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**153 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Jan 29-Feb 4 2022**

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**Government's” Levelling Up” White Paper as regards education.**

* Ministers have unveiled measures aiming to **raise educational standards in 55 English target areas with persistently poor outcomes**, including the promise of elite sixth-form colleges for talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/package-to-transform-education-and-opportunities-for-most-disadvantaged> The new “**education investment areas”** will form part of the government’s levelling-up white paper and will see resources focused on schools in the north, the Midlands, the east of England and the south-west for the next decade. Ninety-five per cent of the areas that have been identified for “intensive support” are outside London and the south-east. **Funding for the government’s plans is expected to come from the existing spending review settlement** According to the plans, in these areas:
* The government will also set a new goal of ensuring **that 90% of children leaving primary school reach expected standards in reading, writing and maths by 2030** – in 2019 the figure was just 65
* There will be £3000 **retention payments** to help schools keep high-quality teachers in maths and science in the first five years of their careers.
* Education investment areas will also be prioritised for new **specialist sixth-form free schools** “to ensure talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to the highest standard of education this country offers”.
* **Schools in these areas that have been judged less than good in successive Ofsted inspections** could be moved into multi-academy trusts, subject to a consultation later in the spring. Note that analysis shows just 155 affected schools are not currently in trusts (0.7 per cent)
* Schools in the areas selected will also be given “*support to address wider issues*”, though there is little detail on what this will entail – and no new funding announced. One example given is encouraging schools struggling with **attendance** being encouraged to join a new pilot programme to tackle the issue.
* The package will also include a £560m “**national youth guarantee**” to provide young people with access to clubs, activities, adventures away from home and volunteering opportunities, an extra £200m for **supporting vulnerable families**, already outlined in the spending review, and **skills training** for an additional 200,000 people. On top of investment in youth services, the white paper commits to funding a “reformed” **National Citizen Service** for the next three years. As previously announced, ministers will also ensure the **Duke of Edinburgh award scheme** is offered to every state secondary school. They also want to see the number of **cadets** in the 500 units in England’s schools increase to 60,000 by 2024.
* In addition, **Institutes of Technology** will become the pre-eminent organisation for technical STEM education in England, through which successful ones may apply for a Royal Charter.
* The government will also aim to double the capacity of the **Supported Internship programme** to provide thousands more young people who have additional needs with the skills to secure and sustain paid employment. The DfE has issued “Providing supported internships for young people with an EHC plan. Guidance on how to provide supported internships for young people with special educational needs and an education, health and care (EHC) plan”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-internships-for-young-people-with-learning-difficulties>
* Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (**SEND**), their families and caregivers will be better supported with respite care and internship opportunities. Councils will be funded £30 million for the next three years to set up more than 10,000 additional respite placements, helping to provide positive opportunities for disabled children and young people and to give family carers a break
* Continued in addition will be £45 million of continued targeted support for **families and parents of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND**). These programmes will:
	+ Target support to improve monitoring, support and intervention for local authorities and local health and care partners’ **delivery of statutory SEND services**, with a focus on underperforming areas and sharing best practice;
	+ Improve participation and access for parents and young people for **high quality advice and support**; and
	+ Directly support schools and colleges to **effectively work with pupils with SEND**, for example through training on specific needs like autism.
* Inspectors from the Food Standards Agency are to **check on school lunches** in a small number of LAs to make sure they meet national standards, as part of government plans to tackle obesity. There will also be a new push to **teach students about healthy eating** and food preparation, with all students expected to leave school knowing how to prepare and cook at least six basic recipes, as well as adopting measures championed by the celebrity chef Jamie Oliver. There will be new funding to **train secondary school teachers in cooking and food preparation**, with £5m over three years to give training to a teacher from every state secondary and create courses. State schools will be asked to publish **annual food reports** showing what progress it had made in meeting standards on health and nutrition. The reporting of schools food arrangements will initially be voluntary but the intention is for it become mandatory. **School governors** are also to be given extra training on their responsibilities to improve food standards. There will also be a new **joint project between the DfE and Food Standards Agency** to “test a new approach for local authorities in assuring and supporting compliance with school food standards” Participating councils include Blackpool, Lincolnshire, Plymouth and Nottingham. Pilots will go live in September. But the white paper is **not thought to improve funding for children receiving free school meals**, which includes all infants up to year two. The government pays £2.34 for each child’s food a day, only slightly more than it did a decade ago despite rising prices.
* An extra £200 million is also being invested in the government’s **Supporting Families programme in England**. The programme will help local areas tackle the challenges that families face that can hold children back from attending and achieving at school or put them at risk of neglect or harm.
* The government wants to set up a new **UK National Academy**. It will be entirely free and “used at the choice of headteachers, teachers and parents”. The process for setting up the organisation that will run the academy, and a decision on whether the existing Oak National Academy will be involved, has not yet been finalised. The Welsh and Scottish governments have hit out at UK government plans for a national online academy offering "the best lessons" from "the very best teachers". They say Westminster has "no remit" to establish a UK-wide academy, that they have not been consulted and that the existence of separate education systems in Scotland and Wales has not been taken into account.

