Tony Stephens Education Support

http://tonystephens.org.uk

tonystephens856@gmail.com

07977804899

**173 Academy and School News and Resources Update, June 18-23 2022**

*Copyright, Tony Stephens*

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

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

**Accountability**

* **DfE Accountability updates**:
* **16 to 18** accountability headline measures, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-accountability-headline-measures-technical-guide>
* **Secondary** accountability measures (including Progress 8 and Attainment 8), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-8-school-performance-measure>
* **Primary** school accountability, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/primary-school-accountability>

The government will **rebrand its school performance website** to “reduce the emphasis on comparison” after a backlash among school leaders at resuming league tables despite Covid’s impact. <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/06/22/were-changing-the-way-we-present-school-and-college-results-data-this-year-what-you-need-to-know-about-performance-tables/>

The DfE said last year key stage four and post-16 performance data would return this year. Publication of key stage 2 performance data will return next year. But it has now advised those using secondary data not to compare schools without considering **Covid’s impact** – and should ask schools for this context. Meanwhile Ofsted will be “sensitive in their use of this data” and it should not be used “in isolation” for staff performance management. The DfE says

* It will change the name of its “Compare School and College Performance” website, <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=default&table=schools&region=all-england&for=primary> , to “reduce the emphasis on comparison between institutions”. It did not provide the new name.
* It will remove coloured bandings to “discourage simplistic conclusions being drawn about a school”. Results are currently colour-coded through a traffic light-style scheme, with “well below average” figures in red.
* Comparison tables for local authorities and all schools nationally will be removed. But the site will “continue to show continue to show local authority and national averages for each performance measure on the individual school or college page” – and national and local data will still be available to download.
* Data from 2018-19 and earlier will no longer be displayed on school pages, but it will remain at “the usual archive with a link on the website”.
* This year, for the first time, the department will list Attainment 8 scores and the percentage of students achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE at multi-academy trust level. Other variables, such as Progress 8 scores, are already include at MAT level.

**ASCL** welcomed steps to “reduce the potentially damaging impact”, calling it a “step in the right direction”. But publishing the information at all is “hugely disappointing”, as the varied impact of Covid makes for an “inherent flaw”. It would still result in data being published that “affects public perceptions”. It called for a further year’s suspension to “allow some sort of return to normality before returning to the full barrage of accountability measures to which educational institutions are subjected”.

