Tony Stephens Education Support

http://tonystephens.org.uk

[tonystephens856@gmail.com](about:blank)

07977804899

**171 Academy and School News and Resources Update, June 4-10 2022**

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**Free School meals**

* The DfE has issued “**Guidance for schools and local authorities about providing school meals including information on free school meal eligibility**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities>

**The number of pupils eligible for free school meals** in England has risen to almost 1.9 million, an increase of almost a third since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and representing 22.5 per cent of all pupils. This is an increase of around 160,000 pupils, or 9 per cent since January 2021, when 1.74 million (20.8 per cent) were eligible. The DfE said the 9 per cent increase in eligibility between January 2021 and 2022 was “is in line with those increases seen prior to the pandemic”, following a much larger 21 per cent increase between 2020 and 2021. Taken together, the two increases since January 2020 mean that over 450,000 more pupils, are now eligible for free school meals, a rise of 32 per cent over two years. FSM eligibility varies between different types of school, sitting at 23.1 per cent in state-funded primaries and 20.9 per cent in secondaries - but the figure is far higher in special schools (44.7 per cent) and pupil referral units (54.6 per cent). In state-funded nurseries - where children are eligible if they meet the criteria and attend for full days - the figure rose to a new high of 8.6 per cent from 8.4 per cent, suggesting that numbers could continue to climb in primaries in the coming years. There are significant regional variations, e.g, nearly one in three children in the north-east of England are receiving free school meals. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2022> **ASCL** said it was "shocking" to see so many children living in extremely difficult financial circumstances. "Even more shocking is the fact that current eligibility does not even capture all the children who need help. Free school meal eligibility now applies to 22.5 per cent of pupils, but we know that the level of child poverty is about 30 per cent”. See <https://www.ascl.org.uk/News/Our-news-and-press-releases/ASCL-comment-on-rise-in-pupils-eligible-for-free-s>

* ESFA has issued “**No recourse to public funds: free school meals**. Information about how to make a claim for additional pupil premium funding”. See <https://www.gov.uk/search/all?organisations%5B%5D=education-and-skills-funding-agency&order=updated-newest&parent=education-and-skills-funding-agency>
* Hard-up families face a “postcode lottery” in **free school meals support during holidays** after one in five councils has scrapped voucher schemes started during the pandemic. Changes to government cost of living grants and rising numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals have forced LAs to rethink their support. Of 50 councils that responded to surveys, nine have stopped providing weekly vouchers entirely. A further five have reduced the amount on offer over the summer. Direct funding for holiday meal vouchers was stopped in late 2020, with vouchers having cost £384 million since the scheme began. Since then, councils have received other government funding – such as the £170 million Covid winter support grant and the subsequent £921 million household support fund. But these are to fund wider support for communities, not just free school meals for children. There is the holiday activities and food programme, but this only covers four weeks of the summer holiday. And support is only available to those who sign up. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/holiday-free-school-meals-support-runs-thin-as-funding-dries-up/>

