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**195 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Nov 19-25 2022**

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**Early years and primary**

* From a report from Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)
* The number of very low-attaining pupils in **Year 2 reading** has more than tripled compared with pre-pandemic levels. The proportion of very low attainers in the year group has risen from 2.6 per cent before the Covid-19 pandemic in 2017 to 9.1 per cent in spring 2022.
* For **maths,** the proportion of very low attainment in Year 2 more than doubled - from 2.6 per cent before the pandemic to 5.5 per cent in spring 2022.
* And the proportion of low attainers in reading in **Year 3** also more than doubled - from 2.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent between 2017 and 2022. Low attainers were defined as those who scored below the lowest standardised score in the spring 2022 assessments.
* The report found that the socioeconomic attainment gap was wider in 2022 compared to pre-pandemic levels and research provides no evidence for it decreasing or increasing since spring 2021. For Year 2 pupils, the disadvantage gap in spring 2022 was around six months of progress for reading and around five months of progress for maths. And for those Year 3 pupils, the gap was even wider, at around nine months of progress for reading and around eight months of progress for maths.
* The research also investigated the **effects of the pandemic on pupils’ social skills and wellbeing.** The findings noted that FSM pupils and boys “were assessed as having significantly lower social skills than non-FSM pupils and girls”.
* 13 per cent of schools reported **disruption** in the 2021 to 2022 academic year due to challenges with pupil behaviour and wellbeing, with over half (58 per cent) of schools “struggling to get the external support they needed for pupils”.

See <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/socio-economic-attainment-gap-remains-stubbornly-wide-after-pandemic-with-reading-skills-particularly-affected>

* The DfE has issued “**Early years foundation stage profile results: 2021 to 2022”.** See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2021-to-2022>
* Percentage of children with a good level of development, 65.2% compared with 71.8 per cent in 2018-19
* Percentage of children at expected level across all early learning goals, 63.4% compared to 70.7 per cent in 2019.
* Average number of early learning goals at expected level per child, 14.1
* A higher percentage of girls than boys were at the expected level of development across all early learning goals (ELGs) and areas of learning, 71.9 per cent compared to 58.7 per cent.
* The physical development area of learning had the highest percentage of children at the expected level of development (85%), and the literacy area of learning had the lowest (68%).
* Of the regions, Outer London had the highest percentage of children with a good level of development (68%) whilst the North West had the lowest (62%).

For early years foundation stage profile outcomes in previous years, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-early-years-foundation-stage-profile>

* The DfE has issued “**Information on the 2022 multiplication tables check**, including breakdowns by pupil characteristics, at national and local authority level”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/multiplication-tables-check-attainment-2022>
  + The check includes 25 times tables questions, up to 12 x 12, with pupils having a maximum of six seconds to answer each one. The Multiplication Tables Check is the first statutory assessment students complete online, either on a PC or tablet.
  + Over 625,000 students took the check in the summer. But 26,692 did not take the test. Of these, 16,682 were working below the level of assessment. Another 3,724 were absent. More than half of pupils with an education, health and care plan did not take the check. Six per cent of those who did achieved full marks. Seven per cent of disadvantaged students did not take the check, compared to 3 per cent of their wealthier counterparts.
* Of pupils who took the check, the mean average score was 19.8 out of 25. The most common score in the check was 25 (full marks), with 27% of pupils achieving this score.
* Disadvantaged pupils performed less well in the check than other pupils. Of pupils who took the check, the average score for disadvantaged pupils was 17.9, while the average score for pupils not known to be disadvantaged was 20.5.
* Pupils with a first language of English performed less well in the check than pupils with a first language other than English. Of pupils who took the check, the average score for pupils with a first language of English was 19.4 while the average score for pupils with a first language other than English was 21.2.
* Boys tended to do better – with a mean average score of 20 – compared to 19.6 for girls.
* Chinese pupils were the highest achieving ethnic group with an average score of 23.5 followed by Indian pupils with 22.7. Pupils of Irish Traveller heritage were the lowest-performers with an average score of 13.2.
* The average score was highest for September-born pupils at 20.6, compared to 19 for August babies. Thirty-one per cent of September pupils gained full marks, compared to 23 per cent of August-born children.

London was the highest performing region, with an average score of 20.9. In other regions, the average score ranged from 19.1 in the South West to 19.9 in the North West and the West Midlands.

* Last week, Ofsted published the first of a series of reviews into the early years. Now Ofsted has been **criticised over its “concerning” exclusion of Reception teaching in the review**. In addition, open letter, co-ordinated by early years sector body Early Education, claims the Ofsted report “**relied solely on a small and incomplete review of the literature**, not the rich and extensive peer-reviewed research evidence available”. And it suggests that the Ofsted document “fails to reflect the wealth of excellent practice in the sector, which inspectors must be regularly encountering”. See <https://early-education.org.uk/open-letter-ofsted-early-years-curriculum-review/>
* **Early years children who are eligible for free school meals have poorer educational outcomes in affluent areas** compared with those in more deprived local authorities, according to new research. Analysis from Nesta shows that 51.9 per cent of children on free school meals in the least deprived local authorities reach a target “good level of development” in an end-of-Reception assessment, compared with 59.3 per cent in the most deprived areas. Nesta has said that possible reasons for the trend could include better-off areas having “less experience” in dealing with disadvantage, or that funding formulas “route” more money into deprived areas. See <https://www.nesta.org.uk/feature/mapping-early-years-practice/>
* Released on Wednesday was a report by BookTrust, about the experiences of primary school teachers and pupils **who welcomed creators of colour into the classroom**. The BookTrust Represents Schools Support: Evaluation Report, 2022 found that “representation in children’s books and their creators has a critical impact on children’s wider learning experiences and development in the classroom and beyond”. It also found that visits from creators of colour inspired many students “to write their own stories, with the authors they met serving as positive role models”. See <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/nov/23/childrens-authors-of-colour-published-in-uk-rose-to-117-of-market-in-2021>

**Attendance**

* **Attendance w/c Nov 7 2022**. 73 per cent of schools are now reporting attendance and others are encouraged to do so.

