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**283 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Aug 25-Sept 1 2024**

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**AI; Technology**

* DfE has issued a collection of documents, “**Using technology in education**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/using-technology-in-education>
* DfE has issued “**Reports on the insights from teachers, leaders and pupils on the potential uses of generative artificial intelligence in education**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generative-ai-in-education-user-research-and-technical-report> This shows parents want teachers to use generative AI to enable them to have more time helping children in the classroom with face-to-face teaching
* DfE has issued research on **parent and pupil attitudes towards the use of AI in education**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-on-parent-and-pupil-attitudes-towards-the-use-of-ai-in-education>
* **The government has announced a new project that will hopefully enhance AI's ability to assist teachers in marking work and planning lessons**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/teachers-to-get-more-trustworthy-ai-tech-as-generative-tools-learn-from-new-bank-of-lesson-plans-and-curriculums-helping-them-mark-homework-and-save>
* Teaching standards, guidelines and lesson plans will form a new optimised content store which will train generative AI to make it more reliable for teachers in England
* new project will bring teachers and tech companies together to develop and use trustworthy AI tools that can help mark homework and save teachers time
* comes as new research shows parents want teachers to use AI to reduce out of hours work and boost time spent teaching children
* almost half of teachers are already using AI to help with their work, according to a survey from TeacherTapp, but current AI tools are not specifically trained on the documents setting out how teaching should work in England.

The project, backed by £4 million of government investment, will pool government documents including curriculum guidance, lesson plans and anonymised pupil assessments which will then be used by AI companies to train their tools so they generate accurate, high-quality content, like tailored, creative lesson plans and workbooks, that can be reliably used in schools. The content store is targeted at technology companies specialising in education to build tools which will help teachers mark work, create teaching materials for use in the classroom and assist with routine school admin. It includes a partnership with the Open University which is sharing learning resources to be drawn on as part of the project. This follows DfE tests which show providing generative AI models with this kind of data can increase accuracy to 92%, up from 67% when no targeted data was provided to a large language model. To encourage AI companies to make use of the datastore, a share of an additional £1 million will be awarded to those who bring forward the best ideas to put the data into practice to reduce teacher workload. Each winner will build an AI tool to help teachers specifically with feedback and marking by March 2025, with applications opening on 9th September. The DfE is also committing to publishing a safety framework on AI products for education, due later this year. The DfE will meet education technology companies before setting out clear expectations for the safety of AI products for education. None of this money will go directly to schools to help them develop and adopt AI. See also <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/minister-morgans-geis-speech>

* For an article, “**AI cheating is overwhelming the education system – but teachers shouldn’t despair**”, see <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/aug/24/ai-cheating-chat-gpt-openai-writing-essays-school-university>

**Mobile phones**

* **Primary school children should not be given smartphones by their parents**, one of the UK’s largest mobile phone operators has warned. EE is advising parents that children under 11 should be given old-fashioned brick or “dumb” phones that only allow them to call or text instead. “EE recommends that children under 11 should use non-smart devices with limited capabilities, such as feature phones, ensuring they can make texts and calls but restrict access to social media or inappropriate content,” the company said. Nine in 10 children own a mobile phone by the time they reach 11. Meanwhile, even though most social media platforms require users to be 13 or older, 60% of children aged eight to 12 who use them are signed up with their own profile, according to Ofcom, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cdp-2024-0103/>

The telecoms regulator’s report also found three in five **secondary** school-aged children had been contacted online in a way that “potentially made them feel uncomfortable”. For children aged 11 to 13, EE also advised that if a smartphone was to be used, the device should have “parental controls enabled, as well as a family-sharing app in place such as Google Family Link or Apple Family Sharing, while restricting access to social media”. See <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/article/2024/aug/25/ee-warns-parents-against-giving-children-under-11-a-smartphone#:~:text=Primary%20school%20children%20should%20not,mobile%20phone%20operators%20has%20warned>.