**National Funding Formula**

* The DfE is seeking views on its approach **to implementing the direct national funding formula (NFF) for mainstream schools**. See <https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/implementing-the-direct-national-funding-formula/>
* Ministers expect to **fully implement their school funding reforms “within the next five years**”. The DfE said it was not setting a “definitive final end date” at which the direct NFF would be implemented, as it would be “important to continue to be guided by the impact of the initial transition”. A “hard” NFF would see the DfE allocations go straight to schools, without any local adjustment.
* At the moment, councils can **transfer funding between their schools and high needs budgets**, though transfers of more than 0.5 per cent or those without the backing of local schools forums have to be approved by the education secretary. But the government wants a more “consistent” approach, and plans to introduce a “menu of options” for how mainstream budgets could be adjusted following transfers to high needs. This would replace councils’ “complete freedom to propose how the adjustments could be made”. This could include a percentage reduction in solely the basic entitlement factor (rather than also additional needs factors, meaning schools with more SEND pupils would benefit), or include the cash being transferred from allocations solely for primary or secondary schools.
* Councils receive around £250 million a year in **growth and falling rolls funding,** which is used to support schools that are facing demographic changes in the number of pupils they have. The DfE is proposing two options. The first, which it prefers, would see councils retain some flexibility but with restrictions on how the funding can be used. This could include things like a minimum expectation on when growth funding is awarded. The second option would be a nationally standardised system, with councils having no say at all. The government is also consulting on whether to remove the rule that only ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ schools can receive falling roll funding, and on expanding the use of the funding to support councils to “repurpose and remove” spare classroom space.
* Academies can also currently receive funding if they are **expecting pupil numbers to grow significantly due to their increasing popularity**, rather than because of demographic changes. The DfE is proposing to keep this scheme, but is also consulting on whether the funding should also be available to maintained schools.
* The DfE is proposing a national formula for **split sites funding**, with a basic eligibility criteria that attracts a lump-sum payment, and a distance eligibility criteria for another payment. To meet the latter, schools’ sites would need to be at least 500 metres apart. Introducing a national system would lead to a reduction in funding for schools that currently receive “generous” funding. But the DfE said it would protect schools from losing money through its minimum funding guarantee.
* The DfE said it wanted to “significantly reduce the number of schools receiving **exceptional circumstances funding** so that we target funding only to schools where costs are exceptional and meaningful”. The exceptional circumstances threshold would be raised from the current 1 per cent of a school’s budget up to 2.5 per cent. Trusts and councils would have to reapply under a new national process to show they meet the new criteria. The consultation also proposes that some costs currently covered, like lump sums for amalgamating schools, be covered in other factors of the funding formula, while some will be defunded entirely, such as funding for listed buildings. Funding for schools with farms attached, those that rent additional premises or share the use of a facility would continue to be covered.
* Under the current funding system, councils set a “**minimum funding guarantee**” for schools to protect them from large losses in funding year-on-year. This is then mirrored in the amounts given to councils through what is called the NFF “floor”. However, since the current system was introduced in 2017-18, the minimum funding guarantees set by councils and NFF floor set by government have “drifted apart” (this is because one is calculated based on schools’ actual funding and the other based on their NFF allocations). Under plans for a hard funding formula, the two protections will merge into one minimum funding guarantee, which will be based on schools’ actual funding from the previous year.
* Currently, the DfE usually publishes **details of the way NFF funding will be distributed** in July. Councils then prepare their own local formula during the autumn and confirm final allocations in the spring. Under the hard formula, councils will no longer prepare their own local formulae, but the DfE said it would keep the other elements of the timetable the same, publishing the NFF in July each year, giving schools “earlier knowledge of the final formula which will apply to them”. To help schools understand what the formula will mean for them in practice, the DfE is consulting on two possible options. The first is to continue to publish data showing what each schools’ funding for next year would look like based on their current pupil numbers. The second is to provide a “calculator” tool which would allow schools to “plug in their own pupil numbers and pupil characteristics, to see what their funding would be”.
* Although the full, hard formula may not come into effect until 2027-28, **some changes proposed in the consultation could come sooner**. For example, changes to split sites funding and growth funding could come into effect in 2024-25. There will also be **other consultations**, for example, on the options for reforms to how schools with private finance initiative (PFI) contracts receive extra cash. A consultation will also be held on how the NFF works alongside high needs funding.

**Learning recovery and NTP**

* The DfE has issued “**Recovery premium funding**. Additional funding in the 2021 to 2022 academic year to support schools with education recovery following COVID-19”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recovery-premium-funding>
* ESFA has issued “**School-led tutoring: guidance and tracker tool**. Details for schools, academy trusts and local authorities on the expectations and conditions attached to school-led tutoring funding”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-led-tutoring-conditions-of-grant>
* The government is asking **schools to consider extending tutoring sessions** beyond one hour or provide multiple courses per week to complete “as many [tutoring] packages as possible before the end of August”. School leaders received an email which says leaders may consider “allowing pupil swapping to increase the benefit of support to those pupils who need it the most”. This means schools can “divide the 15-hour package between two pupils depending on need, with one pupil receiving 10 hours and the second pupil receiving 5 hours”. The email also says schools may consider “delivering more than one session to pupils per week or extending sessions to more than one hour”. It adds “there is still time” to access NTP and schools should “complete as many 15-hour packages as possible before the end of August”. The DfE also reiterated that schools could run tuition through the summer. It comes as the DfE scrambles to reach its distant target to deliver two million tutoring courses under the struggling National Tutoring Programme this year. Latest figures show that just under 1.2 million tutoring courses have been started since September – leaving the government 40 per cent off its promise.
* The DfE has issued “**Future opportunities for education technology** in England. Exploring how education technology could develop in England, based on current global innovations”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-opportunities-for-education-technology-in-england>