All local authorities which contain one of 12 of the government’s **Opportunity Areas** will be designated as Education Investment Areas, and so will benefit from these interventions. Opportunity Areas have been and continue to be effective, with their funding extended up to the end of August 2022.The DfE has issued “**Education Investment Areas: selection methodology**. Methodology and data used to select the local authorities that will become Education Investment Areas”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-investment-areas-selection-methodology> The DfE states that the education investment areas were selected because they had the **lowest outcomes** at the end of both key stage 2 and key stage 4, based on average performance scores between 2017 and 2019. At key stage 2, the DfE used the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, whereas progress 8 scores were used at key stage 4. The list of areas also includes any local authority that contains an **existing opportunity areas**, or one of four areas previously identified as having the “**highest potential for rapid improvement**”.

**The 55 areas selected as Education Investment Areas to raise school standards** include Bedford, Blackpool, Bolton, Bradford, Bury, Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Cornwall, County Durham, Coventry, Darlington, Derby, Derbyshire, Doncaster, Dorset, Dudley, East Sussex, Halton, Hartlepool, Isle of Wight, Kirklees, Knowsley, Leeds, Lincolnshire, Liverpool, Luton, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Norfolk, North Northamptonshire, North Somerset, North Yorkshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Oldham, Peterborough, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Rochdale, Rotherham, Salford, Sandwell, Sefton, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, South Tyneside, St. Helens, Stoke-on-Trent, Suffolk, Sunderland, Swindon, Tameside, Wakefield, Walsall and Wirral.

EIAs, which cover about a third of council areas, account for 39 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals nationally and 38 per cent of those not meeting the expected standard at the end of primary school. **Some of the most deprived areas in England are excluded**, including Birmingham, Hull and the London boroughs of Barking and Dagenham and Hackney; it is also said to be “crucial” that poverty in London is not overlooked.

More than 100 large academy trusts, councils and dioceses will be left £55 million worse off in a **shake-up of school condition allocations (SCA) grants**. Councils affected include eight of the new 55 “education investment areas” targeted for extra support on Tuesday under “levelling up” plans – North Yorkshire, Norfolk, Bedford, Stoke, Rotherham, Halton, Swindon and Plymouth. They stand to lose £5.4 million. SCA funding is a routine annual grant for capital repairs and projects for councils and large multi-academy trusts, voluntary-aided bodies and sixth-form colleges. Schools were informed of the change – for cash covering the financial year starting in just two months – in a letter this week from the DfE’s central capital unit. Meanwhile, 44 trusts and dioceses with more than 500 schools in these areas stand to lose £13.3 million.

See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/investment-area-schools-have-19m-of-repairs-cash-cut/>

Ministers are currently working on a **schools white paper**, which is expected to address the issue of schools structures.

**Attendance**

* The DfE has responded to the **children not in school consultation**, which sought proposals on a local authority register of children not attending school and support for home-educating families See <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/children-not-in-school>

The consultation response outlines its intentions **to legislate at the earliest legislative opportunity to implement a duty on local authorities** to:

* **keep a register of all children of compulsory age in their area who are not registered pupils** at a state or independent school
* provide **support to home educating families**
* **parents of children to supply information to such a register**
* **proprietors of defined settings** to supply information on relevant children

The consultation lacks details on the data required from parents and what sanctions would be taken if they do not abide by the rules. Councils will be told by DfE **what data to collect** and will be “empowered” to share data from the register with “specified agencies where necessary”, such as a safeguarding concern. Local authorities would be open to inspection by these agencies, such as Ofsted, and would need to submit the anonymous data to DfE for statistical purposes. Councils would have to provide support to families who request it, under the plans. **Parents will also have a duty to tell the council their child was not at a registered school**.