The attendance rate was 93.5% across all schools in the week commencing 7 November 2022. The absence rate was, therefore, 6.5% across all schools.

* + By school type, **the absence rates across the week** were:
    - 5.3% in state-funded primary schools (4.1% authorised and 1.2% unauthorised)
    - 7.8% in state-funded secondary schools (5.0% authorised and 2.8% unauthorised)
    - 11.8% in state-funded special schools (9.1% authorised and 2.7% unauthorised)
    - The data shows that the attendance rate across the academic year to date was 93.6%. The absence rate was, therefore, 6.4% across all schools.
  + By school type, **the absence rates across the year** to date were:
    - 5.1% in state-funded primary schools (3.7% authorised and 1.4% unauthorised)
    - 7.7% in state-funded secondary schools (5.0% authorised and 2.8% unauthorised)
    - 11.8% in state-funded special schools (9.0% authorised and 2.8% unauthorised)

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools>

**Ofsted**

* From 2012, schools that had been judged outstanding were legally exempt from further regular inspection, unless there were specific concerns about the school. The exemption was lifted in 2020. **Ofsted reports that over 80% (308) of these schools that had a graded inspection last year did not retain the outstanding grade**. The majority were judged to be good. However, around a fifth were rated requires improvement (17%) or inadequate (4%). When selecting schools for inspection, Ofsted prioritised those that had gone the longest without inspection, which for some was as long as 15 years ago. The average for schools inspected last year was 13 years. When the exemption ended, 43% of exempt schools had not had a graded inspection for at least 10 academic years, and a further 38% had gone between 5 and 10 academic years. There were 3,900 outstanding primary and secondary schools when the exemption was introduced, and 3,400 were outstanding when it ended. Some 1,400 schools remained outstanding throughout the period because they were not inspected at all and so kept their grade. About 1,900 schools ceased to be outstanding (usually after an inspection triggered by a risk assessment), and 1,500 additional schools were judged outstanding during the exemption period. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2021-to-2022/a-return-to-inspection-the-story-so-far-of-previously-exempt-outstanding-schools> Angela Spielman has rejected an MP suggestion that Ofsted deliberately downgraded schools. “Inspectors value their independence and impartiality. They guard that fiercely. And any suggestion from the top of Ofsted that there should be any kind of quota set or a sort of push on a particular kind of school would be met with absolute horror. I can assure you that there is nothing of the kind.” For deeper analysis, see <https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/news/ofsted-graded-judgements-woefully-blunt-tool-inspection-exemption-outstanding-amanda-spielman/>
* Out of the 1,600 graded inspections Ofsted carried out between Sept 1 2021 and June 30 2022, nearly 600 were of schools previously **judged to require improvement (RI**). A higher proportion of the RI schools inspected in 2021/22 have improved than in 2019/20: 70% compared with 56% in 2019/20 A higher proportion of primary schools than secondary schools improved (71% compared with 68%). However, the biggest increase was for secondary schools, with an increase of 26 percentage points from 42% in 2019/20. 74% of the academies inspected this year improved compared with 66% of schools maintained by local authorities. Of the academies that improved, 76% were established academies (rather than new ones being inspected for the first time) and the vast majority of these (91%) are in multi-academy trusts. For full details, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2021-to-2022/schools-commentary-july-2022-schools-that-require-improvement>
* Ofsted has issued official statistics covering outcomes from **initial teacher education inspections** in the 2021 to 2022 academic year. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/initial-teacher-education-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2022>
* Earlier this year, the DfE wrote to headteachers about a plan for parents in England to be given access to data revealing **how their school is using the NTP** and said the data would also be shared with the schools’ inspection watchdog. But Ofsted has now confirmed that has confirmed that there are now no plans to use the data. There are only two references to “tutoring” in the current Ofsted school inspection handbook, including one that says that inspectors will consider “information about use of tutoring in the school” in preparation for an inspection. Another states: “Where the school is directly deploying tutors to support education recovery from the pandemic, inspectors will consider how this supports the aims of the school curriculum, rather than evaluate the quality of the tutoring.
* Ofsted chief inspector **Amanda Spielman** appeared in front of MPs to answer questions:
* **The government’s ITT review** denied accreditation to some providers rated ‘outstanding’ under Ofsted’s tougher new framework. “We’ve reviewed our inspections in the light of what we’ve seen in the accreditation outcomes and we’re confident in the judgments we’ve made.”
* Ofsted began **inspecting initial teacher training (ITT) providers under a new framework in May 2021**. Spielman said the new inspections were “getting under the bonnet” of the quality and substance of training, and “throwing up a better distribution of outcomes”, with fewer providers rated as ‘outstanding’.
* Covid and staff shortages meant that Ofsted **lost about 1,000 school inspections** out of the programme.
* Ofsted announced last year that it would **inspect all schools by summer 2025** as part of its strategy to raise standards. She said Ofsted was “confident that we will meet the target”.
* Spielman said **relationships and sex education (RSE) guidance** sometimes created “difficulty” for schools because it’s structured in terms of the “minimum” they must do, rather than “the furthest they should go”. So, it can appear as though the various mechanisms are encouraging schools to go ever further.” In an effort to resolve this, she said she had advised the DfE it would be “extremely helpful if the guidance could be iterated to place some limits on what schools should reasonably teach”. Asked if she would recommend “more rigid guidelines” on the age-appropriateness of content, Spielman said she would “welcome clearer guidance for schools”. She added that the “burden on heads trying to navigate deeply contested issues is actually very considerable…they need real clarity from government”.
* One of her “regrets” was that the “constrained model” of “short” inspection meant **Ofsted “can’t interact with every single teacher in a school**”, but we have put a tremendous amount into making sure we provide constructive dialogue and feedback for leaders in schools.”
* Spielman **said Ofsted’s inspection models were “designed to meet the policy purposes government set**”. “Many of the concerns people express about inspection really come down to not liking the purpose government sets for us, and to wishing that we could be turned into a school support mechanism. “But the policy divide at the moment, that has been set by government for the last decade, is that our job is only to diagnose, not to treat and improve. And I have to respect government policy.”
* Last year, education secretary Nadhim Zahawi launched a 17-member “**attendance alliance**” which was tasked with working to reduce absence from schools. She said the alliance had been “helpful” but had not met since the reshuffle in the summer.
* The new government guidance on **transgender issues for schools** being worked on by the DfE is “urgently needed”.