* **France is to trial a ban on mobile phones at school for pupils up to the age of 15**, seeking to give children a “digital pause” that, if judged successful, could be rolled out nationwide from January. Just under 200 secondary schools will take place in the experiment that will require youngsters to hand over phones on arrival at reception. It takes the prohibition on the devices further than a 2018 law that banned pupils at primary and secondary schools from using their phones on the premises but allowed them to keep possession of them

**Pupil behaviour**

* **Teachers returning to work in September will confront a worrying “behaviour bubble” as younger children who were most severely affected by the pandemic reach the teenage years renowned for peak classroom disruption**. The warning from experts and school leaders in England comes as evidence shows that children of primary school age during the pandemic – when schools were closed to most pupils – have been accruing exclusions and suspensions at a record pace since moving to secondary school. The most recent official figures, for 2022-23, show that the fastest increases in exclusions and suspensions were among a “bubble” of younger pupils in years 7 and 8. Those pupils will now be in years 9 and 10, when sanctions for misbehaviour are traditionally the highest. The DfE’s most recent behaviour data for England’s state schools shows the proportion of year 7 pupils who received at least one suspension rose from 3.5% in the year before the pandemic to 5.5% in 2022-23, while the rate of year 8 pupils suspended rose from 5.5% to more than 8%. Older pupils in year 9 and year 10 had close to 10% of pupils receiving at least one suspension in 2022-23, also well above pre-pandemic levels. More worryingly, the rate of exclusions at secondary schools rose fastest among year 7 and year 8 pupils, particularly among girls. Before and during the pandemic, roughly three boys were excluded for each girl – but the ratio in 2022-23 moved to nearly two to one, with 1,000 more female exclusions compared with 2018-19. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/aug/25/bubble-of-post-pandemic-bad-behaviour-among-pupils-predicted-to-peak>
* **Fifty secondary schools in England suspended more than a quarter of their students after the pandemic, with children at schools with the most disadvantaged pupils three times as likely to be suspended as those in wealthier areas,** according to analysis. The proportion of schools suspending large numbers of pupils has risen sharply since schools were closed to many children during Covid, and teachers have struggled with deteriorating behaviour since they reopened. The number of secondary schools that sent away a quarter or more of their pupils rose to 50 in 2022-23, double the 24 that did so in 2018-19, according to data published by the DfE. Of the 50 schools, five are run by Dixons Academies Trust and three each by Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) and Northern Education Trust. Three of the schools suspended more than 37% of their pupils in 2022-23: Dixons Croxteth academy in Liverpool, Outwood academy Kirkby in Nottinghamshire and Outwood academy Bishopsgarth in Stockton-on-Tees. On average, 7% of pupils at each secondary school received at least one suspension. But the rate was far higher in some parts of the country: Stoke-on-Trent and Middlesbrough recorded double the national rate with 14% of their pupils suspended during the year. Suspensions were also concentrated in schools serving the most deprived communities across England. In 2022-23 the secondary schools in the top fifth in terms of children on free school meals suspended 11.5% of pupils at least once, compared with 3.4% of pupils at schools with the fewest children on free meals. Since the pandemic 45% of schools had higher suspension rates in 2022-23 than 2018-19, while 9% had lower rates. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/aug/25/50-english-secondary-schools-suspended-more-than-a-quarter-of-pupils-after-pandemic>
* For an article on **how a school has been developing new ways to try to reduce suspensions and deescalate the kind of behaviour issues** increasingly affecting schools across England since Covid, see <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/aug/25/its-about-developing-relationships-with-pupils-the-school-working-to-reduce-suspensions>
* Analysis supported by Cambridge University’s Faculty of Education showed a **positive impact on pupils’ behaviour and emotional literacy after one term of empathy lessons**. Data was gathered from 900 pupils in six countries including the UK. Pupils are shown thought-provoking films, and then engage in around 30 minutes of activities and discussions about the issues raised. Analysis indicated a positive impact on students’ behaviour and emotional literacy within ten weeks. Teachers rated pupils’ empathy, behaviour and other characteristics on a scale of one to ten before the programme began, and five and ten weeks later. The average empathy score rose from 5.55 to 7, while average behaviour scores increased from 6.52 to 7.89. “The programme’s success lies in teaching students to celebrate difference, which changes their wellbeing and behaviour”. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/school-empathy-lessons-lead-to-positive-behaviour-changes>
* **Schools need ‘”crucial” guidance on responding to tensions following the riots earlier this month**, governance leaders have told the government as staff prepare to return next week after the summer break. The warning comes amid growing concerns among heads and teaching leaders about the lack of advice before the start of the new academic year, with fears that schools will be “left alone” to deal with the aftermath of the riots. Scores of young people of school age have been charged with criminal offences over the rioting. NGA called for the DfE to “act swiftly to help tackle the very real risk of division entering the school gates” and provide “practical, easy-to-use guidance for school leaders and governing boards” on how to respond to tensions. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/schools-need-government-guidance-after-summer-riots>