* The DfE has updated a case study “**Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/improving-attendance-good-practice-for-schools-and-multi-academy-trusts>
* The Children’s Commissioner announced this week that she would be investigating **children who have “fallen off the radar” during lockdown**. However, **FFT** found that the number of children being taken off school rolls was no different from years prior to the pandemic, with most being home-schooled, moving to private schools or to other parts of the UK or overseas, soothing fears that the pandemic had caused a surge in children being permanently taken out of school. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2022/01/who-are-the-children-who-have-fallen-off-the-radar/>

**Behaviour and exclusion**

* The DfE is seeking views until 31.3.22 on **proposed changes to the behaviour in schools guidance and the suspension and permanent exclusion guidance** for England. See <https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-absence-and-exclusions-team/revised-school-behaviour-and-exclusion-guidance/> The **proposed revised behaviour guidance includes** the following:
* **Promoting good behaviour in schools** "requires a clear vision of what good behaviour looks like". It says that schools should have behaviour curricula that define "expected behaviours in school, rather than only a list of prohibited behaviour". And it explains that the behaviour that is expected from pupils should be made into a "commonly understood routine",
* It makes clear that heads are best placed to make decisions on whether **mobile phones** should be in classrooms, considering the needs of their pupils.
* One new feature is the concept of a “**national minimum expectation of behaviour benchmarks**”. This expectations align with Ofsted’s ‘good’ criteria for behaviour and attitudes. There are six expectations listed. They include that all incidents of bullying and discrimination being dealt with quickly and effectively, general and targeted interventions are in place to improve behaviour and ensuring school leaders “visibly and consistently support all staff in managing” behaviour.
* It states that some misbehaviours are “more likely” to arise from **SEND** pupils so schools should “anticipate likely triggers” and put in place measures to support these. Measures could include planned movement breaks for pupils who find it difficult to sit still for long periods and text message reminders to ensure SEND pupils don’t forget equipment.
* The guidance newly defines removal, also known as **isolation**, as where “a pupil, for disciplinary reasons is required to spend a limited time of out of the classroom at the instruction of a member of staff”. The measure should allow for the continuation of the pupil’s education in a supervised setting and should be a last resort once other strategies have been attempted. It can be used to restore order or enable disruptive pupils to be taken to a place where education can be continued in a managed environment. Schools’ behaviour policy must outline the length of time appropriate for a pupil to be in isolation and “pupils should not be removed from classrooms for prolonged periods of time without the explicit agreement of the headteacher”. There should be a clear process for reintegration for any pupil in removal.
* **All staff should be aware of the measures outlined in the school's behaviour policy** and how they should implement these measures
* Schools' behaviour policies should have a "range of possible **sanctions**", including what it calls "school-based community service", such as tidying a classroom, "suspension" and - "in the most serious of circumstances" - permanent exclusion.
* **Removal of students from classrooms** "should be used once other behavioural strategies in the classroom have been attempted, unless the behaviour is so extreme as to warrant immediate removal".

**Suspension and exclusions**

* Schools and local authorities “should not adopt a ‘**no exclusion’ policy** as an end in itself”. “Instead, schools and local authorities should work to create environments where school exclusions are not necessary because pupil behaviour does not require it.”
* Headteachers should **no longer be able to end a suspension** or permanent exclusion that has already begun earlier than the end date originally fixed.
* The **current limit on the total number of days a pupil can be suspended** in a single year is 45, but the consultation also seeks views on the impact of this being reduced.
* Headteachers would have to now **inform relevant professionals such as social workers and virtual school heads** (VSHs) of a suspension or exclusion “without delay, and no later than three days after their decision”. **Parents** must also be notified within this period.
* **Remote meetings for governing bodies and independent review panels** introduced as a permanent option
* It highlights the need for **governing boards** to “carefully consider the level of pupils moves” and characteristics of excluded pupils to ensure the sanction is “only used as a last resort”. They are told to consider the timing of moves and permanent exclusions as well as interventions in place to support at-risk pupils.
* A **managed move** should only be offered as a permanent transfer, and only when the pupil has been attending the new school under an off-site direction. A review of the direction must have established the pupil has “settled well into the school” and should remain there permanently.

**School rebuilding programme**

* The DfE has issued “**School Rebuilding Programme**. Information about the School Rebuilding Programme including how responsible bodies can nominate a school”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme> This follows a consultation on **prioritising schools for the School Rebuilding Programme** See <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/prioritising-schools-for-the-school-rebuilding-programme> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme-equalities-impact-assessment> The School Rebuilding Programme, announced by the Prime Minister in 2020 and with £2bn to be invested in 100 rebuilds already, is **entering its most intensive phase**. Applications are being invited for the first time for the selection of up to 300 of the programme’s 500 total projects this decade. The Programme will continue to start delivery on 50 new projects each year, with 100 already in progress from selection rounds from last year. The DfE’s prioritisation for this group will be “largely informed by consistent data” from the condition data collection But **for the first time in the Programme, the bodies responsible for running schools such as local authorities and academy trusts will be able to provide additional evidence of their buildings’ condition need**, making sure the selection harnesses local knowledge, helping level up where the need is greatest across the country. The DfE has also confirmed it will continue to prioritise schools with “higher intensity needs” rather than schools with the “greatest volume of need” across the site. Places will be allocated based on the condition and “significant safety issues”. They won’t target buildings of certain ages or of particular construction types, nor will they consider wider school characteristics including education performance.