**School pupil statistics**

* The DfE has issued “**Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2022**. Statistics on pupils in schools in England as collected in the January 2022 school census, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2022>
  + As of January this year, there were 9,000,**031 pupils in all schools across the state and private sectors**. This represents an increase of 88,000, or around 0.9 per cent, on the previous year. A population bulge caused by a baby boom in the 2000s is currently working its way through the school system, leading to higher numbers of children reaching secondary age and lower numbers of pupils moving in to primary school. The state secondary school population grew by around 2.1 per cent in the year to January 2022, from around 3.49 million to 3.56 million. Meanwhile, the number of pupils in state primary schools decreased from around 4.66 million to 4.65 million, a fall of around 0.1 per cent. The state special school population increased by 5.8 per cent from 134,176 to 142,028.
  + **Independent schools** reported their highest pupil numbers since 2018, following a year-on-year rise of 2.1 per cent, to 581,427. The number of pupils on roll at private schools had been in steady decline since 2017, when 583,268 pupils were reported. This was also the last year that the sector reported an increase in pupil numbers. There was also an increase in the number of independent schools operating – rising from 2,366 to 2,394.
  + The number of pupils in **pupil referral units (PRUs**) has continued to fall, decreasing by around 9 per cent, to 11,700 as of January this year. This follows a much larger 17 per cent drop last year. As was the case in previous years, most PRU pupils are boys – 72.2 per cent. The sector also has a higher proportion of pupils eligible for FSM – 54.6 per cent, compared with 22.5 per cent in the wider population. The DfE said a further 11,100 pupils had a “dual subsidiary registration” in a PRU, meaning their main registration was in another school.

**Ofsted**

* Joining an academy trust has only a “small” positive impact on the fortunes of so-called **“stuck” secondary schools**, and none at all **for languishing primary schools,** new research suggests. The findings raise doubts about the government’s plans to improve schools by moving them all into multi-academy trusts. Researchers warned academisation was “not a silver bullet”. A new report from the Education Policy Institute and UCL Institute of Education found that schools persistently rated less than ‘good’ by Ofsted faced a “cycle of challenging circumstances” and limited improvement. The report lays bare the struggles faced by “stuck” schools, which face greater instability, higher rates of poverty and more challenging locations. Researchers found that after their initial negative Ofsted grade, the intake of a school “tends to become more disadvantaged and teacher turnover increases, both of which contribute to the difficulty in reversing the negative Ofsted judgement”. “The longer the school continues to have the less than good rating, the harder the process of school improvement becomes.” The report also found that inspections of case study schools were “were arguably too frequent, variable and inconsistent”. The effects of an adverse inspection on pupil enrolments expose the school to higher rates of pupil turnover and increasingly disadvantaged intakes. Schools whose neighbours had better Ofsted grades than them were more likely to remain "stuck" over time, and this "neighbour effect" was more important in explaining whether a school got "stuck" than the school's own performance, as measured by its pupil attainment and progress. Changes of headteacher following an adverse inspection contributed to increased teacher turnover and further subsequent less-than-"good" grades. However, “many headteachers, teachers and governors” of all types of school valued the “role of Ofsted and other support received to improve”. One of the most striking findings was the teacher turnover experienced by "stuck" schools. See <https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Final_report_stuck_schools.pdf>
* The DfE consultation propose that **schools that are rated as "requires improvement" in their most recent Ofsted inspection and were less than "good" in the inspection before that could be moved into "strong [multi-academy] trusts**". **ASCL** in its response states that there is no "legal definition" of a 'strong trust', insisting that the label "should be defined...before any attempt to move schools and academies in this position into a trust is implemented". The DfE wants to introduce the changes in September 2022. But this could "breach" the DfE's workload protocol, ASCL's response states. Schools and academies that had previously been graded "inadequate" but are now judged as "requires improvement" are "clearly on an improvement trajectory". As a result, the union says, "it would seem perverse and counterproductive" to interfere "if they are making improvements". Meanwhile, schools graded as "requires improvement" are "likely to have specific strengths and specific weaknesses", says the response. It is important that if interventions are needed, then the school should be supported by a trust or other organisation "which can meet and support their specific needs". The response also highlights concerns that the proposals would "place greater emphasis on Ofsted judgements", and that the "reliability of inspection" could be affected due to inspectors being aware that a second "requires improvement" judgement would likely result in an academy order or termination warning notice.

