how things go at their school.
* A similar number said they feel they **don't have the autonomy** to make decisions. This is particularly true for teaching staff: 57 per cent of teachers and 41 per cent of middle leaders said they lack autonomy.
* 47 per cent of UK respondents said there **aren't opportunities for them to develop** in their current position, with only a fifth (22 per cent) feeling that there is.
* School staff are **enjoying their work less**. More than half of those surveyed said they do not find work fun, with less than a fifth saying that they do (down from 45 per cent last year).
* While 81 per cent of UK respondents said that they get a **sense of belonging** to a team in their current roles, only two-fifths of those surveyed said they feel that their colleagues care about them. This is a substantial drop year-on-year; in 2020, the majority of respondents (66 per cent) said they felt their colleagues cared about them.

See <https://www.tes.com/for-schools/content/staff-wellbeing-report-2022>

**Academy and Trust Issues**

* **Senior officials from the DfE have faced questioning from MPs over academy issues**:
* The DfE is looking at reviewing the eight **RSC regions**. One possible scenario would bring the RSC areas into line with the existing nine government regions, but it did not commit to when this would happen.
* The DfE had been able to ensure that the **free school programme** continued at a similar rate during the pandemic, with 63 new schools opening through this route in 2019-20.
* The number of schools **converting to academies** fell by almost 50 per cent in 2020, with the sector having "other things on its mind".
* The DfE did not have a "house view" on **whether MATs should only run schools in one phase of education**. But, "Any trust that is taking on a **primary school** needs to be able to demonstrate that they understand the effective running of primary schools”
* Although the DfE wants all pupils to be educated in MATs, it does not want **a single trust to have a monopoly in running schools in a local area**.
* The DfE is committed to introducing the **£30,000 salary** and that this would be factored into the next round of STRB recommendations; £30,000 remained an attractive starting salary despite inflation
* ESFA has issued “**Academy trust financial management good practice guides**. Information outlining good practice in academy trust financial management and assurance”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides>
* Just £2.6 billion of the £7.2 billion requested has been handed out in **Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) grants** since 2017; these go to smaller academy trusts. By contrast, larger trusts and councils get guaranteed **School Condition Allocations (SCA) funding**, which they can choose how to invest across their schools. Analysis found SCA funding has jumped 435 per cent since 2015, versus a 5 per cent rise for CIF applicants and 12 per cent decline for maintained schools
* From the **Kreston Academies Benchmark Report**:
* On average, leaders of the largest MATs surveyed have seen a **salary increase** that is proportionally greater than the sector as a whole. Overall, the average salary of MAT leaders and heads of primary single-academy trusts in the survey have increased by 4.5 per cent in 2021. The average salary of heads of secondary single-academy trusts has increased by 2.6 per cent. Chief executives’ salaries at the largest multi-academy trusts increased by around £10,000 on average in the past year. Average salaries for MAT leaders in trusts responsible for more than 5,000 pupils have increased from £140,396 in 2020 to £150,066 last year - a 6.8 per cent rise.
* The Covid lockdown in 2021 has helped academy trusts to achieve another **record year of surpluses**. The average in-year financial surplus for a MAT doubled to more than £460,000 in 2021, up from £221,000 in 2020. This continues a trend identified in academies in 2020 following the first national lockdown. Academy trust cash balances have been bolstered through the injection of government funding earmarked for Covid testing, education catch-up programmes and other Covid-related costs that schools have not yet had the time or capacity to spend because of the pandemic. Surpluses have also been strengthened by the cancellation of exams and the reduced costs associated with utilities, staffing and maintenance, due to schools not being fully open during lockdown
* These **high surpluses will be needed to help fund the recovery effort** from Covid. "Additional spending resulting from rising inflation, soaring energy prices and the increased cost of plugging staff shortages will rapidly eat into financial gains across the sector too."
* An increasing number of MATs are carrying out "**GAG pooling"** - moving schools' general annual grant funding into a central pot and then redistributing the money back to schools. However, only one in seven trusts surveyed in the Kreston report were doing this last year. In 2021, 14 per cent are identified as GAG pooling - up from 11 per cent in 2020 and 5 per cent in 2019.
* MATs featured in the report have **continued to grow** in the last 12 months, with the average size of a trust increasing from 6.8 schools last year to 7.5 in 2020-21. Nearly 65 per cent of trusts reported expected growth in 2022-23, with 57 per cent forecasting up to three additional schools joining their group. Just over a third of trusts (35 per cent) are expecting no growth, while 6.5 per cent expect to grow by between four to six schools. But **the number of academies** overall rose only 2.5 per cent amid Covid disruption. The number of single-academy trusts also continued to fall, but at a slower rate than last year.
* 61 per cent of trusts predicted **their reserves will be lower in three years' time**, compared with 14 per cent of trusts that predicted the level would remain the same. Trusts with a maximum of 10 schools were much more likely to expect reserves to have reduced by 2025 than those with 11 or more schools, reflecting the economies of scale achievable in a larger trust.
* 97 per cent of MATs are now either fully or partially **centralised** and that this approach has been increasing over time. It classes trusts as fully centralised when areas such as finance, human resources or school improvement are managed at trust level. The report said only 3 per cent of trusts featured in the report do not follow a model based on centralisation.

