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**194 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Nov 12-18 2022**

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**Early years and primary**

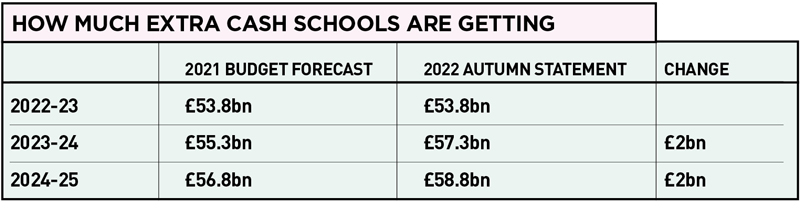
* The DfE has updated information on the DfE **early years COVID-19 recovery programme**, which offers leadership support, coaching and mentoring. See [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-experts-and-mentors-programme](about:blank)
* Ofsted has updated “**Early years inspection handbook**. Ofsted guidance on inspecting registered early years and childcare providers under the education inspection framework”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif](about:blank)
* Ofsted has published the **first in a series of reviews on early years education**. The report draws on a range of published research to consider how early years practitioners deliver high-quality education for children from birth to 4 years old. The report stresses the value of play and teaching, and the importance of developing communication skills. What matters most is that practitioners have considered what they want children to know and be able to do, before deciding how best to teach. Making sure children catch up after the pandemic is still a key challenge in the early years, so practitioners need to think carefully about what content to prioritise. However, the report does not prescribe how to teach a high-quality early years curriculum. **The report found that, high-quality early years curriculum and pedagogy may have the following features**:
  + The curriculum considers what all children should learn. It prioritises communication and offers plenty of opportunity for disadvantaged children, or those who speak English as an additional language, to learn and practise speaking and listening.
  + Practitioners choose what activities and experiences they are going to provide for children after deciding what it is that they want children to learn.
  + Adults think carefully about what children already know and can do when deciding what to teach first.
  + Children with gaps in their knowledge get the additional teaching they need so that they can access the same curriculum as their peers.
  + Practitioners consider children’s interests when choosing activities. They also expand children’s interests so they make progress in all areas of learning.
  + Children’s play is valued and used to teach many aspects of the curriculum. Learning through play is enhanced by skilful adult intervention.
  + Practitioners introduce children to new knowledge through explicit teaching and follow this up with practice through play.

See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-start-in-life-a-research-review-for-early-years](about:blank)

* **Mindfulness books for children** as young as two are the latest runaway publishing trend, the industry has said, with children themselves calling for more titles to help them make sense of their emotions. Publishers are reporting that sales of books for children under 10 years old that address emotions and mental health issues are up almost 40% year on year since 2021. See [https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/nov/14/mindfulness-books-children-runaway-publishing-trend#:~:text=Mindfulness%20books%20for%20children%20as,make%20sense%20of%20their%20emotions](about:blank#:~:text=Mindfulness%20books%20for%20children%20as,make%20sense%20of%20their%20emotions)
* The DfE has issued “Information for early years practitioners about **stronger practice hubs**. See [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-stronger-practice-hubs](about:blank)

**Autumn spending review**

* **Schools will get an extra £2.3 billion in 2023-24 and 2024-25**. But the Treasury documents say this is **actually a £2 billion increase** after the removal of compensation for employer costs of the Health and Social Care Levy is taken into account. This represents a 4 per cent yearly increase. Government said this “**restores 2010 levels of per pupil funding in real terms**. This means that school funding is now forecast to exceed growth in school costs, such as growth in teacher and support staff pay levels It will also provide an “average cash increase for every pupil of more than £1,000 by 2024-25, compared to 2021-22”, the documents state.



However, until we know what’s happening with energy prices, inflation and pay next year – **we can’t be clear exactly how generous this is**.” We know that the pay rises this year cost the sector £1.3 billion – so it is enough to clear that. But we don’t know yet what the extra cost will be of any pay rises awarded next year. Schools are also hit by other rising costs, and Hunt said today that inflation is forecast at over 7 per cent next year.

The **education capital budget** - which covers one-off costs such as building repair work, rather than recurring costs such as salaries and energy bills - rises from £6.3 billion this year to £7 billion next year, and then down to £6.1 billion in 2024-25.

Schools and other non-domestic energy users, including businesses, are currently able to receive help through the **government’s Energy Bill Relief Scheme**. The scheme reduces rates to £211 per megawatt hour for electricity and £75 for gas between 31 October this year and 31 March 2023. But the government is reviewing what support they can offer beyond this date, saying it is “not sustainable” to continue supporting large numbers of businesses. Public sector organisations will “not be eligible for support through the review”, meaning it is currently unclear what support they will receive from April next year. Any extra support would most likely have been announced today, so this does look ominous. If there is no support forthcoming, then this would leave schools facing a big hit in extra costs.