**Teacher pay; teacher recruitment**

* The **NEU has demanded an “inflation-plus” pay rise for all teachers**, threatening strike action as new figures show inflation reaching 9.1 per cent. It has written to Nadhim Zahawi, warning it will urge its members to support a ballot on industrial action unless he takes “sufficient action”. They say all teachers deserve an “undifferentiated inflation-plus” pay rise. If not, NEU would hold an indicative ballot in the autumn term, before a potential formal ballot on strike action. The government’s current proposals, now being considered by its advisory school teachers’ review body (STRB), are likely to mean an 8.9 per cent rise next year to minimum bands for starting salaries, but only a 3 per cent rise for most teachers and leaders. The NEU says teachers’ pay has fallen by a fifth in real terms, accounting for inflation, since 2010and that average salaries are now at their lowest level compared to average national earnings in more than 40 years. It says this has worsened recruitment and retention problems, with “profound difficulties” finding staff nationwide, and they note declining applications for initial teacher training places and missed government recruitment targets. “Some schools are having to reduce their curriculum offer as a result.” The NEU has not confirmed what percentage increase it is seeking. See <https://neu.org.uk/press-releases/neu-calls-inflation-plus-pay-increase-all-teachers> The **NASUWT** union has also threatened to ballot members over strike action if teacher pay is not increased by 12 per cent. See <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/article-listing/national-industrial-action-pay-uncertainty.html>
* **A new poll of 3,097 teachers themselves by Teacher Tapp** found only 46 per cent would award rises of 10 per cent or more, despite those surveyed being explicitly told inflation is likely to hit double digits. Almost four in 10 teachers would support strike action if offered a pay deal of 3 per cent or less, according to the poll. This proportion rose to 44 per cent for secondary teachers, a breakdown of the 6,791 responses reveals. Just under a third (32 per cent) of primary teachers said the same. A fifth of respondents to the poll (20 per cent) said they would not support strike action, while almost four in 10 (38 per cent) were unsure. Men were more likely to support strike action, with 50 per cent of male teachers saying they would strike, compared with 34 per cent of their female counterparts. <https://twitter.com/miss_mcinerney/status/1539267930893991942> The **education secretary** said that teaching unions taking strike action after the disruption that pupils have faced in the pandemic would be “unforgivable” and “unfair”
* The government’s plans to hand teachers lower pay rises than the average UK worker are likely to “exacerbate” already-growing recruitment and retention problems, according to experts. **A study by the National Foundation for Educational Research found the DfE is likely to significantly miss initial teacher training recruitment targets in shortage subjects over the next four years**. It is urging the DfE to revise up its proposed teacher pay awards, hike bursaries to as much as £30,000, hand more staff retention bonuses and offer secondary teachers higher rises than their primary peers. Researchers said their analysis corroborated the significance of teacher pay and the strength of the wider labour market for recruitment. A one per cent rise in teachers’ starting salaries, assuming no change to other graduate starting salaries, can boost ITT applications by two percent, they found. **Recommendations** include:
* a pay hike more than as currently proposed by the DfE as the labour market is “stronger than was thought when DfE pay proposals were developed”. This should be “affordable for schools”. DfE proposals are estimated at a 3.9 per cent rise for the average teacher, versus average UK pay rises of 5.3 per cent, the NFER said.
* Another is raising maximum shortage subject bursaries from £24,000 to £30,000, and expanding the “levelling up premium” retention payment to shortage subject teachers across England. Currently 42 per cent of secondaries are ineligible for any premium, with disadvantaged areas prioritised.
* A further proposal is separating primary and secondary pay scales from 2024-25 to set lower rises for primary staff, where recruitment is stronger and pupil numbers falling.
* Reducing teacher workload could have substantial benefits for improving retention and offering more on flexible working could also help teaching better compete.
* The research also found “little compelling evidence” early career payments and phased bursaries help recruitment, though past studies have found they boost retention. While researchers said specific bursaries and early career payments had provided “some” remedy recently to recruitment and retention woes, the bursaries have “not been enough” to ensure sufficient supply.

They note science, technology, engineering and maths graduates have “relatively attractive” alternative career options. The sector is expected to recruit just 18 per cent of aimed-for physics trainees, 39 per cent of computing trainees and 82 per cent of chemistry teachers in 2023-24, though maths is expected to be 10 per cent above target See <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/the-impact-of-pay-and-financial-incentives-on-teacher-supply/>

* S**econdary schools’ advertised vacancies** have increased by 14 per cent compared with levels seen before the pandemic, according to a new report. And there are “emerging signs of **teacher shortage**” with 15 per cent of schools advertising for secondary posts saying they had failed to fill the position. Among those **primary schools** that advertised this season, 11 per cent of teachers said that not all of their job posts had been filled – an increase of 4 percentage points from last year. And 15 per cent of secondary teachers said the same, with a slightly higher percentage point increase of 7. Furthermore, the report says that leaders are reporting fewer applicants per post than normal across both phases. Secondary schools are also reportedly experiencing **“severe difficulties” in recruiting technicians to work in science, technology and other departments**.