See <https://www.kreston.com/2021-kreston-academies-benchmark-report-now-available/>

**Public examinations**

* **Disadvantaged students due to sit GCSEs this summer** have missed an average of eight weeks of school since they started Year 10 in autumn 2020 - on top of the two months they were learning remotely when schools were closed in early 2021, new data reveals. The data shows that, overall, **current Year 11s have been absent from classrooms** for an average of five and a half weeks on top of the two months of school closures since September 2020. And just over one in seven students on free school meals (FSM) have been off school for a whole term, according to the data collated by FFT Education Datalab. The data reveals that just last term Year 11s missed a total of 11.4 per cent of sessions, - almost double the rate for 2019 (6.5 per cent). The data shows that more than one in seven (16.3 per cent) of disadvantaged students have missed almost a third (at least 30 per cent) of sessions since they started Year 10 in September 2020, the equivalent of a full term, compared with 4.6 per cent of their peers. Overall, students on free school meals missed 18.5 per cent of sessions, equivalent to around eight weeks of school (excluding last year's lockdown periods of online learning). Only just under a third (32.8 per cent) of disadvantaged students missed less than 10 per cent of sessions. See <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2022/01/how-much-in-person-teaching-have-year-11-missed/>
* The **NAHT** has called on the government to **review its plans to make sure that exams are fair for this year's GCSE and A-level cohorts**, given the disruption to their education caused by the virus. "Advance notice information should be published as soon as possible - no need to wait until 7 February - to give teachers and students more information which may help them to plan learning and revision in the remaining time available”. "Communications around the announcement will be vital, particularly to address the variation in the information being provided for different subjects and uncertainty about the impact of it for lower ability students." A high level of absence amongst both teachers and learners is putting "huge pressure on students in exam years" and that the NAHT was hearing "more and more questions" about how fair it is for exams to go ahead. The NAHT said the government should review adaptations to exams "to ensure they go far enough to properly address the impact of the current circumstances which schools, teachers and students find themselves in". If exams do go ahead, it said the decision to publish performance data for schools should be reversed because it would "simply be a reflection on the impact of the pandemic on students and schools". **Ofqual** said it did recognise “students’ education has been disrupted”, and this is why “an unprecedented package of support has been put in place”. It was “looking forward” to the return of exams this summer, adding the advanced information will help teachers manage revision time in the lead-up to exams. A **DfE** spokesperson said they have set out “clear plans for a wide range of exam adaptations to support students, which take into account expected disruption this academic year”. See <https://naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/Press-room/ArtMID/558/ArticleID/1481/NAHT-calls-on-government-to-ensure-a-fair-deal-for-students-ahead-of-2022-exams>
* The main findings in the provisional number of **appeals for GCSE, AS and A level in summer 2021 in England** were:
* Overall, 17,490 of the 6.0 million grades certified for GCSEs, AS and A levels were challenged (0.3% of all grades certified) compared with 3,570 the year before., i.e, appeals over teacher assessed GCSE and A-level grades awarded last summer more than quadrupled compared to 2020 after students were allowed to appeal based on the academic judgement used
* Overall, 6,000 of the 6.0 million grades certified for GCSEs, AS and level were changed as part of an upheld appeal in summer 2021 (0.1% of all grades certified)
* Nearly 5,000 GCSE grades were challenged over the teacher's decision on the final grade, while 3,465 were challenged on the basis of the examples of a pupil's work used to justify the grade awarded.
* At AS and A level, 4,245 results were appealed on the basis of the grade awarded, and 3,065 challenged teachers on the selection of work they had chosen to justify a grade.
* A total of 9,180 appeals of GCSE grades were received in summer 2021 compared with 2,220 in 2020. However, less than half (40 per cent) were upheld, compared with 85 per cent in summer 2020
* Most of the 3,655 GCSE result appeals upheld led to a grade change (3,320). This compares with summer 2020 when 1,875 appeals were upheld and 1,855 appeals received led to a grade change.
* The most common ground for an appeal was unreasonable exercise of academic judgement.
* Most upheld appeals resulted in a grade change. In total, 5,250 pupils had their GCSE or A-level grade changed in 2021 following an appeal. At GCSE, 77% of grades changed by one grade, with 80% of grades changing by one grade at A level.