**NTP**

* The DfE has issued “Details for schools, academy trusts and local authorities on the expectations and conditions attached to **school-led tutoring funding in the 2021 to 2022** academic year”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-led-tutoring-conditions-of-grant](about:blank)
* Education leaders have expressed disbelief that ministers will **pay up to £4 million for a firm to run a national website to match schools with local tutors**. A website was launched this year for schools to find suitable tuition partners through the National Tutoring Programme. The DfE has now awarded Transform – previously known as Engine – a contract of up to £4 million to manage the service. The firm will support the DfE to “build and run the service” over the next two years. The potential value is more than the £2.4 million Tribal is paid to quality assure the whole NTP. On the new website, schools enter their postcode and which key stages and subjects they need support for before being given a list of tutors they can use in person and online. See [https://www.find-tuition-partner.service.gov.uk/](about:blank)
* There is an urgent need to **increase the subsidy that schools can use to pay for tutoring sessions as part of the NTP**, according to the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) which has said that it would like to see the subsidy on the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) rise to 75 per cent. Currently, government NTP funding can be used to pay for 60 per cent of the total cost incurred by a school to deliver catch-up tutoring, but the EEF has said that raising this proportion would allow more schools to access tutoring for more of their socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. The EEF has also issued a **guide to support school leaders to implement tutoring effectively**. See [https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/new-eef-guide-making-a-difference-with-effective-tutoring](about:blank)
* The DfE has set up a “**strategic tutoring advisory group**” to make sure the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) succeeds and embeds tutoring into the sector. The aim is to “help steer tutoring policy and practice in the right direction for the remaining two years of the programme and that we shape the longer-term vision for what could be achieved in the years beyond that”. See [https://schoolsweek.co.uk/troubleshooters-to-keep-an-eye-on-struggling-tutoring-programme/](about:blank)

**MFL**

* **Leading schools in language teaching will form a new Centre of Excellence, comprised of up to 25 schools**, which will work with other schools to improve standards of language teaching across the country in line with the teaching methods set out in Ian Bauckham’s 2016 Modern Foreign Languages Pedagogy Review. The programme will be backed by £14.9 million over the next three years, which will also aim to raise interest in studying German. The programme will aim to create a network of language hubs and build significantly on the previous Modern Foreign Languages Hubs programme, which was made up of nine lead schools. This initiative will support the **DfE’s ambition that 90% of year 10 pupils in state-funded schools study a combination of the core academic subjects as part of the EBacc by 2025, which includes a language**. The Centre will be overseen by a centre of language teaching expertise – which could be a range of institutions including a trust, university or business – and will bid for the contract launched this week. The scheme will also **raise the profile of learning German in schools** including increasing awareness of the benefits of studying it, by setting up a German Promotion Project. Included within the investment, this project worth £400,000, will involve increasing the number of German teachers in schools and will champion German as a subject. The Lead Hubs will engage with schools to improve the languages offer and ensure more effective transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3, as well as ensuring pupils aged 14-18 from all backgrounds have the opportunity to study languages through to Key Stage 5. Schools and organisations wanting to apply to run the Language Hubs Programme can do so via Jaggaer, [https://www.jaggaer.com/](about:blank)

**LA and school finances**

* Subjects including German, French, art, drama and design technology could soon be shut off to many state school students as heads say they are **being forced into cutting expensive and less popular lessons to address crippling deficits**. ASCL said, “Subjects we have always seen as culturally really important will increasingly become the preserve of private schools because state schools can’t afford to teach them.” It has also been said that many schools were already asking staff to teach subjects outside their specialism because of teacher shortages, and this would increase as a result of the funding crisis. See [https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/nov/12/art-drama-languages-and-geography-to-become-preserve-of-private-schools-as-state-sector-cuts-bite](about:blank)
* **Two of England’s largest Tory-run local authorities have warned the prime minister, Rishi Sunak, that they will be forced to declare bankruptcy within the next few months** because of the unprecedented financial crisis enveloping both councils. The leaders of Kent and Hampshire county councils said even “drastic cuts” to current services would not be enough to patch up the huge holes in their budgets created by soaring inflation and rising pressures in adult and children’s social care. The Conservative-run County Councils Network said at the weekend that only one in five of their members were confident of avoiding having to issue a section 114 notice this year. To stave off bankruptcy, they were cutting social care services as well as bus route subsidies, waste services and street lighting. [https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/nov/14/two-tory-run-councils-warns-pm-of-possible-bankruptcy](about:blank)
* **School energy bills are typically made up of two elements: the “commodity” part, covering the raw energy unit costs, and the “non-commodity” portion, which pays for administration**. The “non-commodity” costs are not covered by the government’s relief scheme, which began last month and provides non-domestic customers - including schools - with a discount on their gas and electricity unit prices. But in recent months, non-commodity costs have made up over a third of typical electricity bills, and a much smaller amount for gas bills, although this varies significantly from bill to bill. The non-commodity price of a typical electricity deal rose from around 12-14p/kWh up to 25-30p/kWh in the two months from August, according to data from energy procurement firm Zenergi. Rising non-commodity costs are a “key factor in why those fixing contracts in August onwards are not getting such a significant decrease in costs from their overall unit rate”. Schools need to be careful when looking at bills and quotes, that they understand which elements are commodity and which are non-commodity, and how different elements of the bill can change over time”. Some energy suppliers “like to showcase lower commodity costs while not pointing out higher pass-through non-commodity charges, which can rise during the term of the contract”. However, the trend in non-commodity costs increasing appeared to be reversing in recent weeks.
* ESFA has issued “**Dedicated schools grant (DSG): 2022 to 2023**”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-dsg-2022-to-2023](about:blank)