Meanwhile, one-third of teachers (33 per cent) said they felt **the pandemic had affected their “view of the profession**”. Almost one in five (18 per cent) of the 6,598 respondents to this question said they were now more likely to leave the profession, and 15 per cent said they were now more likely to seek to reduce their hours. Moreover, the share of teachers who said they wanted to become a head one day has fallen from 56 per cent pre-pandemic to 48 per cent. And the number of assistant and deputy headteachers who said they intended to remain in the profession in three years’ time has fallen from 81 per cent before the pandemic to 75 per cent. Meanwhile, nearly three-quarters of teachers (73 per cent) with less than five years’ experience said that they wanted to work fewer hours. The report also says that the attachment of teachers to the profession overall is weakest in schools judged by Ofsted to be “requires improvement” or “inadequate”. See <https://www.schooldash.com/blog-2206.html#20220620>

**Attendance**

* The DfE is seeking views on **new regulations for keeping school registers and draft thresholds for legal interventions** to improve consistency across England. See <https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-attendance-policy-and-strategy-team/school-registers-and-national-thresholds-for-legal/> The DfE is planning to replace the current school census and other collections with a system that scrapes information from school registers, following a trial launched earlier this year. **Proposal**s:
* A change to the law to require all schools **to keep their admission and attendance records electronically**, and to “improve their ability to analyse and share data and to improve the accuracy of recording”.
* Changes to who can **access admission and attendance registers**, to give local authority staff and central government access to the data of all schools.
* Until the new system is completed, existing requirements for schools to make **returns to councils** will remain, including informing them when pupils names are added to or deleted from admissions registers, and the name and address of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly. The government is also proposing to add a requirement to the law requiring schools to inform councils when it is “clear a pupil will be away from school for 15 school days or more, whether consecutively or cumulatively, because of sickness”.
* The DfE wants to set national thresholds at which **fines** must be “considered”, to replace the current system which leaves it up to councils and heads. Ministers are proposing that penalty notices will have to be considered in the following circumstances:
	+ 10 sessions of unauthorised absence including lateness in a term (where support has not been successful, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate)
	+ Any incidence of unauthorised holiday in term time
	+ Any sessions of unauthorised absence immediately following a leave of absence in term time
	+ Any incidence of an excluded pupil being in a public place without reasonably justification during the first 5 school days of an exclusion
* A national limit of two fines issued to one parent for the same child in any school year. After this limit is reached, “**prosecution** should be considered at the next offence”.
* A change to simplify **how absences are recorded in registers**, with a “single list of reasons” a pupil is attending or absent. New regulations will group together cases where pupils are attending the school, another school where they are registered, or are other places for “approved education”, including learning remotely in “very limited circumstances”. Pupils will also be grouped if they are absent for permitted reasons. Those who are not will be recorded as “absent in other or unknown circumstances”.
* Allow for **remote education** to be recorded as “attending any other place for approved remote education”, but only where it meets a specific set of criteria. Pupils could be recorded in this way of they can’t attend school because of a lack of transport, weather conditions, or if their school is partially or fully closed, for example.
* A law change that would require schools to record the same attendance and absence information for **pupils of non-compulsory school age** as for all other pupils registered at the school.
* Four changes to the circumstances in which **pupils’ names can be deleted from schools’ admission registers**. These include…
	+ Removing the ground for deletion when a medical officer says a pupil is “unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age”
	+ Requiring schools to delete a pupil’s name where they know where the pupil is but don’t have “reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again”
	+ Extend the rule preventing deletion of pupils with EHCPs from the roll of special schools without council approval to cover all school types
	+ Requiring councils to sign off on the deletion of children in need or subject to a protection plan
* Middlesbrough has been chosen as the first area to receive **government-funded mentoring support to tackle school absences**. The government has been seeking an organisation to provide mentoring interventions over a three-year period in up to five of its “education investment areas”. The chosen provider will support up to 350 pupils in years 6 to 11 in the first year, before expanding in the next two years to four more areas and supporting up to 1,700 pupils in total
* More than a quarter of a million students would have met **the proposed new government threshold for an absence fine** being considered last term, according to new findings. The FFT Education Data Lab analysis has also found that students with special education needs or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged were more likely to meet the thresholds for the consideration of a parental fine. Its analysis of daily attendance data from the spring term of 2022 shows at least 260,000 students, but possibly as high as 550,000 students, would meet one of the three proposed new criteria for a fine to be considered because of unauthorised absence. FFT said that, under the existing current guidelines, there were 333,000 penalty notices issued in the whole of 2018-19, the final full year prior to the pandemic, according to official statistics. See <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2022/06/how-many-pupils-fall-below-the-proposed-national-thresholds-for-legal-intervention-due-to-absence/>
* The DfE has issued case studies, “**Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts**. Schools and multi-academy trusts (MATs) share their different techniques for improving attendance rates in their settings”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/improving-attendance-good-practice-for-schools-and-multi-academy-trusts>