**Exclusions**

* The DfE has issued “**Levels of permanent exclusion and suspension in the autumn term 2021 to 2022** by school type, and reasons for exclusions and suspensions”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-exclusions-and-suspensions-in-england-autumn-term-2021-to-2022> Suspensions from schools reached their highest rate in at least six years last autumn, but permanent exclusions are still not yet back to pre-pandemic levels. In autumn term 2021/22
  + Permanent exclusions, 2,097
  + Permanent exclusions (rate), 0.03
  + Suspensions, 183,817
  + Suspension (rate), 2.21
  + Permanent exclusions have increased compared to previous terms. In autumn term 2021/22, there were 2,100 permanent exclusions. This is an increase compared to 1,700 in the previous autumn term, but remains lower than pre-pandemic levels, in autumn term 2019/20 there were 3,200 permanent exclusions. Data for previous years shows that the number of permanent exclusions is typically higher in autumn term than in spring and summer. The rate of permanent exclusions is 0.03, equivalent to 3 permanent exclusions for every 10,000 pupils.
  + Suspensions have also increased. There were 183,800 suspensions in autumn term 2021/22. This is also an increase compared to the previous autumn term, when there were 160,000 suspensions and is higher than the final pre-pandemic autumn term when there were 178,400 suspensions. Suspensions are typically higher in autumn term than in spring and summer. The suspension rate was 2.21, equivalent to 221 suspensions for every 10,000 pupils.
  + The most common reason for suspensions and permanent exclusions was persistent disruptive behaviour. Persistent disruptive behaviour was included as a reason in 41% of all suspensions and 31% of all permanent exclusions in autumn term 2021/22. This is in line with previous terms and years where this reason was the most commonly recorded.
  + Boys continue to have higher permanent exclusion and suspension rates than girls.
  + Pupils eligible for free school meals were almost four times more likely to be suspended, and around seven times more likely to be permanently excluded than their better-off peers.
  + Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) had suspension rates of over 600 per 10,000 pupils, compared to 144 for pupils with no SEND. Pupils with SEND but without EHCPs also had the highest permanent exclusion rate of eight per 10,000 pupils.
  + Gypsy and Roma pupils had the highest permanent exclusion and suspension rates – 12 and 917 per 10,000 pupils – of any ethnic group, with those of Irish Traveller heritage the second highest. Indian and Chinese pupils had the lowest rates of permanent exclusions and suspensions respectively.
  + For exclusions data in previous years, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-exclusions>

**NTP**

* ASCL has been left “disappointed” after schools minister Nick Gibb **failed to commit to dropping a requirement for schools to top up National Tutoring Programme funding with their own cash**. Mr Gibb’s letter states: “We are asking schools to pay 40 per cent of the overall cost with the intention that the total spend on tutoring will see 2 million tutoring courses delivered during 2022-23.” 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. Mainstream schools are subject to a maximum hourly per-pupil rate of £18 - meaning they can claim £10.80 from the DfE. For non-mainstream schools, the rate is £47, enabling them to claim back £28.20. Last year schools using the school-led tutoring grant could claim the cost of 75 per cent of tuition from the DfE. This then dropped to 60 per cent this year and will fall further to 25 per cent next academic year - so mainstream schools would only be able to claim back £4.50 for a tutoring session.
* The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) could end up hitting its targets without providing the intended benefits as schools are having to simply **“redesignate” staff as tutors** for funding reasons, a union leader has warned. Cash-strapped schools are having to use existing teaching assistants as tutors without any additional cover, Nick Brook, of the NAHT, said today. This meant tutors were “going to work with exactly the same children, probably doing exactly the same things”, instead of being brought in as an “additionality” to existing classroom teaching staff. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/national-tutoring-programme-hit-target-miss-point>
* Schools had to fill in a year-end statement detailing their total NTP spend and completed tutoring hours. Any unspent cash will be clawed back by the Treasury. But, some headteachers who say they spent all their tutoring allocation are now being told they will have **money clawed back**. ESFA is saying “This means you may have spent more than your allocation, but we still need to recover some funding from you.” It is also said that some charity tutoring providers are now offering discounts on top of the government subsidy just to keep schools using the scheme. Others are fundraising so they can afford discounts. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/heads-bemused-over-tutoring-cash-clawback/>