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/appeals-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2021>

* In a speech, The Chief Regulator for Ofqual set out **the support for students taking exams and assessments this year**, including advance information and a fair approach to grading. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/dr-jo-saxton-speech-at-sixth-form-colleges-association-conference>

**Early years and primary**

* The DfE has issued “The **reading framework: teaching the foundations of literacy**. Guidance for schools to meet existing expectations for teaching early reading”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-reading-framework-teaching-the-foundations-of-literacy>
* **Primary schools** across the country have been **receiving boxes of face masks** from the DfE in recent weeks - despite never being asked by the government to use them for pupils or in lessons.

**Education news for schools**

* A report from the all-party parliamentary group on **political literacy**, the University of Sheffield and Shout Out found that thousands of pupils are leaving school without receiving any political education at all. A survey of 3,000 teachers working at more than 2,000 English secondaries suggested that one-fifth of schools were teaching no political literacy material at all, in citizenship lessons or even in tutor group sessions or one-off political events. See <https://www.shoutoutuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/REPORT_souk2021_view_v8-1.pdf>
* The ideas of academy leader **Ian Bauckham**, who is also the chair of Ofqual about "**emergency timetable changes**", has sparked "anger and incredulity" among teachers. The Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM), which represents UK music teachers and subject leads, wrote an open letter accusing Mr Bauckham of spreading "an unhelpful message to headteachers about prioritising core subjects to the detriment of a broad and balanced curriculum". Subject association Music Mark and the Music Teachers' Association (MTA) also released a joint statement in response to Mr Bauckham, calling his words "short-sighted" and "badly judged". All three organisations said Mr Bauckham's words did not fit with government policy of a "broad and balanced" curriculum for education recovery.
* For an article on “How schools can reverse **Gypsy and Roma under-achievement**”, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/gypsy-roma-traveller-pupils-achievement-mps/>
* Ofsted reports that describe pupils as “**lower ability**” have been criticised for “perpetuating the myth” that certain children are innately inferior. Experts say such phrasing disproportionately impacts pupils from poorer backgrounds and have called on the inspectorate to stop using the terminology. Ofsted admits the description goes against its own style guide, which says inspectors should refer to pupils with “**lower prior attainment**” rather than “lower ability”.
* Free **online anti-racism training** is to be made available for the first time for the 300,000 governors and trustees, only 4% of whom are from a minority-ethnic background. The National Governance Association (NGA) has entered into partnership with ASCL to provide the training. See <https://www.nga.org.uk/News/NGA-News/January-2022/Free-e-learning-on-equalities-diversity-and-inclus.aspx>
* Asked which changes to the **English syllabus** they felt would most help their students, 80% of secondary school teachers, and 69% of primary school teachers, said they wanted **more diverse and representative set texts**. The survey of 2,270 teachers was made by Teacher Tapp for publisher Pearson. The research follows the report last year that just 0.7% of GCSE students in England study a book by a writer of colour, compared with the 34.4% of school-age students in England who identify as Black, Asian or minority ethnic. Although exam boards have since expanded their offerings, Lit in Colour found that lack of budget, and books, were key barriers facing those teachers looking to introduce new texts to their classes. See <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/jan/26/english-teachers-want-diverse-syllabus>