**Learning recovery**

* **A review into whether the government’s National Tutoring Programme** has helped children to catch up will not be published until the autumn. The delay means the independent evaluation is likely to be published two years after the scheme’s launch in November 2020. The study, run by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), is looking into the scheme’s effectiveness, take-up and impact on pupil progress in its first year, when it was run by five founding charities. The NFER is also evaluating the programme under HR-firm Randstad’s stewardship this year, including the new school-led tutoring arm. This is expected to be published in 2023 “at the latest”. The DfE is currently selecting new suppliers on smaller contracts for the next academic year. They will manage quality assurance, recruitment, the deployment of mentors and training
* The DfE has been accused of **using a “telesales” campaign in an attempt to bolster its national tutoring programme,** after figures reveal that government staff called schools more than 2,600 times in a week. An “outbound call campaign” was launched by the DfE on 28 April, and has seen officials call individual schools up to three times to chase up whether they are using the National Tutoring Programme (NTP). Around a third of schools have not engaged with the NTP this academic year, according to the latest DfE data.
* The DfE has issued a wide- ranging collection of documents, “**Get help with technology for remote education**. Support available for educational settings and local authorities for remote and face-to-face education, and access to social care”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education>

**Early years and primary**

* The DfE has issued “**Systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) teaching programme validation**. Guidance on how to complete the self- assessment form with the essential core criteria and supporting information”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-teaching-materials-core-criteria-and-self-assessment>
* The DfE has updated “**Choosing a phonics teaching programme**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/choosing-a-phonics-teaching-programme>
* The DfE has issued information on “**Early years experts and mentors’ programme**. Information on the DfE early years COVID-19 recovery programme which offers leadership support, coaching and mentoring”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-experts-and-mentors-programme> and **to apply**, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-role-in-the-early-years-covid-19-recovery-experts-and-mentors-programme>
* STA has issued:
* **Key stage 2 tests: applying for a review of pupils’ test results**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/key-stage-2-tests-how-to-apply-for-a-review-of-key-stage-2-results>
* **Key stage 2 tests: how to access results and test scripts,** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/key-stage-2-tests-how-to-access-results-and-test-scripts>
* STA has updated “**National curriculum assessments: practice materials**. Practice materials for the phonics screening check, key stage 1 and key stage 2 national curriculum tests, including past test papers”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum-assessments-practice-materials>
* STA has issued “**Phonics screening check: 2022 materials**. Scoring guidance, pupils' materials and answer sheet for the 2022 phonics screening check”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-2022-materials> and” **Phonics screening check: 2022 modified materials”,** see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-2022-modified-materials>