**Teacher pay and possible industrial action**

* **Teachers in sixth form colleges across England have voted to strike over pay**, and will likely walk out for the first time in six years later this month. The NEU has announced that a formal ballot of over 4,000 staff in 77 sixth form colleges had yielded a ‘yes’ vote of 88.5 per cent, on a turnout of 63 per cent. The first planned day of strike action is November 30, though the union today appealed to the education secretary to make the case for larger pay rises. But the Sixth Form Colleges Association pointed out that the government funds sixth form colleges at a lower level than schools, universities and other colleges, and do not have the resources to meet demands for such a high pay rise. **School staff in the NEU are also currently being balloted for strike action over pay**, though the result will not be known until January as that ballot started later. The union has said school staff strikes are “likely” to take place from the end of January if they are approved in the ballot. Most staff in schools and sixth form colleges have been offered pay rises of 5 per cent, though starting salaries are due to rise by 8.9 per cent this year. Inflation is currently at 10.1 per cent.
* Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the NAHT said he wanted to reassure heads that he “**cannot envisage circumstances where we instigate action that will call on you to close your school**”. The NAHT was asking members to vote “yes” to strike action as it will “offer us a wide range of activity that affords you the protection of legal industrial action”.
* For **The Secretary of State’s letter to the School Teachers’ Review Body asking for recommendations on teachers’ pay and conditions for 2023**, see [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-review-body-remit-letter-for-2023](about:blank) The letter includes: “Pay awards must strike a careful balance, recognising the vital importance of teachers and other public sector workers, whilst delivering value for the taxpayer, considering private sector pay levels, not increasing the country’s debt further, and being careful not to drive prices even higher in the future. In the current economic context, it is particularly important that you have regard to the Government’s inflation target when forming recommendations”. She asks for: “An assessment of the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers, and school leaders in 2023/24. This should aim to promote recruitment and retention whilst taking into account the Government’s commitment to uplift starting salaries to £30,000 and the cost pressures facing both the school system as a whole and individual schools”.
* For the latest **School Teachers’ Review Body (STRB) report**, see [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-teachers-review-body-strb-reports](about:blank)

**Free school meals**

* Two-thirds of MPs **want free school meals (FSM) to be extended to all children in families that receive universal credit**, new data released today shows. According to YouGov findings, surveying a representative of 103 MPs and commissioned by charity The Food Foundation, 64 per cent of elected members either “strongly support” or “tend to support” the measure, against just 14 per cent who do not. An additional 14 per cent were neither for nor against, and 7 per cent said they did not know. The survey also showed that almost half of MPs (46 per cent) from YouGov’s representative sample supported the idea of extending FSM to all primary school children without means testing. Asked who they thought bore the most responsibility for helping children in food poverty, 59 per cent of MPs said it fell to parents, with under half (43 per cent) saying it was primarily down to the government. **Further analysis from a separate Food Foundation poll**, conducted by children’s research specialist CHILDWISE, found that nearly one in three children in England (30.5 per cent) said they had shared food with friends at school because they didn’t have enough to eat. Additionally, the survey, which polled 1,000 children aged 7 to 17 in September, found that more than one in five (23 per cent) knew friends who were hungry and did not have enough to eat at school, and 17 per cent of respondents had used a food bank at least once over the summer holidays. See [https://foodfoundation.org.uk/publications](about:blank)

**Tesco, Aldi and Asda are among the major supermarkets calling on the government to extend free school meals** in England. Some of the UK's biggest retailers have co-written a letter which urges the government to commit to expanding the eligibility of free school meals in the Autumn budget. Chefs Jamie Oliver and Tom Kerridge have written the letter to Education Secretary Gillian Keegan alongside Iceland, Tesco, Sainsbury’s, Lidl, Aldi, Co-op, Waitrose, Asda and Morrisons.

**Welfare of young people**

* As mentioned in the last Update, **unofficial advice on provision for trans pupils** for maintained schools and academies in England has been jointly published by school leaders’ unions ASCL and the NAHT, the National Governance Association, the Institute of School Business Leadership, the Chartered College of Teaching and the Confederation of School Trusts. This can be found at [https://safeschoolsallianceuk.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Guidance-for-maintained-schools-and-academies-in-England-on-provision-for-transgender-pupils.pdf](about:blank) It aims to help schools meet their legal duties while supporting trans children, and should be read by all schools
* Campaigners have warned of a “national child protection emergency” in England with **vulnerable and disturbed children languishing for months in unsuitable placements while social workers attempt to find them secure homes**. According to figures obtained from the DfE after a freedom of information request, the average time a child who has been deprived of their liberty for their own protection will spend waiting for a secure placement is currently 65 days. In the two years to 19 October, the longest time a child had to wait for a secure placement was 211 days. The DfE said there were just 128 beds in 13 secure children’s homes in England available to local authorities, who hold the statutory duty to care for and protect children who have been assessed as needing this type of specialist home. On 14 September this year, 58 children in need of a secure placement were chasing just two beds available in the whole of England. On 22 September, 62 children required a secure placement but only three were on offer, the figures show. See [https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/nov/14/vulnerable-children-in-england-waiting-months-for-secure-homes#:~:text=Vulnerable%20children%20in%20England%20waiting%20months%20for%20secure%20homes,-Children%20languishing%20in&text=Campaigners%20have%20warned%20of%20a,to%20find%20them%20secure%20homes](about:blank#:~:text=Vulnerable%20children%20in%20England%20waiting%20months%20for%20secure%20homes,-Children%20languishing%20in&text=Campaigners%20have%20warned%20of%20a,to%20find%20them%20secure%20homes).
* Local authorities are struggling with a last minute dash **to find homes for children coming into care** due to the rising demand for places and a lack of suitable accommodation, according to Ofsted. In a report, Ofsted found that the lack of enough suitable accommodation, and the need to find placements quickly, mean local authorities often struggle to plan for and meet their legal duty to offer sufficient accommodation for children in need of care. Difficulty forecasting demand and the need for urgent placements leaves local authorities with little option but to respond to individual cases as and when they arise. Some local authorities told Ofsted that a lack of time and resources for forward planning results in a last-minute response when a child comes into care. Even when local authorities can plan, there is often a lack of available accommodation and care for children with more complex needs. Local authorities also noted tension in their relationships with some private providers and their ‘power’ over the children’s social care market. Some suggested that providers can cherry-pick certain children, making it difficult for them to follow their plan and fulfil their sufficiency duty. Conversely, other local authorities highlighted how positive relationships with providers mean they are better able to find homes for children with more complex needs and negotiate the cost of placements. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-local-authorities-plan-for-sufficiency-children-in-care-and-care-leavers](about:blank)
* Scientists are launching a trial **screening programme for type 1 diabetes** in the UK to detect the disease earlier and reduce the risk of life-changing complications. About 20,000 children aged between three and 13 are being invited to take part in the Early Surveillance for Autoimmune Diabetes (Elsa) study, with recruitment opening on Monday. The aim is to assess children’s risk of developing type 1 diabetes at the earliest stage possible to ensure a quick and safe diagnosis, and reduce the number being diagnosed when they are already seriously ill. See [https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/nov/14/children-to-be-screened-for-diabetes-risk-in-uk-early-detection-trial](about:blank)
* **A quarter of children say they are frequently victims of face-to-face bullying**, with those on free school meals or with SEND more likely to be targeted. Research published by the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) also shows that 6% of children are being frequently bullied online. Meanwhile, separate research from the Diana Award reveals that 83% of children have experienced bullying, with the vast majority stating that the bullying took place within school grounds, and half of those being bullied saying that the focus of the bullying was their appearance. See [https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week](about:blank)
* Four out of 10 teenagers have been **directly affected by violence in the past year**, with some staying away from school out of fear. A stark research report also reveals that a quarter of young people have seen other children carrying or using weapons, while 14% have been actual victims of violence. 65% said they had changed their behaviour to keep themselves safe from violence while 14% had been absent from school out of fear of violence The study, which involved 2,025 young people aged 13 to 17 in England and Wales, has been published by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF). See [https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/reports/children-violence-and-vulnerability-2022/](about:blank)