* **The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas** may “perpetuate a number of dangerous inaccuracies and fallacies” when used in teaching young people about the Holocaust, an academic report has said. According to research by the Centre for Holocaust Education at University College London, more than a third of teachers in England use the bestselling book and film adaptation in lessons on the Nazi genocide. See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/27/the-boy-in-the-striped-pyjamas-fuels-dangerous-holocaust-fallacies>
* A Geographical Association report warns that the **limited fieldwork opportunities** available to early career teachers during their training and beyond is "impacting their confidence and subject knowledge to design and lead fieldwork in the future". Prior to exams being cancelled in 2021, the exam regulator Ofqual removed the requirement for schools to declare that they had given GCSE, AS- and A-level geography students a set number of fieldwork days. And the requirement for GCSE and AS-level students to answer exam questions relating to their own fieldwork experience was also removed. Both of these changes will be retained for 2022 exams. However, policymakers must reverse the changes for exams in 2023 and "reinforce" the requirements for fieldwork within the curriculum, according to the report. See <https://www.geography.org.uk/Announcements-and-Updates/research-on-the-needs-and-views-of-teachers/276422>
* Two-thirds of teachers say education about **climate change** is not embedded in their school's curriculum in a meaningful way, a survey suggested. Research by climate education campaign group Teach the Future, drawing on responses from over 4,000 teachers, found 67 per cent reported that their school and subject area did not teach issues relating to climate change in a way that was "meaningful and relevant". "We're in danger of preparing students for a world that's no longer going to exist." See <https://www.teachthefuture.uk/>
* The NEU, NASUWT, NAHT, UCU, UNISON, GMB, and the NUS, alongside SOS-UK, The Edge and ThoughtBox, have written to Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi to share joint concerns that the **curriculum needs to address and reflect the importance of sustainability and the effects of climate change**. See <https://naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/Press-room/ArtMID/558/ArticleID/1482/Joint-letter-to-DfE-on-climate-strategy-in-the-curriculum>
* Members of the **NEU** working at **23 private schools have voted to strike** over opposition to their employers' plans to withdraw from the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). Nearly all - 95 per cent - of NEU teacher-members at the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) have voted in favour of strike action, on a turnout of 84 per cent. See <https://neu.org.uk/press-releases/gdst-vote-yes-strike-action>
* The Church of England has extended the suspension of its school inspections into next month and warned it would be "unfair and unwise" to resume them while schools are still facing Covid staff absences. **Statutory inspections of Anglican and Methodist schools** (SIAMS) had been put on hold until the end of January to allow schools to deal with the pandemic and to avoid the risk of spreading the virus. Schools have now been told that this suspension is being extended until at least Monday 28 February as long "as the situation for schools eases".
* The government is considering **allowing councils to run their own academy trusts** as ministers draw up measures to achieve a fully academised system as part of the government’s upcoming schools white paper, due out later this year. It comes as the DfE told MPs that ministers were exploring “other options” for schools that want to become academies while “holding on to some of the relationships they’ve already got”, with a desire to see strong “families of schools” and fewer standalone academies. As of January 2021, 78 per cent of secondary schools were academies, while just 37 per cent of primary schools held the status. A National Governance Association (NGA) member survey last year found just five per cent of maintained school governors planned to join a MAT in the near future.
* **British Sign Language (BSL)** is on course to become a recognised language, after the government backed a proposal by a Labour MP, aiming at improving accessibility for deaf people and would see the promotion of BSL when making public service announcements It will encourage government departments and public bodies to follow the guidance, giving deaf people “equal access to education, employment, public services such as the NHS”, according to the British Deaf Association (BDA).