**Public examinations**

* Ofqual leader Jo Saxton has said that **advance information** issued by exam boards to help students sitting papers this summer, after having their learning disrupted during the pandemic, may not have been as helpful in practice. “Students love the idea of advance information, but the reality is that they found navigating it, in many cases, just one other thing to think about.” She also said **Changes to exam grading scales** in the future could be possible, said Dr Saxton. “How many different grading scales is it reasonable for a society to operate?” She also questioned whether existing grading scales worked, referencing GCSE’s numerical grading system and adding: “Should the highest number always be used for the highest grade? This is a discussion I’d like to have.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/dr-jo-saxton-at-confederation-of-school-trusts-annual-conference>
* The children’s commissioner for England has hit out at suggestions that **girls found maths A-levels too difficult**. She said that girls were more likely to be put off taking science, technology and maths (Stem) subjects by male-dominated classes and a lack of female role models
* AQA is investigating reports its **A-level Chemistry paper 2** was leaked before students sat the exam
* **The OCR exam board has updated its GCSE poems to bring more “diversity” and “inclusivity” to the curriculum**. The board is adding 15 “exciting” and “diverse” poems to its GCSE English literature syllabus from this September. OCR is also set to introduce more diverse texts to its A-level English language and literature curriculum, as well as its GCSE and A level in media studies, from September 2023. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/secondary/gcse-exam-ocr-adds-15-poems-boost-diversity> Of the 15 poets added, 14 are poets of colour, OCR said. They also include disabled and LGBTQ+ voices. Apparently, poems from John Keats, Wilfred Owen, Thomas Hardy and Philip Larkin have been removed from the list of 45 poems to make way. **Nadhim Zahawi then tweeted: “Larkin and Owen are two of our finest poets. Removing their work from the curriculum is cultural vandalism”**. For a list of the new poems, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/zahawi-accuses-exam-board-of-cultural-vandalism/>
* Ofqual has issued “**Appeals: guide to the data submission process**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/appeals-guide-to-the-data-submission-process>

**Careers**

* Through the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, the DfE **is strengthening the statutory requirement for schools to provide opportunities for providers of technical education and apprenticeships to talk to pupils in years 8 to 13** to discuss their education and training options. It is seeking views on proposed revisions to the statutory careers guidance that underpins this legal duty. The guidance explains the changes to the law, what schools must do to comply and the support available to help schools to deliver provider encounters for young people. See <https://consult.education.gov.uk/careers-unit/access-to-schools-for-education-and-training-provi/>

The skills and post-16 education act 2022 creates a new legal duty for schools to provide pupils with “at least six encounters with a provider of approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships”. The new law states two of these must be in school years 8 or 9, with another two in years 10 or 11. A further two must be offered in years 12 or 13. However, unlike the earlier encounters, sixth formers will not have to attend by law. The “encounters” for year 9, 11 and 13 pupils will have to take place between September 1 and February 28 in each academic year. The encounters for pupils in year 11 and below are mandatory for schools to offer and for pupils to attend. Schools that fail to meet the new requirements, which come into effect next year, will be subject to a “ladder of support and intervention”, with a legal direction serving as the most severe form of punishment. The new law comes into effect next January, but schools will have until September to put their plans in place

**ITT and teacher recruitment**

* The DfE has issued a 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>
* **Half the universities piloting the new international teacher training qualification have failed the first re-accreditation round to run teacher training in their own country**. The Universities of Warwick, Birmingham and Sunderland are all reapplying in the second round, which closes this month.
* The DfE has issued an extensive collection of documents, “**Information about teaching in England for non-UK teachers and trainee teachers, and for schools and training providers recruiting from overseas**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/non-uk-teachers-and-trainees>
* To find out about the **visa and immigration routes, qualifications and help available for overseas teachers who trained outside the UK**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teach-in-england-if-you-qualified-outside-the-uk>

**Rail strikes**

* National travel survey data estimates that 4 per cent of trips to school for 11 to 16-year-olds were made by surface rail, though this figure was 2 per cent in pre-pandemic 2019. In an email to headteachers, the DfE **said students and staff who travel by train** “may be understandably concerned about the impact of the industrial action – particularly if they are due to take or oversee exams”. The DfE said schools should draw on “existing contingency arrangements to manage any disruption, including late arrival of staff or students”, and referred schools to Joint Council for Qualifications guidance on exams. For students who will “struggle to afford” alternative travel for exams, the DfE said schools were “best placed to prioritise their spending to support their pupils and students and can consider making available funding for pupils and students who may require it” “For example, by using core funding or, for post-16 students, using the 16-19 Bursary Fund to support alternative travel for pupils and students.”
* Students held sleepovers with classmates, parents organised car-sharing rides and teachers drove minibuses to ensure that **those affected by the national rail strike would make it to their exams on time**. There is little evidence of students actually missing exams. Some staff are finding it difficult getting to work and this may prove an increasing problem as the strikes continue and especially with the London tube strike at the same time. Some teachers are delivering remote learning and others are staying at colleagues’ houses in moves to minimise the potential disruption to schools See <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jun/21/students-make-it-to-exams-on-time-despite-rail-strike> <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/how-schools-responded-rail-strikes>