**Covid issues, infections and vaccinations**

* Surveillance data from the UK Health Security Agency **suggests special schools are being disproportionately affected by Covid**. Last week, special schools recorded the lowest attendance, falling from 82 to 78.4 per cent; characteristics of special schools, such as a lack of social distancing, an inability for some pupils to conduct LFD tests and pupils “less able to wear masks”, were exacerbated by Omicron. Supply agencies were “rarely a suitable option because the staff available cannot necessarily replicate the skills and experiences
* **Covid rates have increased among both primary and secondary school-aged pupils**, despite declining for the rest of the country's adult population, according to the latest official figures. The highest increase was among younger and primary-aged children. More than one in 10 children between the age **of 2 and Year 6** in primary school tested positive for the coronavirus at the end of last week (22 January), the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has revealed. In this age group, 11.8 per cent of children are estimated to have had the virus on 19 January. The figures also show that 6.5 per cent of secondary school pupils in **Years 7-11** tested positive for Covid on 19 January, up from 5 per cent the previous week. Cases started rising again among older students from 13 January, the data shows. See <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19/latestinsights>
* New ONS figures reveal that **teachers are among the professions most likely to have had three doses of the Covid vaccine**. At the end of last year, 64.9 per cent of adults aged 18-64 years who were employed in England had received three coronavirus vaccinations, while 8.8 per cent were unvaccinated. Among occupation groups, health professionals (80.4 per cent) and teaching and other educational professionals (76.0 per cent) were most likely to have received three vaccinations. They were also the least likely to be unvaccinated at 4.2 per cent and 4.8 per cent respectively.
* **Young children between the ages of five and 11 considered most at risk of coronavirus are being offered Covid jabs from 31.1.22 in England**. Eligible children include those with learning disabilities and long-term conditions, such as diabetes and children with serious underlying heart and lung conditions and those living with people with weakened immune systems. Most jabs will be given by GP-led teams and in hospital hubs. Officials say parents and guardians should wait to be invited by the NHS. Young children at risk will be offered two Pfizer vaccines eight weeks apart - at a third of the adult dose. Separately, NHS England plans send out **flu vaccine reminders** to the parents and guardians of eligible children. In England this includes all two-and-three-year-olds and all pupils from reception age to school leavers, to drive up protection from the virus.
* The government rescinded the requirement **for masks in secondary school classrooms** in England on 20 January and since 27 January they have no longer been compulsory in communal indoor spaces either. But a number of schools that complied with the change in the rules are having to reintroduce them a week later because of outbreaks in infections. In some areas, including Enfield in north London, Calderdale in West Yorkshire, and Hertfordshire, public health teams are now recommending that masks be temporarily reinstated in schools where there are significant outbreaks. At least nine education authorities are also advising that masks remain in place in the schools’ communal areas, despite the change in national guidance
* **Children attending state schools in the most deprived parts of England are almost half as likely to be vaccinated as those in the most affluent places**, figures out from the Office of National Statistics this morning also suggest. Only about 36% of those aged 12 to 17 in the poorest areas have had at least one dose of a Covid vaccine, compared with 70% in the least deprived neighbourhoods. Overall, just over half of pupils aged 12 to 15 and 70% of 16 and 17-year-olds have had at least one jab, according to the data, which runs up to 9 January. The figures also suggest differing rates of vaccination between ethnic groups, with Chinese and Indian pupils the most likely to have had the jab. Gypsy or Roma pupils and Black Caribbean pupils were the least likely to be vaccinated, with rates of just 12% for both groups. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special education needs were also less likely to have had the vaccine.
* **The Covid pandemic has “destroyed morale” among school leaders in England, who feel they have been scapegoated for government failures** during the crisis instead of being hailed as heroes for their role on the frontline, MPs have been told. School leaders told a parliamentary briefing that **a pay freeze, soaring workload and a mental health and wellbeing crisis** are also acting as deterrents to the next generation of headteachers. The **NAHT** said the **school leadership supply** is already teetering on the brink of collapse and warned of an exodus from the senior ranks of the profession once the crisis is over. A recent NAHT survey found that more than half (53%) of school leaders who are not yet headteachers do not aspire to headship, up from 40% in 2016. Almost nine in 10 assistant and deputy heads (87%) said concerns about personal wellbeing were a deterrent to become a head and 93% accused the government of failing to support their wellbeing during the pandemic. See <https://naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/Press-room/ArtMID/558/ArticleID/1493/Experience-of-school-leaders-during-pandemic-has-destroyed-morale-MPs-told>
* The DfE has updated “**COVID-19 12 to 15 vaccination programme funding for schools**: conditions of funding” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-12-to-15-vaccination-programme-funding-for-schools-conditions-of-funding>
* Teachers fear children have become "**feral" and are suffering "extreme" separation anxiety** as a result of the pandemic disrupting their education, ministers have been told. MPs raised concerns shared by teachers in their constituencies as they debated the government's education catch-up and mental health recovery programmes today. MPs then gave a series of examples in which teachers had highlighted to them how pupils had struggled on returning to the classroom after lockdowns.
* ESFA has updated “Coronavirus (COVID-19) **mass testing funding** for schools and colleges. Information about the funding allocations associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) National Testing Programme”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-mass-testing-funding-for-schools-and-colleges>