**Academies, trusts, free schools and UTCs**

* ESFA has issued a collection of reports by the Education and Skills Funding Agency into concerns about **the use of academies funding**. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/academies-investigation-reports](about:blank)
* The Swedish firm that ran **England’s first and only “for-profit” free school has abandoned the UK market** altogether after sinking almost £1 million into the failed project. IES Breckland opened in Suffolk in 2012 as a result of a free school bid by a group of parents. They chose Internationella Engelska Skolan to run the school on their behalf. The firm is the largest of those that run state-funded, independently managed schools in Sweden – a model said to have formed the blueprint for England’s free school reforms. But the company admitted its foray into the English market was over. IES Breckland was quietly moved to new sponsor the Unity Schools Partnership this summer. Dr Mary Bousted, joint general-secretary of the National Education Union, said: “The education system has been starved of funds so there isn’t any profit to make. See [https://schoolsweek.co.uk/swedish-for-profit-free-school-experiment-fails-to-make-grade/](about:blank)
* **Since their introduction in 2010, university technical colleges have struggled**. In 2017, more than half of UTCs inspected by Ofsted were rated ‘inadequate’ or ‘requires improvement’. Low student recruitment left some financially unviable. The National Audit Office found that deficits had doubled across UTCs in an investigation report published in 2019. Almost £800 million of public money had been spent on the programme. Twelve have closed, leaving just 47 open. But the **Baker Dearing Trust** – the organisation that promotes UTCs –says the “latest evidence points to it **going in the right direction**. It says UTC aggregate enrolment rose 8 per cent to 18,736 students this year. And latest Ofsted data shows 78 per cent of the colleges are rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ with none ‘inadequate’, (but what it doesn’t point out is those poor-performing UTCs were given a fresh start with their Ofsted grades wiped after joining a multi-academy trust). It wants every UTC to be Ofsted ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ by 2025 But the picture on recruitment is still worrying. Analysis found that while five are oversubscribed, more than half are still less than two-thirds full (the capacity that the Trust says is needed to be financially viable); four UTCs are less than 20 per cent full. However, **seven in 10 UTCs are in MATs** – a move favoured by ministers and, despite initially resisting it, the Baker Dearing Trust which began to encourage the process in 2019 to enable the colleges to survive. In addition to MAT mergers, almost four in 10 UTCs have **lowered their age range** from the traditional 14 to 19 model. Six now recruit from year 7 while 12 recruit from year 9. So, are these schools even UTCs anymore? The tens of millions of pounds of “transitional funding” from government to clear their debts, the financial picture of UTCs nationally is much healthier than three years ago at the time of the NAO’s report. At the encouragement of the DfE, bids for three brand new colleges have gone into the latest wave of free school applications. The last time bids for new UTCs were submitted was 2019, but all three applications were rejected. The Trust also says setting up **UTC “sleeves” in schools** provides an alternative way to grow – a model first put to ministers last year. The model would involve a secondary school offering the technical education curriculum, including T-levels, used in UTCs alongside their usual academic pathway, developed with the help of an employer board. Students would enter the sleeve at age 14 and leave at 19, like a normal UTC. See [https://www.utcolleges.org/our-mission/about-us/](about:blank)
* This year’s Schools White Paper set an ambition for schools to join “strong multi-academy trusts”, but with no set definition of what constitutes this, the Education Policy Institute (EPI) think tank is running a long-term study into the possible **features of successful school groups**. As part of this, the institute has begun new research to understand whether **characteristics of a school’s staff** can determine how effective its trust is, including whether **teacher turnover** can be used as a performance measure of how effective a multi-academy trust is. Researchers have identified a five-year cumulative staff turnover - the percentage of teachers that have exited a school group five years after a baseline measurement is taken - as its preferred way of measuring turnover. This research is the third part of EPI’s work to identify the features of effective school trusts, having already looked at financial efficiency and inclusion metrics. The EPI is also highlighting how recruitment and retention,”is a serious challenge for the English education system”. They outline that different groups of schools have a “large variation in turnover figures” and say this means they are not yet able to “confidently identify school groups where deliberate workforce management policies lead to higher or lower turnover, as opposed to other contextual factors”. See [https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/the-features-of-effective-school-groups-measuring-workforce-sustainability-of-effective-school-groups/](about:blank) [https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/financial-decision-making-in-multi-academy-trusts/](about:blank) [https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/which-school-groups-are-most-successful-and-why-epi-seeks-school-leaders-views-2/](about:blank)
* A government minister has accepted **more “transparency” is needed in its decision-making over academisation and transfers of schools into new trusts**. Baroness Barran, recently re-appointed academies minister, said it was in response to sector calls for greater openness as part of its ongoing review of academy regulation. Struggling maintained schools and academies can be forced to academise or join new trusts through a process known as “brokering” and “rebrokering”. But decisions are signed off at regional government advisory board meetings not open to the public, with only limited minutes published typically months later. She also pledged to “**simplify” regulatory burdens on trusts**. Barran spent most of her speech setting out some aspects of the government’s definition of “strong” trusts, repeating themes previously spelled out including collaboration, culture, economies of scale and career opportunities. But she also placed fresh emphasis on the importance of “**geographic coherence**”. She stressed this was not “trusts operating in a single area”, but instead trusts having clusters of schools – “so they can benefit from some of the collaboration that can take place between schools that are close to each other.”