The **NAHT** is concerned that the policy could exacerbate problems with recruitment and retention as it will increase workload and risk "further damage to the health and wellbeing of school leaders and their teams". The union says that the consultation "bestows decision making on school intervention to regional directors, but fails to adequately set out how individual regional directors will make these decisions, other than saying that this will be on a case-by-case basis" It emphasises the importance of "transparency", "openness" and "redress" so that regional directors can be held to "public account" for their decisions and actions.

* Ofsted has updated “**School inspection data summary report (IDSR) guide**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-inspection-data-summary-report-idsr-guide>
* Ofsted has issued “**Further education and skills inspections and outcomes**: management information up to 31.5.22”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-management-information-from-september-2021-to-august-2022>

**School workforce statistics**

* The DfE has issued statistics on the **size and characteristics of the schools' workforce in state-funded schools**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-workforce> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2021>
* The **number of teachers leaving** last year jumped by 12.4 per cent, with 4,000 more departures in 2020-21 than the previous year. Some 36,262 staff – 8.1 per cent of all teachers – left the state-funded sector. However, this is still lower than 2018-19 before the pandemic, with Covid boosting both recruitment and retention. More primary teachers were leaving than secondary for the first time ever. Asian, black, mixed and other ethnic minority background teachers were also more likely to leave than white peers. Only 11 per cent of those leaving were retiring, whereas a third of those leaving in 2010-11 were retirees.
* Among **newly qualified teachers**, the number who left within one year rose from 11.7 per cent in 2020, to 12.5 per cent last year. Again, this is still below the pre-pandemic levels (it was 14.6 per cent in 2019). Meanwhile, both the two-year and five-year retention rates improved year-on-year.
* Total **teacher vacancies** have jumped 42 per cent in a year to 1,600. It followed small declines over the previous two years. It means vacancies are now at the highest level since recent records began in 2010-11. Classroom teacher vacancies hit 1,368 last November, up 45.5 per cent on 2020 and almost four times higher than the 355 vacancies in 2010-11. Vacancies for “all leadership” posts hit 196, also a record high.
* The average classroom **teacher’s salary** of £38,982 was only 1.4 per cent higher last November than a year earlier. While heads’ average pay was £74,095, it marked only a 0.8 per cent rise. Men continue to generally out-earn women, with secondary heads earning £3,698 more. Significant exceptions are primary classroom teachers, where women earn £655 more on average.
* The average secondary school teacher **taught 16.7 pupils**, similar to last year but up from 14.8 in 2010-11. Officials noted rising secondary pupil numbers since 2016. Primary pupil numbers per teacher remain similar at 20.4 in 2010-11 and 20.6 in 2021-22, though Courtney noted this came in spite of primary pupil numbers falling.
* The **ethnic diversity** of the teaching workforce continued to increase last year, with 14.9 per cent of staff identifying as ethnic minorities, up from 11.2 per cent in 2010-11. But diversity remains significantly below the national average, with 21.5 per cent of working-age people in England identifying as ethnic minorities. “White British” teachers remain more likely to lead, making up 15.3 per cent of leaders compared to 8.1 per cent of “Asian or Asian British” teachers.
* In 2020-21, 45 per cent of teachers took **sickness absence**, not including isolation or shielding, down significantly on the 54 per cent absence rate in 2018-19. Figures were not collated in 2019-20. But the average number of days off jumped from just over 4 per cent between 2014 and 2019, to 8.6 days in the last academic year.