**Student health, safety and welfare**

* The DfE has updated “Information for local authorities who will receive funding to **support disadvantaged children during the 2022 Easter, summer and Christmas holidays**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme>
* Police made an average of 669 **child protection referrals** to social services every day last year because of incidents of domestic abuse across England and Wales, a new analysis has disclosed. The NSPCC has found that data from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) shows there were 244,197 referrals in 2020/21, an 8% increase from the previous year
* Too many young people are still not being taught the basics of **relationships and sex education** despite the subject having now been mandatory for 18 months https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/news/news/new-polling-shows-young-people-are-being-failed-poor-relationships-and-sex-education. New research finds lessons are inconsistently delivered, with few opportunities to ask questions, and with students having little influence over how to improve things. <https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/news/news/new-polling-shows-young-people-are-being-failed-poor-relationships-and-sex-education>
* **Vulnerable teenagers are being let down by a care system** that is not fit-for-purpose and often places them in greater danger of exploitation. See <https://thecommissiononyounglives.co.uk/anne-longfields-speech-to-inside-government-a-new-care-system-to-protect-vulnerable-children/>
* The Anna Freud Centre is creating a set of resources to help school staff understand the **mental health impact of racism** on children and young people and learn more about what they can do to tackle it. <https://www.annafreud.org/insights/news/2022/01/new-podcast-series-talking-racism-and-mental-health-in-schools/>
* Join the DfE and subject experts for a series of three 90-minute webinars on Wednesday 2, 9 and 16 March, all starting at 4pm, to support high-quality delivery of relationships, sex and health education (**RSHE**). The webinars will focus on three important topics: domestic abuse, pornography and sexual exploitation. See <https://www.naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/News/ArtMID/556/ArticleID/1488/Tackling-sexual-abuse-and-harassment>
* **LGBT+ History Month** is celebrated every February as an annual commemoration of the history, achievements and contributions of LGBT+ people in the UK, as well as promoting equality and diversity for the benefit of all. See <https://lgbtplushistorymonth.co.uk/>
* Social workers are warning of a **rise in the number of children with mental health problems** since the start of the pandemic, with official figures recording a 25% increase as successive lockdowns and school closures take a toll. Councils said they have “grave concerns” over the growing demand for help, with nearly 1,500 children a week presenting with mental health problems. There were 77,390 children who had been assessed as having a mental health need by councils on 31 March 2021, an increase of 25% on the 61,830 seen two years earlier, according to statistics from the DfE. The increase may be an undercount as there has also been a 31% slump in the number of referrals from schools – 36,000 fewer cases – reflective of the restrictions on school attendance in place for parts of the year to April 2021. The pandemic has triggered increased pressure from gangs, through county line drug dealing networks, as well as sexual harassment, social workers reported. The most common problems remained the impact of a parent being subject to domestic violence and a parent’s poor mental health. Separate NHS figures, <https://digital.nhs.uk/news/2021/rate-of-mental-disorders-among-children-remained-stable-in-2021-after-previous-rise-report-shows> showed that in 2021, one in six children in England had a probable mental disorder, up from one in nine in 2017, with girls aged between 11 and 16 more likely to have experienced a decline in mental health than boys the same age. The proportion of 11- to 16-year-olds with eating problems almost doubled from 2017 to 2021. Thirteen per cent of 11- to 16-year-olds and 24% of 17- to 23-year-olds felt their lives had been made “much worse” by coronavirus restrictions. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-60197150>
* **Children with mental health problems are dying** because of failings in NHS treatment, coroners across England have said in what psychiatrists and campaigners have called “deeply concerning” findings. In the last five years coroners have issued reports to prevent future deaths in at least 14 cases in which under-18s have died while being treated by children’s and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). The most common issues that arise are delays in treatment and a lack of support in helping patients transition to adult services when they turn 18. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/feb/03/warnings-over-nhs-mental-health-care-issued-in-14-young-deaths-in-five-years>