* The DfE says its new scheme aimed at setting up a ‘**pipeline’ of new multi-academy trust CEOs** will be up and running by the start of next academic year. A supplier to create a curriculum for a new multi-academy trust CEO development programme will be chosen by the spring - and will begin delivery at the start of next academic year. The DfE’s “MAT CEO Development Offer” is being designed by an expert advisory group, which features trust CEOs, sector leaders and trustee chairs. See [https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/academy-trust-schools-mat-ceo-leadership-development-provider](about:blank)
* The DfE has issued 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](about:blank)
* The DfE has issued “Details of **successful applications for free schools and university technical colleges** (UTCs) in the pre-opening stage”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-schools-successful-applications](about:blank)
* For a speech from the new chief executive of the ESFA on **how the ESFA will work with academies and trusts**, see [https://schoolsweek.co.uk/autumn-statement-esfa-school-funding-agency-ceo-speech/](about:blank)
* Converting a group of schools into a multi-academy trust at the same time “makes sense”, a Department for Education regional director has said. Hannah Woodhouse, the DfE’s regional director for the South West, told the Schools and Academies Show today that there was no central instruction to the department’s regional chiefs **to convert schools in clusters**. But she said that, nonetheless, the move would make sense because “no trust” would want to grow at the rate of “one primary school” a month.
* The NAHT president has warned that **the target for moving all schools into MATs by 2030 could “destroy” the system**. “A lot of people are waiting to see a plan because we haven’t grown at the speed that we would have to meet the 2030 target. And, actually, growing that rapidly could wreck the trusts we have already got,” he said. “By setting the target of 2030 without any real plan of how that looks, it could actually destroy the very thing they’re looking to create or jeopardise it or lead to a period of real chaos.
* The government is working on identifying a list of multi-academy trusts about whom it has **concerns over high levels of chief executive pay** according to the chief executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency, David Withey
* The NEU has accused ministers of “double standards” after they offered several academy trusts extra funding **to take on under-performing schools when some of their own are “coasting**”. New rules this term enable the government to force schools with two consecutive less-than-good inspections into new trusts. School leaders are also angry about rehashed “coasting” rules, warning against “naming and shaming”. Education leaders also say they are lobbying the DfE to urgently amend the regulations to exclude Ofsted ratings handed out before academies joined their current trust. See [https://schoolsweek.co.uk/18m-academy-growth-cash-shows-coasting-double-standard/](about:blank) [https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/dfe-urged-curb-powers-over-coasting-academies](about:blank)

**Public examinations**

* Ofqual has conducted in-depth research into **ESOL Skills for Life qualifications**, identified some possible areas for improvement, and will now work with awarding organisations to address the research findings. The report finds ESOL SfL qualifications are seen by awarding organisations as having value to students and wider society, but have multiple and potentially conflicting purposes. Findings suggest some areas for improvement in the design and delivery of assessments. Ofqual has identified ways the quality of these qualifications could potentially be improved for students and is launching a series of workshops with ESOL SfL awarding organisations to address these findings. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/english-for-speakers-of-other-languages-esol-qualifications](about:blank) [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-esol-skills-for-life-qualifications](about:blank)
* Ofqual is conducting research on **online tests**, including investigating adaptive testing – a computerised test that adjusts the difficulty of questions as students go through it – to replace tiering. AQA has launched an online pilot where thousands of students sit onscreen tests. Ofqual will be “cautious”, but said greater use of technology could benefit some students such as those with special educational needs and disabilities. “We will need to make a detailed and sober assessment of risk and benefits and not experiment with young peoples’ futures.
* The Ofqual chair has told **schools to expect 2023 results to be lower than 2022**, with a return to pre-pandemic standards planned, albeit with some protections. He added it was “very misleading to compare your results this year, 2022, with any other year”. “And looking ahead to next year, lower results in 2023 compared with this year 2022 will not mean by itself that your school’s performance has fallen…it will be much more likely to be a reflection of the return nationally to normal grading standards. “I know that it really can feel worrying when results come in and they look lower than the previous year. But let me repeat this point, we should not compare 2023 with 2022 and certainly not with 2020 and 2021 when we had no exams at all.”
* Ofqual has issued statistics on “**Entries and late entries for GCSE, AS and A level: 2021 to 2022 academic year**”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/entries-and-late-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-2021-to-2022-academic-year](about:blank)