**School management and resources**

* The DfE has issued “**School resource management**: **training and support**. Sources of training and support for school business professionals in schools, trusts and other organisations”. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-resource-management-training-and-support>
* The DfE has issued its manual, “**Buying procedures and procurement law** for schools”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-procedures-and-procurement-law-for-schools>
* The DfE has admitted not knowing **how many schools have suffered partial building collapses** – and urges academies to report structural concerns about problems which “may cause harm or … closure”. ESFA will then “consider further support”.
* School staff and other key workers should have concessions on proposed **new driving charges in London** that will “inevitably impact” them, headteachers say. Sadiq Khan, London’s mayor, is exploring implementing a smart charging system in which existing charges are replaced by a pay-per-mile scheme. But with that technology “still years away”, shorter-term measures such as an expansion of the ultra-low emission zone and a “small” charge for all but the cleanest vehicles are also being considered. This **may also be an issue in other cities**, where such schemes are introduced
* For an article where four **BAME headteachers** describe the obstacles they have had to overcome to reach senior leadership roles, see <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/25/there-is-absolutely-systemic-racism-bame-headteachers-share-their-views>
* The DfE has issued “**School funding statistics: 2021 to 2022 financial year**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-funding-statistics-2021-to-2022-financial-year>
* For the latest statistics on **the number of children supported by local authority Children’s Social Care**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vulnerable-children-and-young-people-survey>
* For the latest **ESFA Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-26-january-2022>
* The ESFA has updated “**Dedicated schools grant (DSG): 2021 to 2022**” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-dsg-2021-to-2022>
* The DfE has updated “**School census 2021 to 2022:** technical information. Technical specification and validation rules for submitting 2021 to 2022 school census data”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2021-to-2022-technical-information>
* To find out **how to obtain qualified teacher status (QTS**) to teach in a maintained school or non-maintained special school in England, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/qualified-teacher-status-qts>
* Jamie Oliver and campaigners aiming to **improve the quality of school lunches** are to meet with Nadhim Zahawi, after Oliver teamed up with the leaders of hundreds of schools urging the government to tackle the rise in child obesity since the Covid pandemic. Oliver’s charity Bite Back 2030, with headteachers and academy trust executives, wrote to Zahawi to lobby for changes to the government’s planned food strategy, and to call for schools in England to publish annual food reports showing what progress they have made in meeting standards on health and nutrition. The letter was backed by executives representing many of England’s largest multi-academy trusts – including Ark, Star Academies and Ormiston Academies Trust – totalling more than 600 individual schools. For **student comments about school meals**, see <https://biteback2030.com/spill-the-beans>
* **The DfE is reviewing its own staffing set-up**. “Like many organisations, having reflected on how the COVID-19 outbreak has changed us and our sectors, and at how we want to work in future, we are currently working with our staff to take a purposeful look at how we are organised to deliver.” It links with an independent review launched to ensure the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) “remains effective into the future”. The **ESFA review** will look at the “operating model, governance, accountability and impact” of the organisation. It is part of wider programme of reviews into arm’s length bodies.
* For an update on the **Support staff pay award 2021/22,** see [https://www.naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/News/ArtMID/556/ArticleID/1242/Support-staff-pay-award-202122?\_gl=1\*j32cvq\*\_ga\*NDAyNzE1OTAyLjE2MjI4OTQ1MDY.\*\_ga\_N9LLDHSYC3\*MTY0MzMwNTE1OS4zNS4xLjE2NDMzMDUxNjIuMA..&\_ga=2.81070933.378253051.1643305160-402715902.1622894506](https://www.naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/News/ArtMID/556/ArticleID/1242/Support-staff-pay-award-202122?_gl=1*j32cvq*_ga*NDAyNzE1OTAyLjE2MjI4OTQ1MDY.*_ga_N9LLDHSYC3*MTY0MzMwNTE1OS4zNS4xLjE2NDMzMDUxNjIuMA..&_ga=2.81070933.378253051.1643305160-402715902.1622894506)
* ESFA has issued “Guidance for schools and local authorities on the **schools supplementary grant** for 2022 to 2023”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-supplementary-grant-2022-to-2023>

**Post 16**

* ESFA has issued “**16 to 19 funding allocations supporting documents for 2022 to** **2023**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-funding-allocations-supporting-documents-for-2022-to-2023>
* To nominate your school for a **BTEC Award**, go to <https://www.pearson.com/uk/educators/fe-college-educators/about-btec/btec-awards.html?utm_source=schoolsweekadvertorial&utm_medium=display&utm_campaign=GBVOGP1221BA22>
* ESFA has issued “**Financial assurance: monitoring post-16 funding**” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/financial-assurance-monitoring-post-16-funding>
* For analysis of **Ucas figures on who one a university place on a course in 2021**, see <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/jan/27/record-number-of-black-and-asian-students-accepted-at-top-uk-universities>
* The Commons Education Select Committee said it is to launch an inquiry into **careers education**, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for students after its chair, Robert Halfon, said current provision meant that the "government is not always providing value for money". The committee said the new inquiry will look at whether current careers advice provides young people with sufficient guidance about career choices, employment, training and further and higher education opportunities. It will also look at how arrangements for CEIAG could better support disadvantaged or left-behind groups to access career opportunities that may otherwise not be available to them,

**Tony Stephens**