**Early years and primary**

* The STA has updated “Information for local authorities (LAs) on **training and standardisation for moderators of key stages 1 and 2 English writing**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teacher-assessment-moderation-standardisation-and-training-process>
* Thousands of children face an increased risk of catching deadly **measles** in England, senior health officials have warned, as “very worrying” figures reveal MMR vaccine rates have fallen to their lowest level in a decade. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the NHS have launched a joint appeal urging parents and guardians to ensure their children have had their measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccines – as well as other routine jabs – before starting school. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, there has been “a significant drop” in the number of children getting MMR jabs and other childhood vaccines, UKHSA said. Between July and September last year, the most recent figures available, just 88.6% of children had had their first MMR dose by the age of two while only 85.5% had had both doses at the age of five. It means that more than one in 10 children aged five are not up to date with their two doses of MMR vaccine. Of 2,000 parents and guardians of children aged five or under surveyed, almost half (48%) were unaware measles can lead to serious complications such as pneumonia and brain inflammation. Just four in 10 (38%) were aware that measles can be fatal.
* The DfE has updated its list of **early years initial teacher training (ITT) providers**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-initial-teacher-training-itt-providers-and-school-direct-early-years-lead-organisations>
* Ofsted has told **primary** schools it is **not essential that they design their own curriculums** and reassured primaries that inspectors will also **not expect subject leaders to be specialists**. “Schools also make use of schemes of work that are developed by subject specialists. Ofsted does not consider it necessary for schools to design their curriculums themselves, it just needs to be ambitious and coherent”. Small primary schools inspectors are aware they may not have the capacity to provide the same resources as larger schools during visits. As such, **deep dives** will focus on “what matters most for the quality of each pupil’s education: whether pupils are learning the knowledge they need”. **Questions** will focus on issues such as whether the subject curriculum matches the “scope and ambition” of the national curriculum and if inspectors see how content is broken down into manageable chunks which build towards “clear end points” Inspectors will also question if the “identified chunks” are logically sequenced and if they prepare pupils for future learning. Ofsted also clarified they have “no expectation” about what **paperwork** is provided during a deep dive as it is up to schools how they record and set curriculum expectations. See <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/02/02/what-to-expect-on-a-primary-deep-dive-some-guidance-for-subject-leaders/>
* An agency funded by the government to support and improve maths teaching has been accused of using its position to "unfairly" promote the children's television show **Numberblocks.** The National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) website contains resources that can be used alongside episodes of the programme to teach maths to young children. Previously, NCETM has also pointed parents to Numberblocks DVDs available from online retailers. The British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA), which represents over 300 suppliers, has written to the Department for Education and NCETM, complaining that the resources are being promoted without proper processes being followed

**Public examinations in 2022**

* Ofqual will **evaluate the impact of giving advance information on topics to students this year** to “inform thinking for future years”. Dr Jo Saxton, chief regulator, said she saw the measure as a “really exciting” adaptation, brought in to help exam year students focus their revision in the light of continuing Covid disruption. Dr Saxton said that exam boards are working to provide just enough information to aid revision without revealing the questions. She also said:
* There are no plans to "switch off" the **plan B exam contingency measures** that schools are being asked to carry out in case exams have to be cancelled for the third year running because of Covid. Schools have been asked to carry out mock-style exams throughout the year in case exams are cancelled and schools are asked to carry out teacher-assessed grades (TAGs)
* There will be **no standardisation model to determine students' grades**" and that exam grades for GCSEs and A levels would not be set by any "single statistical midpoint" between 2019 and 2021 grading. Grading in 2022 will be set between the standards of 2019, when full exams were last sat before the pandemic, and the teacher-assessed grades (TAG) system in 2021. She said: "As a check and balance, of course exam boards will use other evidence, including statistical evidence of how students were graded when exams were last taken, so that grade boundaries do, indeed, deliver this generous midpoint approach."
* She understood concerns that **universities may raise the grades** on which offers are based if results this year are as "generous" as those in 2021. But she added: "Our grading requirements will provide a safety net for this cohort and it is likely to mean that results overall are higher than in normal years."
* For the latest **Ofqual rolling update**, information on qualifications which have been disrupted by coronavirus (COVID-19), see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-rolling-update>
* Ofqual has issued “Publications relating to the awarding of **vocational, technical and other general qualifications** in the academic year 2021 to 2022”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/vocational-technical-and-other-general-qualifications-in-2022>