**Ethnic group achievement**

* The Institute for Fiscal Studies **says the rate of change in education performance for some ethnic groups has “been remarkable”**. The IfS looked at the percentage point difference in GCSE attainment relative to white British pupils. The share of white British pupils achieving a grade 4 or above (or previous benchmark standards) increased from 42 per cent in 2004 to 65 per cent in 2019. The IfS said Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black African pupils were 10 percentage points behind white British pupils in 2004. But in recent years this gap has closed and in some cases been reversed. Bangladeshi students are now 5 percentage points more likely to achieve top grades compared to white counterparts. Indian and Chinese students have 15 percentage point and 25 percentage point advantages respectively, which is similar to scores in the mid-2000s. But after a “notable reduction” in an 18 percentage point gap between 2004 and 2013, the gap for Black Caribbean attainment has now increased again to around 16 points.

The IFS also found a **greater proportion of students from all large minority groups attended university than white pupils**. In 2019, Pakistani students were 19 percentage points, Bangladeshi students 27 percentage points, and Black African students 29 percentage points more likely to attend some form of higher education than were white British students. However, for all three of these groups, **the proportion of students attending the most competitive universities was “substantially lower**” than among white British students. Students from all minority ethnic groups were also less likely to complete their degree or obtain good grades at university than their white counterparts.

Researchers also warned that **success in education had “not yet translated” into better or equal success in earnings.** Ethnic inequalities in pay were “persistent”, but varied hugely between groups. Median weekly earnings for Black Caribbean men were 13 per cent below white British men in 2019. Pakistani and Bangladeshi men were paid 22 per cent and 42 per cent less respectively. But average earnings among Indian men were 13 per cent higher than white British men. The IfS also found that **poverty rates** among minority ethnic groups remained “substantially elevated” compared to the white population. In 2018–19, non-white children accounted for a fifth of children overall but nearly a third of children in poverty. Two-thirds of Bangladeshi children and nearly half of Black Caribbean children lived in households in poverty, after accounting for housing costs. See [https://ifs.org.uk/inequality/race-and-ethnicity-chapter/](about:blank)

**ITT and teacher training**

* The government has quietly **abandoned three policies from its teacher retention and recruitment strategy** in a “disappointing” blow amid growing shortages in the sector. A “match.com-style” website to pair up teachers looking for job shares and an Ofsted hotline to report workload inspection breaches were never set up after being outlined in the 2019 plans. A pilot scheme offering experienced teachers paid sabbaticals was also dropped. See [https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ministers-quietly-abandon-promised-teacher-retention-policies/](about:blank)
* **Appropriate bodies (ABs)** are organisations that have the main quality assurance role in statutory teacher induction. A consultation set out reforms to the AB sector so that teaching school hubs (TSHs) will become the main providers of AB services and local authorities will no longer carry out this role. For the outcome of the consultation, see [https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/appropriate-body-reform-and-induction-assessment](about:blank) Ministers had proposed a shake-up of “appropriate bodies” under the early career framework from 2023, amid concerns new teachers and their mentors are not given enough time for induction. But the department has pushed this back by a year, after consultees warned the proposals would not give enough “transition” time. Councils will continue to check on schools’ teacher induction provision for an extra year after ministers decided to “phase” plans to put teaching school hubs in sole charge. Councils will thus to continue acting as appropriate bodies for their existing ECTs until September 2024. However, “in the interest of consistency”, local authority appropriate bodies will not be able to register any new ECTs from September 2023.But proposals to toughen up guidance to ensure schools face more rigorous checks will go ahead as planned. Appropriate bodies are meant to check that early career teachers (ECTs) and mentors receive their statutory entitlements during their two-year inductions. The responsibility is currently shared between teaching school hubs and councils. The DfE concluded that there were “aspects of the AB role that are being conducted inconsistently and there is some uncertainty about the expectations for ABs”. Amended statutory guidance is expected next spring.