**School and Academy finance**

* ESFA has issued a **large collection of the latest documents on all aspects of pre-16 schools funding**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authorities-pre-16-schools-funding> This includes NFF, Early Years, Pupil Premium, DSG, High Needs, Infant free school meals, Teachers’ pay grant, Teachers' pension employer contribution grant, Section 251, Other grants (PE and sport, FSM and school improvement), Data and quality assurance, Authority proforma tool, School capital funding
* ESFA has updated “**Coronavirus (COVID-19) recovery premium funding: allocations and conditions of grant 2021 to 2022**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-recovery-premium-funding-allocations>
* ESFA has updated information to help **academy trusts submit their budget forecast return** to the ESFA, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-budget-forecast-return> and “Academies budget forecast return: **guide to using the online form**”, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-budget-forecast-return-guide-to-using-the-online-form>

**SEND**

* The DfE has issued information **on how local authorities can manage their high needs systems and associated spending in a sustainable way**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creating-sustainable-high-needs-systems> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-budgets-effective-management-in-local-authorities> The DfE has launched its “**Delivering Better Value in SEND**” programme. The government informed 55 councils with substantial deficits they will receive support to make services “sustainable”, as funding growth is set to slow and wider SEND reforms will “take time”. Officials and SEND financial and practice advisers will help the councils and their stakeholders “identify and address the key drivers” of deficits. The DfE will provide “project and change management capacity”, and is partnering with consultancy firm Newton Europe and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The DfE has already said another 34 councils with larger deficits have received or will receive “safety valve agreements”, committing to significant savings in exchange for multimillion-pound bailouts. It stresses they are “not a cost-cutting exercise”. It means 58.6 per cent of England’s 152 local education authorities now face direct Whitehall involvement in deficit-cutting plans. In new guidance and recommendations for all councils on managing high needs budgets, they are also warned they face “smaller” hikes to high needs block allocations in 2023-24 and 2024-25 than the past three years. They are told to assume a 5 per cent rise between 2022-23 and 2023-24, and 3 per cent beyond that. Meanwhile dedicated school grant deficits will no longer be ring-fenced from councils’ wider finances from 2023, so councils will have to show they can cover deficits “from their future available reserves”. The advice is based on research into 10 councils said to be managing needs effectively – though their average spending has still jumped by almost a quarter since 2018. Recommendations include:
	+ Equipping mainstream schools to meet as many needs as possible via core provision, through training and specialist support services. Some best practice councils co-produce documents telling schools what to “ordinarily provide”.
	+ Alternative provision and special school places should only be used “strategically”.
	+ Making SEND and finance officers jointly accountable for managing high needs budgets, and investing “properly” in SEND leadership.
	+ Reviewing joint commissioning to get “rebalanced” contributions from health and social care, with “many” council high needs budgets funding health and care duties.
	+ Considering devolving resources to schools or school groups.
	+ Learning from case study councils’ “culture of partnership” with parents and schools of all kinds, with “co-ownership” of deficit management with schools. Some, like Camden, involved mainstream heads in working groups addressing issues.