**Support staff**

* Research from the GMB union shows that 77 per cent of teaching assistants who took part in a survey **have faced attacks**. Responses showed that a third experienced violence every week. Injuries reportedly received include broken bones and teeth, concussions, black eyes, torn ligaments and bites that break the skin. Nearly seven out of ten (69 per cent) participants felt that violence is expected to be tolerated as part of the job, and more than half (53 per cent) believe the assaults are not taken seriously by school leadership when reported. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/teaching-assistants-face-pupil-violence-schools>
* School support staff are **dipping into their own pockets** to help pay for food, stationery and uniforms for needy pupils, while skipping meals and taking on multiple jobs to pay their own bills, a Unison survey has found. Nearly all the 6,700 respondents (98%) to the UK-wide survey said they were worried their pay would not cover spiralling living costs, yet more than a third (35%) said they had helped pay for food or packed lunches for pupils. More than one in five (23%) have used their own money to pay for books, pens and pencils for their students, while 30% have helped struggling families with the cost of school uniforms. One in eight school support staff have themselves had to use food banks in the past year and may need to turn to them again, or are relying on family to help. More than a quarter have taken second or third jobs to make ends meet – including work in security, supermarkets, delivery driving, hospitality, beauty, tuition, cleaning and care. Almost half said they were actively seeking better-paid work elsewhere – often in retail – because they cannot make ends meet on their current salary, Unison said. Recruitment websites currently advertise TA jobs at around £80-£100 a day in London. More than two in five of those who took part in the survey had borrowed money in the past year to help with family finances. Others have tried to keep bills down by buying extra blankets (55%), heating a single room (31%), or not using heating at all despite needing it for health reasons (30%). Meanwhile 8% were using public spaces to keep warm and avoid using their own heating.

**Technology; Remote learning**

* The DfE has issued “Understand how to **follow safeguarding procedures when planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education>
* The DfE has issued “Policy documents, support and guidance for education providers on the **use of technology in education**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/using-technology-in-education>
* The DfE has issued a research report summarising an evaluation of **the EdTech Demonstrator programme phase 2**, which ran from 2021 to 2022. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/edtech-demonstrator-programme-evaluation-for-2021-to-2022>
* The DfE has issued “Report on the **tools that schools and colleges used for remote teaching** before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic closure in 2020 and 2021”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-technology-for-remote-teaching>
* The DfE has issued “**A study of the EdTech market in England**, and an analysis of both the supply of products and services and their demand and usage by schools”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-education-technology-market-in-england> The evaluation of the second year of the edtech demonstrator programme found “no statistical difference” in results between schools that received support in four of the five areas and those that did not.

**Academies and Trusts**

* Schools **should not rush to join multi-academy trusts**, despite the government’s 2030 vision for an all-academy system, the head of the National Governance Association has said. Emma Knights said: “For those of you that are leading or governing ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ schools, the decision is still yours. She also said the past decade had shown that when trusts rushed and grew too quickly, it “didn’t necessarily work terribly well”. Mergers had not been that common so far, but the NGA expected them to pick up, she said. The diminishing number of maintained schools was gradually limiting trusts’ ability to grow through conversions.
* Research by Arbor shows **92 per cent of multi-academy trust leaders surveyed expected their trust to add at least one school over the next three years**. While 58 per cent said their preference was adding new schools, 26 per cent said they would prefer mergers. But the vast majority said they wanted mergers with similar or smaller trusts, not larger ones. The poll also asked maintained school leaders if they expected to be part of a multi-academy trust by 2030. Almost half (45 per cent) agreed, but almost as many answered “I don’t know”, and 14 per cent said they did not.
* For details about the **Queen Street Group** – which has evolved from an informal group of CEOs in 2015 to a formal network of 35 trusts, largely serving disadvantaged communities, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/queen-street-group-academy-trusts-join-growth/> <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/revealed-academy-trusts-mat-group-warning-stricken-duck-schools>