**School Leadership**

* The DfE has issued **“School leadership in England 2010 to 2020**”, characteristics and trends, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-leadership-in-england-2010-to-2020-characteristics-and-trends>
* **Vacancies for some school leadership posts have shot up** by as much as 85 per cent in the past three years, further fuelling fears of a post-Covid retention crisis. Analysis of job adverts by TeachVac shows secondary assistant head vacancies increased from 451 in the first four months of 2019 to 835 over the same period this year and secondary deputy head vacancies increased by 62 per cent over the same period, from 344 to 558. See <https://schoolleadersworkandwellbeing.com/> TeachVac also revealed it had logged 65,000 **vacancies for teachers** as of the end of May 2022, more than in any of the last four calendar years in total. Between January and December 2021, it found 64,283 vacancies. The figure for the whole of pre-pandemic 2019 was 54,569. There is also concern at present over **middle leadership positions** in some secondary subjects where the continued under-recruitment into the subject over the past seven years is taking its toll on the pool of available candidates for middle leadership.
* Polling showing **most leaders feel they’re either only “surviving” or “sinking” in their roles** according to the report,” Leading after lockdown”. Their first report last July found guidance for schools during the Covid-19 pandemic had been “inadequate”, contributing to a “crisis in school leadership”. The latest report shows that the pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges for leaders, with the current academic year proving anything but ‘normal’”. “We need a national conversation about succession planning, backed by concerted local action, to avoid a crisis.” 42 per cent of headteachers felt they were “mostly surviving”, while 29 per cent said they were either sometimes or mostly “sinking”. Twenty-eight per cent said they were “mostly” (6 per cent) or “sometimes” (22 per cent) thriving. But women were less likely to report they were thriving than men. Ten per cent of women leaders said they were “mostly” sinking, compared to 7 per cent of men, while 23 per cent said they were “sometimes” sinking, compared to 14 per cent of men. At the other end of the scale, only 24 per cent of women said they were either “sometimes” or “mostly” thriving, compared to 36 per cent of men. However, the proportion of leaders considering leaving the profession early appears to have fallen since last year. In 2021, a poll found 42 per cent of heads and 26 per cent of other senior leaders planned to leave the profession for reasons other than full retirement – within the next five years. A survey earlier this year found 30 per cent of heads and 16 per cent of senior leaders planned to leave in the next five years, though 10 per cent of heads and 6 per cent of senior leaders said they were unsure. See <https://schoolleadersworkandwellbeing.com/blog/>

**Support staff**

* Unions representing **teaching assistants and other school support staff** have submitted a pay claim demanding a pay boost of at least £2,000. UNISON, GMB and Unite want a pay increase from April 2023 of either £2,000 or the current rate of inflation (which stands at 11% according to the RPI), whichever is higher for each individual. The claim covers 1.4 million council employees, including teaching assistants, wider school support staff, and other professionals like library staff, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Many of these employees are in low-paid roles and are paid little more than the minimum wage. The three unions say that 27.5% has been wiped off the value of pay for these workers since 2010. If successful, the pay rise would lift all council and school employees back above the real living wage of £9.90 per hour (outside London). See <https://www.naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/News/ArtMID/556/ArticleID/1733/Support-Staff-Pay-Award-202223>

**Ukraine**

* A “sizeable number” of **Ukrainian children who have arrived in England** are still not in school, the government has admitted. But schools and councils have been praised for their “herculean efforts” in offering almost 10,000 places for children so far, around 87 per cent of those who have applied. The government estimates that out of 11,400 applications from Ukrainian children, 9,900 school places have been offered. However, this is based on responses from 77 per cent of council, with the data adjusted for non-responses. The DfE said 6,300 of the places offered to Ukrainian pupils were in primary schools, while 3,500 were in secondary schools. The data also shows that of 5,500 applications made by **Afghan** children, 5,400 offers have been made, while 8,500 applications by children from **Hong Kong** has so far resulted in 8,000 offers. Again, these figures are adjusted for non-responses. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/schools-place-10k-ukrainian-pupils-but-sizeable-number-havent-applied/>