**School Admissions**

* The DfE has issued **statistics on offers made to applicants for secondary and primary school places in England to start in September 2022,** and the number and proportion which received preferred offers. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/secondary-and-primary-school-applications-and-offers-2022> The proportion of secondary school applicants who received an offer from their first preference school increased by 2.2 percentage points to 83.3 per cent - the highest level since 2017-18. While the equivalent figure rose 0.4 percentage points to 92.2 per cent in primaries - the highest in at least a decade. Overall, the proportion of all secondary school applicants who were made an offer by any of their ranked preference schools rose to 95.8 per cent from 95.5 per cent, and the figure remained unchanged at 98.4 per cent in primaries

**Welfare of young people**

* Parents have expressed their concerns about the **cost of school uniforms**, at a time when other living costs are so high. New government guidelines come into force in September requiring that second-hand uniform items should be made available and the cost of anything branded must be kept to a minimum.
* The children’s commissioner has said that that there is a “major strategic opportunity” presented by the timing of the care review, the Schools’ White Paper, the SEND review and the integrated care systems reforms in the NHS. She said that there is now **an opportunity to deliver a “system around the children”**, urging schools “to engage”. At present, teachers are “filling gaps that social care should be delivering”
* Schools are seeking support for making referrals after incidents of harmful sexual behaviours among young people. The **Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service** has handled more than 450 cases so far this year, supporting schools when it comes to seeking additional support. See <https://swgfl.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-support-service/> For more detail, see <https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/news/harmful-sexual-behaviours-schools-seek-referral-support-safeguarding-child-protection-harassment-abuse/>
* Commenting on the **Welsh Government’s pledge to provide free school meals for every primary pupil in Wales by 2024**, the NASUWT, said: “We are delighted the Welsh Government is taking this positive step towards supporting families and ensuring that all primary pupils will receive free, healthy school meals so they can concentrate on their learning. We urge the UK Government to show the same degree of concern about the impact that the cost of living crisis is having on children – its recent paltry increase to the funding rate for universal infant free school meals in England will have little impact”. See <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/article-listing/uk-urged-to-follow-wales-on-free-school-meals.html>

**Education news for Schools**

* For the **Tes Schools Awards 2022 winners**, see <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/tes-schools-awards-2022-winners>
* To find **DfE research publications and invitations to tender for new research projects,** see <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/research>
* The DfE has issued a list of confirmed participants for the **Diocesan multi-academy trust formation pilot and the Catholic turnaround trust pilot**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/diocesan-multi-academy-trust-pilots>
* The DfE has issued **guidance and resources to help education staff support Ukrainian pupils.** See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/helping-ukrainian-students-in-schools>

**School management**

* The DfE has updated “**Lists of local authorities seeking academy and free school proposers, and of all academies and free schools already set up**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-school-proposals>
* Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014 allows the Secretary of State to publish a list of **approved independent educational institutions** in England and special post-16 institution. This guide explains the process for applying to be added to the list of approved independent special institutions. It also sets out the timescales and information required to complete the application form. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-to-be-on-the-approved-list-of-independent-special-institutions>
* ESFA has issued “How can apprenticeships be delivered for your business?” This guidance explains how **apprenticeship training** can be delivered flexibly around the needs of your business. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-can-apprenticeships-be-delivered-for-your-business>
* For the latest **ESFA Update,** see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-22-june-2022>
* The DfE plans to pay up to £768,000 for the delivery of a “culture change programme” focused on embedding **flexible working** in schools and multi-academy trusts. In a tender for the contract, the DfE said it was seeking a provider to “design a strategy for culture change and promote the programme across the sector”. It said the provider should ensure a focus on “schools/MATs with high proportions of pupils receiving pupil premium” and “specific specialisms, such as pupil referral units/alternative provision and SEND”. It added that it should support the flexible working ambassador schools, and deliver a programme of “workshops and webinars” targeted at “key audience groups”. Bidding for the contract closes next month, and the contract will run from the autumn until spring 2025.

**Post 16**

* The DfE has issued a list **of successful post-16 providers funded from the Post-16 Capacity Fund**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-capacity-fund-2021-to-2022-successful-applications>
* ESFA has issued “**T Levels: next steps for providers**”, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/t-levels-next-steps-for-providers> and “How to register to deliver **T Levels from 2024 to 2025 academic year**”, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-register-to-deliver-t-levels-from-2024-to-2025-academic-year>

**Tony Stephens**