**Public examinations**

* For the latest data on **vocational and other qualifications outcomes**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-vocational-qualifications> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr> <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/further-education-outcome-based-success-measures/2019-20>
* Ofqual has issued “**Provisional November 2022 exam entries: GCSE English language and mathematics”.** See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/entries-for-gcse-november-2022-exam-series/provisional-november-2022-exam-entries-gcse-english-language-and-mathematics>
* The total GCSE entries in English language and mathematics in November 2022 decreased by 10% compared to 2021, from 114,040 to 102,405. The number of entries in November 2022 are similar to entries in 2019 (109,495 entries) and 2018 (104,710 entries). Variation of entries over recent years may reflect alternative awarding arrangements for summer series in 2020 and 2021, and different approaches to grading in summer 2022.
* Entries for English language decreased by 7% from 50,345 in 2021 to 46,900 this year.
* Entries for mathematics decreased by 13% from 63,695 in 2021 to 55,500 this year.
* As in previous years, the majority of entries in GCSE mathematics were for the foundation tier (95%). The remaining students (5%) entered for the higher tier paper.
* Entries by year 12 and 13 students decreased both respect to 2021 and 2019.
* Ofqual has issued “**Equalities analysis of GCSE, A level and vocational and technical qualifications awarded in 2022**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-level-equalities-analyses-for-gcse-a-level-and-vtqs-2022> <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/equalities-analysis-further-insights-from-2022>
* There will be “no big bangs” in **the move to digital assessments**, an exam board leader has said today. Colin Hughes, chief executive of AQA, said that it would be important to plan the move to online exams “carefully, nationally and execute steadily over time”. He added it “should be approached not as a digital revolution, but as a natural assessment evolution”. He said that it was his strong view that “pens and pencils and paper should retain a large part in our examination system for the foreseeable future”. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/secondary/exams-gcses-move-online-aqa-digital-assessments>

**SEND**

* The DfE has issued “**Special free schools: local authority applications**. List of local authorities that applied to open a special free school in 2022”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-free-schools-local-authority-applications>
* **Ministers are considering a U-turn on plans to force councils to fill a huge black hole in school budgets next year**, as some local authorities say they risk bankruptcy. Soaring demand for support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities has left councils with a £1.9 billion deficit on everyday school funding, according to Local Government Association (LGA) estimates. The government issued a “statutory override” of standard accounting rules in 2020, letting councils leave dedicated schools grant (DSG) deficits unaddressed. It acknowledged they may otherwise have to raid reserves or cut wider services. Earlier this year the DfE said that the reprieve would end next April. The government is now consulting on the need to extend” the override on school deficits. In addition, ministers lifted the cap on council tax increases last week, given authorities’ “additional flexibility” to increase charges by up to 5 per cent without a referendum
* Government says a new minimum funding guarantee (MFG) next year will require councils to increase special schools’ top-up funding by 3 per cent. Those working in this area say it is “very important” the **funding goes “directly” to special schools**, alternative provision and specialist settings. We cannot have a rerun” of councils being given “the discretion about what funding (if any) that would pass on”.
* The much-delayed **SEND and alternative provision (AP) green paper** included a commitment to identify children’s needs more quickly and introduce new national standards for provision. When it was announced in March, ministers said they would publish a “national SEND delivery plan” on how proposed changes would be implemented “later this year”. It would also set out the government’s response to the three-month consultation, which closed in July. Ministers now appear to have abandoned their pledge to decide on sweeping reforms to the broken special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system by the end of the year.

**Health and schools**

* The DfE has highlighted government-backed research which showed **high CO2 levels** were associated with headaches and poor concentration. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/schools-to-receive-a-co2-monitor-for-every-classroom-as-flu-cases-rise/>
* **Schools will get enough carbon dioxide (CO2) monitors to put one in every classroom**, the DfE has announced, as figures show a steep rise in the number of severe flu cases in England. It told headteachers in an update that it would provide CO2 monitors to be placed in the “remaining 50 per cent” of classrooms. It introduced the £25 million scheme last September to help staff identify when ventilation needed to be improved, in an effort to prevent more Covid disruption. DfE said the extension would be backed by an additional £24 million in funding, adding that the monitors would help schools with “energy efficiency” amid soaring bills. So far, the DfE has provided 386,000 monitors across education settings, and 8,026 air-cleaning units. The new funding will supply schools with around 360,000 extra monitors, but the DfE is yet to confirm the number of **air-cleaning units** available. It said units these would be available for schools with classrooms where it is not possible to “maintain adequate ventilation” and where CO2 levels were consistently over 1500ppm. Schools will not need to apply for monitors. Instead, the DfE said it would send them a notification in advance to confirm the date of deliveries, which start on Nov 28. Applications for the air cleaning units have already reopened, with schools able to apply for units for up to five rooms. A total of 9,000 air cleaning units were pledged for schools under former education secretary Nadhim Zahawi. See <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=yXfS-grGoU2187O4s0qC-ZrWrzYoXuBFvIczJ5dewXtUREg3R0RESkEyQVZSUDVSSkJES1I5Q0ozMS4u>
* NHS England data released on Thursday shows the **number of people hospitalised with flu** last week was more than 10 times the number seen at the beginning of December last year. The figures were followed by a warning from the service’s national medical director, Sir Stephen Powis, that the country could face a “tripledemic” of flu, Covid and record demand on urgent and emergency services this year. **Covid cases** in the UK are currently on the decline, according to the most recent official data available. In the week to November 12, there were 20,588 recorded cases – a 16 per cent fall on the previous week.