**ITT**

* The DfE has issued “**Initial teacher training (ITT): accreditation**. Find out about eligibility and how to become an accredited provider of initial teacher training (ITT). See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/initial-teacher-training-itt-accreditation>
* **International teachers wanting to teach in English schools** will need to meet a new set of consistent standards, rather than their eligibility being dictated by the country they qualified in. Under DfE plans, new standards will be introduced, which include the need to have completed teacher training of at least the same academic standard as that in England and a requirement to demonstrate a proficient level of English. Teachers arriving in England from overseas who are early on in their career will get the same induction period as teachers in England, such as reduced timetables and access to a mentor and development. The current system only recognises teachers from a list of 39 designated countries, including across Europe, the United States and Australia. Teachers from other countries need to re-train, or otherwise find work as an unqualified teacher and then go through paid assessment of their teaching practice. The 39 countries where qualified teachers are currently eligible for QTS are: countries in the EEA, Switzerland, the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Gibraltar, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. See “**Awarding qualified teacher status to overseas teachers**”, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualified-teacher-status-to-overseas-teachers> For **policy papers and supporting documents for current and prospective providers of international qualified teacher status**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/international-qualified-teacher-status> For “International qualified teacher status (iQTS): **inspection policy”**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-qualified-teacher-status-iqts-inspection-policy>

**Free Schools**

* The government’s 55 Education Investment Areas will be prioritised for up to 15 new **mainstream free schools**. This will include a targeted number of high-quality, standalone sixth forms, designed to help children from disadvantaged backgrounds fulfil their potential. The first of the new wave of up to 60 **special and alternative provision free schools** will begin opening from September 2025, creating approximately 4,500 new places. LAs across England will be able to bid for the special schools and funding will be allocated according to demonstrated need for specialist places, and where new free schools are most needed. For alternative provision free schools, we will also be prioritising LA areas where none of the existing AP schools are currently rated ’Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted, or where no AP schools currently exist. The new special and AP free school waves build upon the 60 schools already in the pipeline, from waves launched in 2018, which launched 37 special and 2 AP free schools. In relation to this, the DFE has issued:
  + Guidance and expression of interest form for proposers looking to set up new **mainstream free schools**. This includes 16 to 19 free schools, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-application-guide>
  + Documents for groups interested in opening a **free school or maths school**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/opening-a-free-school>
  + Apply to open a **special free school**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-free-school-applications>
  + Apply to open an **alternative provision free school**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-to-open-an-alternative-provision-free-school>

**Public examinations**

* Analysis by FFT Education Data Lab echoes other research in finding that **A-level physics** tends to be "more severely graded" than other subjects. But it also finds that physics students are often further "penalised" because many take the subject in combination with other science and maths subjects that are graded in a similar way. See <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2022/06/why-a-level-physics-students-are-doubly-penalised-by-grading-severity/#footnotes_section>
* Schools are being warned about a “despicable” **cyber- attack** where scammers pose as a parent of a child who is in hospital and cannot make their exams, in order to potentially gain “sensitive details”; opening the attachment installs a virus on the recipient’s computer. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/be-vigilant-about-despicable-virus-exams-email-schools-warned/>
* **From JCQ**

**Exams support**

As we head into the third week of exams, JCQ and its member awarding bodies want to extend a big ‘thank you’, to all exams officers and centre staff who have worked incredibly hard to support and deliver this summer’s exams.

We know some of you are new to the role and were not involved in the last summer exam series that took place in 2019. To help with this, here’s a reminder of two things that are essential to ensuring the security and integrity of exams.

Two people are required to check every question paper packet, before it is opened.

The date and time must be double checked by both members of staff before opening the question paper packet.

The journey of a question paper infographic provides a detailed flowchart to guide you with handling and securing question papers in your centre. <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/JCQ-Infographic-Paper-Journey-Final-version.pdf>

This video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7R4P06iNkhw> provides an example of this, along with general guidance for what to do on the day of the exam. We’ve broken it up into chapters to help you navigate through the different topics.