**Teacher misconduct**

* Following consultation, the DfE has issued revised guidance, **“Teacher misconduct: the prohibition of teachers**”, See <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1051778/Teacher_misconduct_consultation_-_government_response.pdf> Stalking, upskirting, revenge porn and controlling or coercive behaviour have been added to a list of offences for which teachers can be banned. The DfE has also made clear other behaviours beyond listed offences can be dubbed unacceptable conduct, and updated “incompatible” behaviour to include failures protecting children, and breaching exam rules – or colluding in or concealing it, and inappropriate use of off-rolling”. The largest change to initial proposals involves adding child cruelty to offences which should “weigh in favour of not offering a review period” – added partly in light of “recent tragic cases”.
* The DfE is also seeking views until March 14 on **the teacher misconduct regulatory arrangements** operated by the Teaching Regulation Agency. See <https://consult.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-in-schools-team/teacher-misconduct-regulating-the-teaching-profess/> Proposed reforms to widen government powers to ban teachers from the classroom would also apply to those who have left the profession, are between jobs and people working in online schools. Changes would mean department officials investigating fraud or exam cheating can formally trigger misconduct probes into teachers, rather than having to wait for schools, police or others to refer cases. The move could see bans for such misconduct imposed faster. A third reform would see the TRA able to ban staff from more settings; online education providers, further education colleges and other post-16 providers would be added to the list.

**Ofsted**

* For the latest **Ofsted blogs and videos**:
	+ Social care blog post: Our new report on care leavers’ experiences of preparing to leave care, <https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/01/27/report-care-leavers-experiences-preparing-to-leave-care/>
	+ Video: Aimee Floyd, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), talks about attendance in schools, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBuGxw-068c>
	+ Video: Janet Pearce, HMI, talks about CPD, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQKpZxOwyg4> ,
	+ Video: Janet Pearce, HMI, talks about what happens after an inspection, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBlnzWQkzVo>
	+ Video: Shaun Jarvis, HMI, talks about disadvantaged pupils, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6atg4hHQeCE>
	+ Video: Clive Dunn, HMI, talks about alternative provision, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bIA-Tpsy6Q>
* Ofsted has issued “**Non-association independent schools inspections and outcomes: management informatio**n” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/non-association-independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes-management-information>

**Learning Recovery**

* **BBC Bitesize** is offering educationally approved, curriculum relevant self-study and home-learning to 5-16 year olds. The website includes more than 20,000 pages of curriculum. BBC Bitesize also continues to support teachers and students with new and updated KS3 guides in English, maths, biology, chemistry, physics, history and geography. These broad ranging new courses can support learning, homework and revision. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ks3-resources-for-teachers-and-students-to-support-learning-homework-and-revision/> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>
* A trial to **extend the school day in Wales** has started. 13 primary and secondary schools and one college will take part in a pilot scheme - adding an extra five hours a week for groups of pupils. A total of 1,800 children will have a longer day for 10 weeks and take part in sessions such as art, music and sport, as well as academic lessons. But trade union NAHT Cymru said it had not been provided with any evidence to support extending the school day and raised concerns about the potential extra workload on staff. See <https://naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/Press-room/ArtMID/558/ArticleID/1490/NAHT-Cymru-comments-on-plans-to-extend-the-school-day-in-Wales>
* ESFA has updated, “**Get help with technology**: conditions of internet access and device grants”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-help-with-technology-conditions-of-internet-access-and-device-grants>

**Research papers**

* The Education Policy Institute (**EPI**) has published a research paper offering **new methods to measure pupils’ inclusion** based on admissions, attendance and exclusions. The paper, supported by the NEU, calls for school networks such as academy trusts, federations, dioceses and other local authority schools, to be judged against inclusion metrics as well as those concerned with attainment. EPI argues the current sole focus on pupil progress and attainment has “serious limitations” and can lead to exclusionary practices such as ‘off-rolling’ and vulnerable children missing out on school places. See <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/measuring-pupil-inclusion/>
* The Independent Assessment Commission, funded by the NEU, has published an 80-page report today on the **future of assessment and qualifications** in England. IAC say their evidence suggests qualifications are “inequitable and unreliable” and do not provide young people with skills to “thrive” in the 21st century. In a series of 10 recommendations, they say alternative approaches to high-stakes exams as the only assessment mode should be trialled. One solution is allowing students “opportunities to demonstrate achievements when ready” through 14 to 19 education. See <https://neu.org.uk/campaigns/assessment>