**Early years, primary, childcare**

* **One in four children are due to start school in September without being toilet trained**, a charity has said. A report by early years charity Kindred found pupils are losing, on average, a third of their learning time each day due to teachers diverting away from teaching and towards supporting children who are not school-ready. The issue is linked with the fact children starting school this year were born during or near the start of the pandemic, "so in quite a lot of their early years they haven't had as much attention on their social development". Toilet training can be more difficult now than in previous generations, due to many social and economic factors affecting families.  A change in focus for health visiting and dwindling numbers means the profession has less capacity to provide help and guidance, contributing to the lack of support services and advice to help people who are experiencing problems. Toilet training can be more difficult now than in previous generations, due to many social and economic factors affecting families.  A change in focus for health visiting and dwindling numbers means the profession has less capacity to provide help and guidance, contributing to the lack of support services and advice to help people who are experiencing problems.  ERIC: The Children’s Bowel & Bladder Charity runs a helpline for families experiencing bladder and bowel issues, <https://eric.org.uk/information/https://eric.org.uk/information/>
* DfE has updated yet again “Lists of **qualifications that meet DfE's criteria for counting in the early years foundation stage framework staff/child ratios**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-qualifications-achieved-in-england>
* **From Monday 2nd September, hundreds of thousands of eligible working parents of children from 9-months-old should be able to begin to access 15 hours of government-funded early education per week** if they have been able to secure a place. . To deliver what parents have been promised requires an unprecedented rate of growth in childcare places and staff. This may mean some parents are not able to access their first-choice provider next year. The government is now taking the action needed to help deliver the additional places needed and will set out further plans to deliver the government’s commitment to use primary school classrooms to create new nurseries. The government is now taking the action needed to help deliver the additional places needed and will set out further plans to deliver the government’s commitment to use primary school classrooms to create new nurseries. Schools will be able to signpost parents to newly appointed wraparound leads in every local authority, who will be able to provide support if parents are unable to access the wrapround childcare they need. More primary school-age wraparound childcare places are also expected to become available from January 2025. This comes as the government looks ahead to delivering the expansion to 30 funded hours from next September. Nationally, around 85,000 more places are needed to deliver the rollout for September 2025 compared to 2023 – over double the increase in places seen in the past five years combined. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-funded-childcare-offer-to-kick-in-from-next-week>
* Babies born in 2020 started life in the strange world of lockdown in a small bubble of people with faces hidden behind masks. Social ­experiences, such as seeing extended family, trips to the playground or mother and baby groups, could not happen. And struggling public ­services meant infants were likely to miss out on face-to-face appointments with a health visitor who might have been able to spot developmental difficulties early. Those babies are now four years old, and arriving at school for the first time in England this week**. Experts say teachers should be braced to encounter – and tackle – problems ranging from poor speech and language development to social and emotional difficulties**. Similar problems have been seen in children who were very young during the pandemic and are already in the system. “We’ve had an increase in reception children biting one another, throwing things, running off, spitting,” said the headteacher of a primary school in north-west England. He added they were often frustrated or struggled with taking turns, sharing, or following routines and listening in class. “They don’t have the vocabulary to express what they are feeling,” he said. “They’re about two years behind when they arrive.” Staff talk about everything from nutrition, teeth-cleaning and toilet training, to the importance of regular bedtimes. Many homes will not have books.

1.9 ­million children in the UK – one in five – are **struggling with speech and language**. Research found more than half of teachers felt they had not had enough training to tackle these problems. If you grew up in a poorer area, your vocabulary would on average be about 3,000 words smaller than that of your peers in wealthier areas. after years of cuts, there were not enough professionals for the volume of need. Thanks to a nationwide shortage of speech and language therapists, if a child does secure an external assessment, the result will typically be a programme for the school to run with parents. “When and how do you fit that in?” Disadvantaged children are already, on average, 4.5 months behind by the end of reception class. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/sep/01/fears-children-born-lockdown-start-school-covid> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c39kry9j3rno>

* **The government has announced an extension of the early years stronger practice hubs programme** until at least March 2025. The programme supports nurseries by bringing groups together across local areas, to share evidence-informed practice, advice and build lasting local networks. This comes alongside additional resources for early educators to support children with special educational needs, with a **new online training module and assessment guidance** launching next month to enable them to better identify, assess and support children with additional needs.