**SEND**

* The “**Parent Pledge”** should be included in statutory guidance that schools have a legal requirement to follow, the children’s commissioner has said. In a new report, released today, Dame Rachel de Souza proposed that the DfE should include the pledge in statutory guidance as part of her plan to overhaul provisions for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). She said this would make clear what parents should expect from schools through the pledge and how this support would be funded for pupils with SEND. The Parent Pledge - introduced in the Schools White Paper - sets the expectation that schools identify when pupils fall behind in English and maths and keep parents informed of their progress. The children’s commissioner says the government should **ensure that mainstream schools are better equipped to support young people with SEND**. The report says this should include more support for schools looking to develop in-house alternative provision offers and that more schools should be encouraged to work together via their family of schools or academy trusts to provide good quality alternative provision. It also calls for a new cross-Whitehall body to be established to drive through reforms across education, health, and social care. She said the current system was **“not sufficiently ambitious” for children with SEND,** with diagnosis often used as an excuse for poor attendance, low attainment and poor expectations for higher education and employment. See [https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/cc-beyond-the-labels-a-send-system-which-works-for-every-child-every-time.pdf](about:blank)
* Ofsted has issued “**Area SEND inspections and outcomes in England as at 31 August 2022**”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/area-send-inspections-and-outcomes-in-england-as-at-31-august-2022](about:blank) More than two thirds of councils inspected by Ofsted last year had “significant weaknesses” in how they support pupils with special educational needs (SEND) – the worst record since the watchdog started visits six years ago. 68 per cent of councils effectively failed inspections in 2021-22. This is worse than the 56 per cent in 2019-20, before the pandemic, and since inspections started in 2016-17. Overall, 55 per cent of councils visited since inspections began have been ordered to produce action plans (82 of 149). Ofsted will introduce revamped SEND inspections early next year. It is now just carrying out revisits until the new framework starts.
* ESFA has updated its **High Needs benchmarking tool**. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-benchmarking-tool](about:blank)
* There is evidence that some LAs have **seized millions of pounds in extra funding designated for special schools.** The £325 million funding increase allocated for special and alternative provision schools goes to councils as part of their high-needs budget, but some LAS have kept some of it to plug other spending gaps. See [https://schoolsweek.co.uk/councils-seize-millions-earmarked-for-special-schools/](about:blank)

**Oak National Academy**

* Heads, teachers and edtech leaders have joined forces to call on the education secretary to **cut funding for the Oak National Academy**, which they condemn as an “unwanted government technology project” that will mean “vital public funding will be wasted”. The group of 13 education sector and supplier leaders - including Geoff Barton, general secretary of ASCL; Dr Mary Bousted and Kevin Courtney, joint general secretaries of the NEU; and Caroline Wright, director general of the British Educational Suppliers’ Association (BESA) - co-signed a letter to education secretary Gillian Keegan suggesting the money should go to schools directly instead. The letter says they look forward to working with Ms Keegan to “develop an effective model for school support that promotes a virtuous cycle of innovation and investment” rather than “wasting vital public funding on what looks set to become another unwanted and ill-fated government technology project”. See [https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/axe-unwanted-oak-national-academy-gillian-keegan-curriculum](about:blank)

**Universities and HE**

* ESFA has issued information on what **higher and degree apprenticeships** are and a summary of upcoming opportunities for programmes starting in 2022. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-and-degree-apprenticeships](about:blank)
* **University student loan interest rates will now be capped at 6.3% from September 2022**. For new students from August 2023, student finance will be put on a more sustainable footing. Student loan interest rates will be reduced so that they will not, in real terms, repay more than they borrow.
* The pandemic is still taking its toll on **UK university students’ mental health**, experts are warning, as figures show that growing numbers are seeking help from peer-run helplines for anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts. Nightline, which is staffed by anonymous student volunteers, said it had recorded a 51.4% increase in calls in 2020-21, and that this has grown since, with early data suggesting numbers for 2021-22 were 30% higher, and up a further 23% since the new academic year began. See [https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/nov/14/pandemic-still-affecting-uk-students-mental-health-says-helpline-covid](about:blank)

**SIMS**

* **Schools will be consulted on proposals to exit contracts with England’s largest school management information system (MIS) provider a year early**. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) seeks to wind up its 10-month investigation into “suspected breaches of competition law” by Education Software Solutions **(ESS) SIMS**. The probe was launched in April, the same month ESS scrapped its normal one-year rolling contracts in favour of three-year deals. This week, the CMA said the firm – which is owned by Parent Pay – had offered to give legally binding assurances which would allow some schools to apply for a new 12-month break clause to escape their current three-year deal with ESS. The “commitments” would apply to schools given “insufficient” time to switch providers before the new contracts were brought in, while applications would go through independent adjudicators. The CMA has outlined that schools would be informed of decisions by the adjudicator by the end of March next year, and given the option to end new three-year contracts with ESS on 31 March 2024. In effect, it means schools will only be able to escape one year of the contract. Schools and other organisations who could be affected by the legally binding assurances are now able to send in comments over a three-week period. The consultation will close on December 8. See [https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/watchdog-seeks-schools-views-sims-contract-fix](about:blank)

**Education news for schools**

* **Teaching assistants and other school support staff will be able to join the Chartered College for Teaching (CCT),** with a new associate membership. Support on offer from the CCT includes online short courses, access to “extensive professional development” and research, and access to consultations, surveys and events to “shape the profession”. The organisation currently represents serving and student teachers and has more than 45,000 members. Associate memberships for teaching assistants and other support staff will cost £1.25 a month, slightly less than the fee for early career teachers. See [https://members.chartered.college/join/memberships](about:blank)
* For a collection of the latest **statistics on looked-after children**, see [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children](about:blank)
* The DfE has issued “Reporting Year 2022, **Education and training statistics for the UK**”. See [https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-and-training-statistics-for-the-uk/2022](about:blank)
* Pupil numbers in maintained schools increased in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland between 2020/21 and 2021/22 but decreased in Wales over the same period. Teacher numbers rose in every part of the UK at every level, except at nursery level across the UK and in primary schools in England.
* Pupil to teacher ratios remained similar to last year suggesting the increase in the number of students has been offset by the increase in the number of teachers.
* Pupil to teacher ratios in maintained schools were lowest in Scotland (13.2) and similar in Northern Ireland (17.7), England (18.0) and Wales (18.5).
* Number of pupils, 10,028,578 in 2021/22, maintained schools - increase of 78,700 from 2020/21
* Full-time equivalent number of teachers, 563,831 in 2021/22, maintained schools - increase of 6,500 from 2020/21
* 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](about:blank)
* Ofsted has updated “**School inspection data summary report (IDSR) guide**”. This guide gives an overview of the inspection data summary report (IDSR) for primary and secondary schools, along with information to help interpret the charts. See [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-inspection-data-summary-report-idsr-guide](about:blank) and “**IDSR: news and updates**. News and information about updates for each inspection data summary report (IDSR) release, including any new functionality, features and bug fixes”. See [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/idsr-news-and-updates](about:blank)
* **Robin Walker has been elected as the chair of the parliamentary education select committee**. The former schools minister, who resigned in July over Boris Johnson’s leadership, received 228 votes in a ballot on Wednesday.
* Sam Sims, an education lecturer at UCL Institute of Education, and his colleague John Jerrim, a professor of education and social statistics, have published a research paper that aimed to find out **whether traditional or progressive approaches to teaching leads to better outcomes**. See [https://econpapers.repec.org/paper/uclcepeow/22-08.htm](about:blank)
* The Centre for Social Justice has issued a report on **home education in England**. See [https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/CSJ-Home-education-report.pdf](about:blank)