**School finances**

* For an article on “**Integrated curriculum financial planning**”, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-funding-can-a-magic-formula-cut-spend-but-not-standards/>
* **The DfE expects additional school funding announced in the autumn statement to help “ease” the pressure of rising energy bills when a support scheme ends in March,** its permanent secretary has said. Schools are currently receiving support with their energy bills in the form of an effective cap on the prices paid, said to be worth £4,000 for a school paying £10,000 a month for energy, but the scheme is due to come to an end in March. Ministers have said what happens with the energy support scheme from April is under review, but that public sector bodies will not benefit. Asked about how the government is helping schools with their energy bills today, she said schools “are part of the energy support until March, and then part of this addition is intended to help ease that pressure after that”. It is the first time the government has confirmed that the additional funding will also have to cover rising energy costs, as well as pay rises and other pressures.
* In an email to schools this week, Gillian Keegan said the school funding was “over and above what has been previously committed both next year and the year after and is the biggest **injection of funding** ever”. But actually, the increase is likely to be the largest only in cash terms over a three-year period, this is not much of a surprise, given pupil numbers are the highest they’ve been since the 1970s, and inflation is currently at a 40-year high. While school funding in 2024-25 will be 41.7 per cent higher than it was in 2010 in cash terms, it will only be 2.6 per cent higher in real terms.

**School leadership**

* The Church of England is aiming to more than **double the number of UK minority-ethnic (UKME) headteachers** across schools in England in the next five years through a new leadership scheme. Its Leaders Like Us scheme, which is now open for applications, aims to equip UKME teachers with the skills for headship, including through shadowing, mentoring and networking, <https://www.cefel.org.uk/leaderslikeus/> It is open to teachers in any state school in England - not just those that are part of a Church of England diocese. There are currently fewer than 400 headteachers from UKME backgrounds in more than 20,000 schools in England, the Church said. But one in every three school students is from a UKME background. The Church of England has now set the goal of recruiting 450 teachers and supporting them into headship, including 50 in the first cohort. The scheme will formally launch in January next year but applications are already open at <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=O0bilbA6tEeawVh8d-6E8PbX7-WB9XJCnhY0T_zKahtUNlBCV1dGWE1IMFc5RFc2WkFJTUxTU0VWRi4u>
* **The gender pay gap for secondary school leaders** grew by more than a third in the last year, a new analysis shows. School Workforce data from the DfE shows the average difference between male and female earnings stood at £3,698 in the 2021/22 academic year. In 2020/21, male secondary headteachers earnt £2,702 more on average a year than females. Other leadership roles, including deputy and assistant heads, also continue to see disparities in pay in terms of gender. According to the analysis, the gap for these roles is “up to” £1,502 across all state-funded secondary schools. But the gap for primary heads has narrowed slightly, dropping from £2,834 in 2020/21 to £2,221 last year. See <https://www.naht.org.uk/Our-Priorities/Our-policy-areas/Equality-diversity-and-inclusion/ArtMID/824/ArticleID/1414/Closing-the-Gender-Pay-Gap-in-Education-A-leadership-imperative#:~:text=The%20report%2C%20Closing%20the%20Gender,the%20work%20that%20they%20do>

**Health and welfare of young people**

* **Mental health and wellbeing support should be added to pandemic catch-up activities in schools**, according to a report. The Covid Social Mobility and Opportunities (COSMO) study, led jointly by University College London and the Sutton Trust, also recommends “ring-fenced” funding for mental health services to support pupils in all schools. This would include giving students access to independent counsellors, and preventative and early intervention services for pupils deemed most at risk or falling behind as a result of the pandemic. Researchers surveyed a sample of 13,000 Year 11 students in 2021 and found that almost half (44 per cent) were above the threshold for “probable mental ill health”. Around half of students from comprehensive or grammar schools rated their school’s mental health support as “not very good” or “not at all good”. A total of 69 per cent of those who identified as non-binary or “in another way” reported high psychological distress, 61 per cent had self-harmed and 35 per cent had attempted suicide. Girls, meanwhile, were twice as likely as boys to have attempted both self-harm (23 per cent against 11 per cent) and suicide (11 per cent against 5 per cent). See <https://cosmostudy.uk/publications/mental-health-and-wellbeing>
* A more **targeted focus on wellbeing for students starting secondary school** is needed to halt a sharp decline in happiness later on, a study has suggested. Researchers from Cambridge University and Manchester University analysed the wellbeing and self-esteem of more than 11,000 young people from across the UK, using data collected when they were 11, and again when they were 14. The study found that the teenagers’ overall “subjective wellbeing”, defined as their satisfaction with different aspects of life, such as friends, school and family, dropped significantly during the intervening years. It is widely accepted that young people’s wellbeing and mental health are influenced by factors such as economic circumstances and family life, and that it tends to fall steeply and across the board during early adolescence. However, the research indicates that the decline is probably linked to the transition to secondary school at age 11. See <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/wellbeing-falls-sharply-after-starting-secondary-school/>
* **Close to a third of single parents have resorted to skipping meals** to make ends meet because of rising food costs, according to research revealing the household types worst hit by the cost of living crisis. Three in 10 single parent households surveyed said they had missed meals as a consequence of runaway food prices. That compared with one in seven parents in couples and an overall figure of 14% in the poll by the consumer group Which?
* The DfE has issued “**National school breakfast club programme**. How eligible schools can apply for support for breakfast club provision”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-school-breakfast-club-programme> <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/24/how-we-are-ensuring-thousands-of-children-receive-a-healthy-nutritious-breakfast/>
* There has been a huge rise in the number of adolescent biological girls seeking referrals to gender clinics with concerns over **gender identity**. According to a study commissioned by NHS England, 10 years ago there were just under 250 referrals, most of them boys, to the Gender Identity Development Service (Gids), run by the Tavistock and Portman NHS foundation trust in London. Last year, there were more than 5,000, which was twice the number in the previous year. And the largest group, about two-thirds, now consisted of “birth-registered females first presenting in adolescence with gender-related distress. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/nov/24/an-explosion-what-is-behind-the-rise-in-girls-questioning-their-gender-identity>