**ITT and teacher CPD**

* The DfE has issued “**International qualified teacher status** (iQTS)”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-qualified-teacher-status-iqts>
* 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>
* The additional cost of embedding 35 hours of high-quality **CPD** a year for all teachers would most likely be offset by improved retention rates, researchers have concluded. A study from Pro Bono Economics (PBE, 2022) and commissioned by charity the PTI estimates that as many as 12,000 teachers a year could be prevented from quitting. What is more, investing in high-quality CPD would be more cost-effective than trying to recruit and train the additional teachers needed to replace those who leave. See <https://www.probonoeconomics.com/learning-to-save-teacher-cpd-as-a-cost-effective-approach-to-improving-retention>
* There is a **Religious Education Leadership Programme** which is a one- to two-year mentoring and coaching programme developing leadership skills in middle leaders. It is free to schools. Applications are open now until 31 March 2022 for a September 2022 start. See <https://www.reonline.org.uk/leadership/leadership-programme/>
* For **STEM CPD** courses, see <http://email.stem.org.uk/q/11oBrIRdv1FFE88TKXeXhxT/wv>
* The DfE has updated “**National professional qualifications (NPQs) reforms**. The government’s plans to introduce new national professional qualifications (NPQs) and review existing NPQs”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-reforms>
* Around 400 schools in England don't have a **teacher for physics A- level**, and without swift action, the shortage would become more pronounced, as the squeeze on specialists was creating "extra challenges" to those that remain in the profession, Rachel Youngman, deputy chief executive at the Institute of Physics (IoP) has said. She said that a scheme supporting engineering graduates to go into physics teaching was needed to solve the recruitment issue and that it was vital to ensure that those in the job at the moment were being offered professional development opportunities to make sure they did not leave their roles. Just 22 per cent of the necessary physics teachers were recruited last year, according to DfE data. See <https://www.iop.org/about/blogs/not-invest-physics-skills-jeopardise-economic-growth#gref>

**School management**

* The DfE has issued “**Supporting excellent school resource management**. Help and support for schools to reduce cost pressures and make every pound count” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-excellent-school-resource-management>
* The DfE has issued a manual, “**Buying for schools**. Resources for buying goods and services, and finding DfE-recommended suppliers”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-for-schools>
* The DfE has updated “**Transport to schools and colleges** during the COVID-19 pandemic”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-to-school-and-other-places-of-education-autumn-term-2020>
* ESFA has issued details about **National Careers Service careers workshops**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/get-help-to-apply-for-the-job-you-want-and-make-your-job-application-stand-out-from-the-crowd>
* The DfE has set out the financial support available to **alternative provision** (AP) schools and colleges to support current year 11 students into post-16 education. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/alternative-provision-year-11-transition-funding>
* ESFA has updated, “**Dedicated schools grant** (DSG): 2022 to 2023”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-dsg-2022-to-2023>
* ESFA has issued “**Academies general annual grant allocation guides**: 2022 to 2023” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-general-annual-grant-allocation-guides-2022-to-2023>
* For the latest **ESFA Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-2-february-2022>
* The DfE is hosting **webinars** on how using their approved frameworks could help your school get **value for money**. See [https://www.naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/News/ArtMID/556/ArticleID/1495/Upcoming-DfE-webinars?\_gl=1\*1egkpoo\*\_ga\*NDAyNzE1OTAyLjE2MjI4OTQ1MDY.\*\_ga\_N9LLDHSYC3\*MTY0MzkwOTUyNC4zNi4xLjE2NDM5MDk1OTMuMA..&\_ga=2.263982927.2107209628.1643909525-402715902.1622894506](https://www.naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/News/ArtMID/556/ArticleID/1495/Upcoming-DfE-webinars?_gl=1*1egkpoo*_ga*NDAyNzE1OTAyLjE2MjI4OTQ1MDY.*_ga_N9LLDHSYC3*MTY0MzkwOTUyNC4zNi4xLjE2NDM5MDk1OTMuMA..&_ga=2.263982927.2107209628.1643909525-402715902.1622894506)
* **Building material shortages and price hikes** are causing problems for schools planning capital work, with gaps between government budgets and builders’ prices; strict timelines for work outside term-time leave schools especially vulnerable. A leading construction survey earlier this month found a third of companies reporting supplier delays. **Higher fuel, energy and raw material prices** were pushing up costs, while **shipping delays** and haulage shortages meant long waits
* Councils with multi-million-pound shortfalls in special needs funding will **face visits by government cost-cutters** as ministers “lay the foundations” for new reforms under the much-delayed SEND review. The DfE is looking to appoint 15 finance professionals as special educational needs and disability financial advisers (SFAs) to visit local authorities from March. It is part of a new £1.5 million “Delivering Better Value in SEND” scheme, which will also establish an “index” measuring councils’ performance against spend. Estimates suggest council deficits in their high-needs funding – for children with complex needs – could balloon to more than £1.3 billion next year amid rising demand. The new advisers aim to uncover “underlying drivers” of “high spend and poor outcomes” at councils with growing designated schools grant (DSG) deficits.
* The DfE has updated “Find out how to apply for a grant and access DfE quality assured training to help **develop a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/senior-mental-health-lead-training>

**Post 16**

* The ESFA has given information about **in-year growth post 16 funding** for 2021 to 2022. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/in-year-growth-for-2021-to-2022>
* 2022-2023 **Student Loan repayment thresholds** have been confirmed. See <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/01/28/2022-2023-student-loan-repayment-thresholds-confirmed/> This is freezing the salary threshold at which people start paying back their student loans, with the decision not to increase the threshold in line with inflation

**Tony Stephens**