We want to remind you, that you should expect to be inspected by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service at least once during the 2022 exam series. <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/jcq-centre-inspection-service-changes%25e2%2580%25932018/19/>

You can find more information in relation to question paper security in our Instructions for conducting examinations, <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ICE_21-22_v6.pdf> and Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures, <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Malpractice_21-22_FINAL.pdf>

**Education News for schools**

* The DfE has updated “**National professional qualifications** (NPQs) reforms”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-reforms>
* Author Cressida Cowell has renewed a call for the government to invest £100m in **primary school libraries**, as her final act in the role of children’s laureate. Cowell said that it was “ever more urgent to introduce a proper, lasting” library intervention, as new research shows that school libraries help to improve academic standards, as well as foster a love of reading in children.
* Parents in England are being hit with **an increasing number of fines as schools try to encourage children to stop missing school**. The number of non-attendance fines being handed out dropped off during the pandemic, as self-isolation rules and lockdowns led to millions of children learning at home. But there has been growing concern since it was revealed that almost 1.8 million children regularly missed school in the first term of this academic year. As part of a mission to tackle this, parents have been fined £3.7m for the school year so far, figures obtained by the BBC show. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-61638420>
* The DfE has issued “Information on **pupil premium funding**, how school leaders can use it effectively and pupil premium strategy statements”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium>
* Former regional schools commissioner **John Edwards** will lead the DfE’s new “regions group”, overseeing government schools policy. Edwards, who is currently interim chief executive of the ESFA, has been appointed as the first director-general for the regions group, which will replace the current system of RSCs. In his new post, Edwards will oversee nine regional directors, who will replace the current eight RSCs. The DfE recently confirmed the creation of a specific London region, to bring its operations in line with other departments and agencies. The new regions group will provide “integrated delivery for schools and local authorities, including children’s social care and special educational needs and disabilities”.
* The education secretary has asked officials to draw up new guidance **on long Covid for schools** as cases continue to rise among teachers and support staff and DfE research suggests that more than a third of secondary schools are reporting workforce challenges due to long Covid. DfE research published last month found that the condition was causing workforce challenges in more than a third of secondary schools (36 per cent) and more than a quarter (29 per cent) of primaries surveyed. It also comes as teaching unions unveil a new joint protocol which calls for staff who have been medically diagnosed with long Covid to be given up to 12 months of full-paid leave. The joint protocol, formed by the NEU, the NASUWT, the ASCL and more, sets out a "temporary suspension of some elements of the sickness absence scheme for staff medically diagnosed with long Covid". ASCL also highlighted the potential need for "additional funding" to help to pay for supply cover where schools are "struggling to fill the gaps". See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/nadhim-zahawi-orders-long-covid-schools>
* The number of **child cruelty offences** in England jumped by a quarter last year, according to police data collected by the NSPCC. The child protection charity blames the stress many families felt during the pandemic for the rise, and backs recent high-profile calls for earlier help. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-61748712>

**Resource management**

* The key document is “**School resource management: building a stronger system**”, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-excellent-school-resource-management> This outlines the DfE approach to supporting schools and academy trusts to get best value from their resources. The government wants to find another £1 billion of savings in schools and trusts, freeing up funding to “prepare for and manage” rising energy and other costs. The new school resource management strategy aims to “unlock” the 10-figure sum by driving a “step change in the way SRM is prioritised and delivered”. Much of the strategy includes existing support, but new plans to save money include:
  + Helping schools “monitor and reduce” energy and water usage, and get better deals
  + Funding for a second round of aspiring chief financial and operating officers to study relevant diplomas after a pilot, plus more free webinars for all from the autumn
  + Better resilience against crime, such as “CCTV or better securing schools’ perimeters” and offering cyber-attack insurance to trusts through the risk protection arrangement
  + Potentially expanding the school resource management adviser programme.
  + Working with schools most at risk of flooding to install “resilience measures”
  + Promising to “invest” in board training, and new board guidance on multi-year planning and budget setting in the autumn
  + Supporting new induction materials and development materials for school business professionals guidance, alongside a “refresh” of Institute of School Business Leadership’s professional standards
  + Updating workforce guidance to “maximise” staff deployment, updating financial checklists and value standards for schools, and expecting all schools to use integrated curriculum and financial planning (ICFP)
  + Pledging to cut bureaucratic burdens, including improving digital services schools find it “difficult to navigate”, potential “rationalisation” of guidance, and cutting “planning time and workload” through the DfE’s new curriculum body
  + Widening the rollout of the “capital advisers programme” after a pilot , with expert support on improving estate management capability at “trusts who need it most”