**Teacher recruitment**

* In the academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21, 45 per cent of state-funded secondary schools surveyed for the research reported **using non-specialist teachers** for at least ‘some’ maths lessons. The figure for physics and MFL stood at 39 per cent and 17 per cent respectively. A report notes that with ITT entrants this year expected to fall well below the level of 2019 and retention levels in the sector returning to pre-pandemic levels, “secondary schools are likely to struggle with filling vacancies in the coming years”. In the 20 per cent of schools that experienced the most difficulty in recruiting teachers, according to the survey, 62 per cent reported that at least some maths lessons had been taught by non-specialists. The figures for physics and MFL were 55 per cent and 26 per cent respectively. Around 70 per cent of secondary schools also reported senior leaders doing more teaching than usual. It also suggests a link between low Ofsted ratings and increased recruitment challenges. Only 15 per cent of primary and secondary schools rated ‘outstanding’ and 20 per cent rated ‘good’ were among those classed as experienced the most difficulty with recruitment. But 26 per cent of schools requiring improvement or rated as inadequate were among this group. See <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/news-events/press-releases/use-of-non-specialist-teachers-could-have-negative-impact-on-learning/>
* The DfE has issued “**International qualified teacher status (iQTS): inspection policy**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-qualified-teacher-status-iqts-inspection-policy> and “**International qualified teacher status: criteria for providers**”, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-qualified-teacher-status-criteria-for-providers>
* **The number of teaching vacancies being posted by schools has reached a record annual high**, according to new data. TeachVac says it has recorded 100,000 adverts for teaching posts so far in 2022, far above the 60,000 figure recorded in a normal year. In November, more than half of the vacancies posted by primary schools were either maternity leave cover or temporary vacancies, whereas most secondary schools are still advertising permanent post vacancies
* The government is looking to **expand its free teacher jobs board to include other school staff**, including business leaders and catering personnel. The service, launched in 2019, allows schools to advertise teaching, leadership and classroom support staff vacancies online free, in a bid to save leaders some of the estimated £75 million spent each year on recruitment. 83 per cent of state schools are now signed up to the service, which is now the “largest source of primary school jobs” directly listed in England, and the second-largest for secondary. It is hoped all roles could be advertised on the site within a year, making it “a one-stop place for school recruitment”. See <https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk/>

**Industrial action**

* Tens of thousands **of teachers in Scotland will strike** on Thursday after a new pay offer was rejected. The industrial action by members of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) will lead to the closure of most schools in Scotland and comes after the union’s demand for a 10% increase in pay was not met. Members will also take action short of striking from 9 December, which will involve refusing to cover for absent colleagues and attending no more than one meeting a week outside pupil sessions.
* **ASCL has launched an “unprecedented” indicative ballot, asking its members if they are prepared to strike over pay and underfunding**. The “consultative” ballot is the first in the union’s history, and its results will guide the union’s next steps. It will ask whether members would support a walkout or action short of a strike. However, a formal ballot would have to be held before legal industrial action could be called. See <https://www.ascl.org.uk/News/Our-news-and-press-releases/ASCL-launches-consultative-ballot-for-national-ind>

**PE**

* Between 2011 and 2021, **timetabled PE lessons allocated to GCSE** students fell by 19.6 per cent, from 134,418 per year to 108,044 (19.6 per cent), an analysis of DfE data by the Youth Sport Trust shows. Sixth-formers, meanwhile, saw a 24 per cent decline, from 36,539 in 2011 to 27,756 in 2021. Overall, secondary school students as a whole experienced an 11 per cent decrease in allocated PE lessons during the decade. However, the data also suggests that there has been a slight increase over the past year. Allocated hours, which are submitted by schools at the beginning of each academic year, have risen for PE across all secondary age groups since the beginning of the 2020 school year - and by 4 per cent for GCSE students and 7 per cent for A-level students. The weekly time for PE averaged at 92 minutes across the 178 secondary schools surveyed, with Ofsted’s recommending 120 minutes of PE a week. See <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/news-insight/news/stop-the-squeeze-schools-cutting-back-on-pe-for-gcse-students-when-they-need-it-most>

**Careers**

* **The government has watered down its careers advice targets for schools** after new figures showed most still do not meet eight key “benchmarks”. The DfE announced in 2018 that it expected all schools to meet the eight “Gatsby benchmarks” by the end of 2020. But the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), tasked by government with boosting these figures, revealed this week that just 12.8 per cent of schools had self-assessed as meeting all eight of the benchmarks as of the past academic year. Statutory guidance on careers advice no longer sets a target for when the benchmarks should be met, simply stating that schools should “demonstrate how they are working towards” meeting all eight. The CEC insists that the picture is improving. The average number of benchmarks met has risen from 1.8 five years ago to 4.9 today. More than 43 per cent of schools now meet at least six benchmarks, while just under 28 per cent meet at least seven. It said, careers leaders are a “growing force” in schools, and the government’s careers hubs programme – in which schools work together to improve their offer – is “driving improvements in careers provision and outcomes for young people. By extending careers hubs to all schools and colleges our goal is to ensure more young people benefit from high-quality, inclusive careers provision, especially those that need targeted support.” The CEC has been handed £142 million by the DfE so far, and is due up to £30.7 million this year.