**School leadership**

* An analysis from FFT Education Datalab and the Teacher Development Trust (Sims & Jerrim, 2022) has sought to identify **the factors that can lead to a stressed teaching workforce**. Supportive school leadership and reasonable workload demands are most closely related to relieving the stress that teachers often feel, research suggests. However, collegiality and helpful behaviour policies are less likely to be linked to stress levels – although do play a role in job satisfaction and retention. See [https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2022/11/understanding-what-makes-some-schools-stressful-places-to-work/](about:blank)
* A report from the Teacher Development Trust – entitled A culture of improvement (Weston et al, 2021) – identified **five key aspects of teachers' working conditions that “appear most closely associated with increased student attainment, sustainable school turnaround and successful retention of teachers in the profession”**. These were:
  + Creating opportunities for effective teacher collaboration to explore student data, plan and review lessons and curricula, and plan and moderate assessments.
  + Involving teachers in whole-school planning, decision-making and improvement.
  + Creating a culture of mutual trust, respect, enthusiasm in which communication is open and honest.
  + Building a sense of shared mission, with shared goals, clear priorities and high expectations of professional behaviours and of students’ learning.
  + Facilitating classroom safety and behaviour, where disruption and bullying are very rare and teachers feel strongly supported by senior leaders in their efforts to maintain this classroom environment.

See [https://tdtrust.org/coi/](about:blank)

* 85% of **teachers with disabilities** say they are worried about their financial situation, with the cost of living crisis and years of real terms teachers’ pay cuts compounding the financial vulnerabilities typically experienced by workers with disabilities. A real time polling session of delegates at a conference found that:
* Three-quarters say they have been subjected to ableism from their employer;
* 80% said they have been prevented from progressing in their careers due to their disabilities;
* 60% feel ableist attitudes and abuse have increased in the past 12 months.

See [https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/article-listing/pay-cuts-hitting-disabled-teachers.html](about:blank)

**Governance**

* The National Governance Association has published new resources to **support governing boards to recruit and retain volunteers**. See [https://www.nga.org.uk/News/NGA-News/November-2022/NGA-publishes-new-resources-to-tackle-volunteer-re.aspx](about:blank)
* The DfE has issued “An evaluation of the reformed **national leaders of governance** programme’s success in its first year”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-leaders-of-governance-reform-evaluation](about:blank) A total of 66 designated NLGs were employed across English regions in 2021-22 to support long-term “requires improvement” schools, or those given the rating during the academic year. Regional Schools Commissioners could also refer schools they thought needed intervention for support. The programme, which has been running for a decade, was reformed last year to include a wider range of experts, with those sent in to help improve schools’ governance now being paid. The evaluation suggests that the government should consider extending the National Leaders of Governance (NLG) scheme to support local authority schools rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted. The research report emphasises that it is “too early to comment” on changes and progress made by schools and trusts who have received support, despite stressing that the reception of the reforms had been “positive”. It also urged the DfE to consider if current targeted timescales for the deployment of NLGs, reports and action plans were “realistic and appropriate”.

**School management**

* The DfE has issued a collection of documents “**Individuals prohibited from managing or governing schools**”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/individuals-prohibited-from-managing-or-governing-schools](about:blank)
* The DfE has issued “How schools can **share daily attendance data and access attendance reports**”. See [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/share-your-daily-school-attendance-data](about:blank)
* The DfE has updated “**Data protection: privacy notice model documents**. Suggested privacy notices for schools and local authorities to issue to staff, parents and pupils about the collection of data”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-and-privacy-privacy-notices](about:blank)
* The DfE has issued “**Technical specification and validation rules for submitting 2022 to 2023 school census data**”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2022-to-2023-technical-information](about:blank) and “**Complete the school census**”, see [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2022-to-2023](about:blank)
* For the latest **ESFA Update**, see [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-16-november-2022](about:blank)

**Post 16**

* The DfE has issued a collection of documents, **“Further education estates planning**” See [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/further-education-estates-planning/strategic-estate-planning](about:blank) [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/further-education-estates-planning/tools-and-templates](about:blank) [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/further-education-estates-planning/making-best-use-of-the-estate](about:blank) [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/further-education-estates-planning/understanding-the-estate](about:blank) [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/further-education-estates-planning/buying-selling-and-leasing-property](about:blank)
* The DfE has issued “**T Levels capital fund**”. See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-levels-capital-fund](about:blank)

**Tony Stephens**