The **NAHT** said tools to achieve value for money were “useful”, but added: “Schools are facing unprecedented cost pressures, from gas and electricity price hikes to surging food costs. Achieving value for money will not make up for insufficient funding to cover these rising costs.”

* The DfE has also issued a large collection of documents on “**School resource management**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency>

In addition it issued:

* **School resource management tools and resources: formative evaluation**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-resource-management-tools-and-resources-formative-evaluation>
* **School savings in non-staff expenditure**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-in-schools-savings-and-resource-management>
* A **survey of school business professionals** (financial leads) in schools and trusts, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-school-business-professionals-2021>
* In addition, ESFA has issued a collection of “**School resource management: case studies**”. Examples of how school resource management tools and guidance have helped schools and academy trusts achieve better value for money from their resources. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-efficiency-case-studies>

**School management**

* The DfE has issued “Submit a **school land transaction proposal**. Find out when you'll need to involve the Secretary of State for Education and which forms you'll need to submit”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/submit-a-school-land-transaction-proposal> and “A **summary of the decisions about the disposal of school land**”, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-land-decisions-about-disposals>
* The DfE has issued “Information on **grant funding for academies that have changed trust in the past 9 financial years”**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/academy-transfers-and-funding-in-england--2>
* The DfE has issued “**Provide information about your banking and payments to DfE**. Digital form for organisations and individuals to notify the DfE of their bank account and payment details and any changes to them. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/provide-information-about-your-banking-and-payments-to-dfe>
* The DfE has issued **“Barring unsuitable individuals from managing independent schools**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/barring-unsuitable-individuals-from-managing-independent-schools>
* To support **schools considering joining or forming a multi academy trust**, the National Governance Association has published updated guidance. See <https://www.nga.org.uk/News/NGA-News/May-2022/Updated-guidance-for-those-considering-joining-or.aspx>
* The DfE has updated “How educational and childcare settings should **plan for and deal with emergencies**, including significant public health incidents and severe weather”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings>
* ESFA has updated “**Academies budget forecast return**”, <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>
* The DfE has issued “Expression of interest guidance and form to partake in an **academic progression programme pilot**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academic-progression-programme-pilot-expression-of-interest>
* Almost one-third of schools’ buildings include materials either at the end of their shelf life or that **pose a “serious risk of imminent failure”,** official figures reveal. Data shows more than 7,100 schools were given the worst possible rating for at least one aspect of their buildings during the DfE’s last full condition data collection (CDC). 32 per cent of schools visited for condition checks between 2017 and 2019 were given a D rating for the “construction type” of at least one aspect of the building. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/risk-of-imminent-failure-1-in-3-schools-need-immediate-repairs/>
* The DfE has updated “**Complete the school census**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>

**Post 16**

* The DfE has issued “**Introduction of T Levels**. Find out what T Levels courses include and how they work with other qualifications including grading and UCAS points”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels>
* The DfE has issued “**Qualification achievement rates 2021 to 2022**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-achievement-rates-2021-to-2022> and QAR and **minimum standards**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/qualification-achievement-rates-and-minimum-standards> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-the-esfa-measures-the-performance-of-fe-providers-it-funds>
* ESFA has issued “**College debt return**. Guidance for sixth form and FE colleges on preparing and submitting the requested borrowing and financing arrangements information to ESFA”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/college-debt-return>
* The DfE has issued “**Graduate labour market**: statistics”, with the latest relating to 2021. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/graduate-labour-market-quarterly-statistics>
* The DfE has issued “Statistics on **participation and learner outcomes in the further education and skills sector, including apprenticeships**, reported for January 2014 to present”, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>

**Tony Stephens**