**Education News for Schools**

* **Children will learn about biodiversity and nature in schools**, and perhaps gain new green spaces in the playground, thanks to a new partnership between the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), the Natural History Museum (NHM) and the government. The plan is for students to map out the biodiversity in their schools and add it to a nationwide database, as well as supporting teachers to develop curriculum-based climate education resources and lesson plans. Schools without green space could be eligible for funding to create some for students to study. The exact amount of funding has not yet been agreed, but a spokesperson for the DfE said there would be opportunities for a mix of government funding and corporate sponsorship. See <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/23/schoolchildren-in-england-to-learn-about-biodiversity-in-new-rhs-project>
* The DfE has **announced funding of up to £59.3 million to continue driving up the quality of maths teaching in schools across the country**, in line the Government’s commitment to making sure every child leaves school with a strong grasp of the basics. The funding will support the continuation of the Maths Hubs Programme through to the end of the next academic year. The programme which started in 2014 aims to reach 11,000 primary and secondary schools by 2023 and 40 hubs across England are now helping schools to improve their teaching quality.
* It seems there may be bias in the opposition to the **Oak National Academy**. A letter to Gillian Keegan, the education secretary, last week said the £42 million earmarked for the curriculum quango was a waste of “vital public funding on what looks set to become another unwanted and ill-fated government technology project”. The letter was coordinated by the British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA), and now it has emerged that four of the five members of the House of Lords who signed the letter have paid roles with potential rivals to Oak.

**DfE Research papers**

* The DfE has issued “Findings from 4 studies investigating **the experiences and impact of wearing face coverings in schools and colleges”**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-in-schools-surveys-and-qualitative-focus-groups> This includes data showing that, last year, a group of schools that had requested face coverings be worn saw a slower rise in Covid absence than a group of schools that had not. Teachers facing difficulty in enforcing the wearing of masks during the height of the Covid pandemic would have benefited from having more evidence showing they were slowing the spread of the virus. Older pupils were more likely to question the efficacy of face coverings, and teachers often needed to convince parents.
* The DfE has issued “Lessons learnt from a DfE funded pilot which examined the existing **oversight of out-of-school settings**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oversight-of-out-of-school-settings-lessons-learnt-from-the-dfe-funded-pilot>
* The DfE has issued “Papers summarising **evidence in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic,** particularly around children, young people and education settings”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-summary-covid-19-children-young-people-and-education-settings>
* The DfE has issued “A review of existing literature on **Latin and Ancient Greek provision in primary schools**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ancient-languages-in-primary-schools-in-england>
* The DfE has issued “**School and college panel: omnibus surveys for 2021 to 2022**. Findings from regular surveys with school and college teachers and leaders”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-panel-omnibus-surveys-for-2021-to-2022>

**School management**

* The DfE is looking at setting up a **national mental health lead hub** for senior staff who have undergone the government-funded training, aimed at helping them improve mental health and wellbeing support for staff and students in schools. The resources hub will make it easier for leads to find “trusted” information and “save time” in developing their school’s “approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing”, the DfE said. See <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/notice/96d4db11-766a-46d5-8271-447b2b9398fa?origin=SearchResults&p=1>
* For the latest **ESFA Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-23-november-2022>

**Post 16**

* A paper from the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) argues **for UCAS personal statements** to be replaced by short-response questions. The research from HEPI indicates that the personal statement in its current form favours more advantaged students, as they are more likely to receive extensive support from families and other sources. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to be able to draw on that support, particularly where students come from families with little experience of university. Parents or carers of disadvantaged students are also often too busy working long hours just to make ends meet, to be able to offer any other form of support. See <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2022/11/24/ucas-personal-statements-create-inequality-and-should-be-replaced-by-short-response-questions/>
* The DfE has issued information about **the intervention framework for post-16 education and skills providers**. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-accountability>
* The DfE has issued “Information about how to get **ESFA funding for post-16 education and training**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-market-entry> This guidance contains information on how to get ESFA funding for education and training for students aged 16 to 19 and for high needs learners up to 25 with an education health and care plan. Organisations wishing to tender for funding to deliver education and training for adults were previously required to apply to be on the register of training organisations. This has now been decommissioned and all future opportunities to apply for funding will be communicated via GOV.UK. Training organisations wanting to offer apprenticeships are required to apply to join the register of apprenticeship training providers, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers>
* For Ofsted inspection **statistics for further education and skills**., see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-inspection-outcomes>
* A Bradford-based academy trust has unveiled plans for an **“elite” all-girls STEM sixth form college.** Feversham Education Trust is consulting on its early proposals with a view to submit a bid to wave 15 of the DfE’s free school application process. Government ambitions for new “elite” sixth forms emerged earlier this year as part of its levelling up white paper, targeted at the 55 education investment areas (of which Bradford is one) where it aims to bolster opportunities for disadvantaged pupils.

**Tony Stephens**