**Trusts and academies**

* Schools and multi-academy trusts awaiting academisation and funding decisions are facing potential delays after the DfE proposed that **regional meetings to advise on academy conversion should not take place in Septembe**r, while some trusts face longer waits on funding bid decisions. Regional advisory boards usually meet once a month, with members advising on academy conversion and growth decisions. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/academy-transparency-fears-regional-advisory-meetings-halted>
* **Some trusts are facing delays in decisions on capacity funding**. The latest funding window for the Trust Capacity Fund (TCaF) closed on 25 June. According to the guidance, the planned grant activity start date was 1 August. However, several trust leaders who applied say they are yet to receive a decision on whether they were successful.
* ESFA has updated “**Related party transactions: information for academy trusts**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/related-party-transactions-information-for-academy-trusts>

**Ofsted**

* Ofsted has issued “**Local authority inspection outcomes as at 31 March 2024**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-inspection-outcomes-as-at-31-march-2024>
* The overall quality of LA children’s services in England has improved over the past few years. As at 31 March 2024, 60% of LAs were judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection, compared with 53% as at 31 March 2022.
* Of the 65 LAs that received more than 1 inspection under the ILACS framework, 26 LAs (40%) improved their overall effectiveness judgement compared with their first ILACS inspection, and 15 LAs (23%) retained a good or outstanding judgement. There were 12 LAs (18%) that had a decline in their overall effectiveness.
* The quality of LA children’s services showed substantial variations at a regional level. The proportion of LAs judged as good or outstanding was highest in the London region (85%) and lowest in the North West (36%).
* There was some variation in quality across the different judgement areas. Around 54% of LAs were judged as good or outstanding for their services for help and protection, while 65% were judged as good or outstanding for their services for care leavers.

The report gives the latest inspection outcome for each LA

* Ofsted has issued “**Area SEND inspections and outcomes in England**: management information spring term 2023 to 2024”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/area-send-inspections-and-outcomes-in-england-management-information-spring-term-2023-to-2024> The report gives outcomes for each of the areas that has been inspected in this time period
* **NAHT has warned against rushing “the biggest change to inspection for decades” but insisted that one-word Ofsted judgements should be scrapped immediately.** It also called on Ofsted and the government to ensure that the introduction of a new system to replace single-word judgements is carried out in full consultation with the schools sector.

**Welfare of children and young people**

* **More than 500 children a day in England are being referred to NHS mental health services for anxiety, more than double the rate of before the pandemic began**. In 2023-24 there were 204,526 new referrals of patients aged 17 or under where the primary cause was anxiety, official figures show. In 2019-20, the year before Covid-19 struck, the total was 98,953. In 2016-17 it was 3,879. The alarming increase means children are now being referred to NHS mental health services in England for anxiety at a rate of one every three minutes or almost 4,000 a week. Officials said the rise in demand for care was straining the capacity of the health service to provide timely treatment for anxiety, with thousands of children on “unacceptably long” waiting lists. Delays to treatment risked causing further harm at a crucial stage of their development, they said. Mental health leaders fear the figures may only be the tip of the iceberg because many children are not seeking help or are unable to do so, despite increasing awareness. NHS data does not record the reasons for referrals for anxiety, but experts surveyed by the Guardian cited a range of factors behind the rise in children experiencing the condition. They include intensifying academic pressures, particularly related to exams, the powerful influence of social media and cyberbullying, growing pressures around appearance, widening inequalities, rising poverty levels and the cost of living crisis. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/aug/27/nhs-referrals-for-anxiety-in-children-more-than-double-pre-covid-levels-england>
* According to recent analysis by Action on Smoking and Health (Ash) 5.6 million adults in Britain vape, about 11% of the adult population. **Vape use among children and young people has increased almost six-fold in the last** **decade**, with 7.6% of 11-17 year olds now vaping, either regularly or occasionally, compared with 1.3% in 2014. The World Health Organization has called for “urgent action” to protect children from e-cigarettes. Vaping can lead to nicotine addiction, while some devices have been found to contain other harmful substances, such as lead, or even spiked with the synthetic drug spice. Vapes should only be sold from “behind the counter”, like cigarettes, and not be on display in shops, according to the British Medical Association. It called on ministers to introduce legislation to tackle the “growing epidemic” of vaping in the UK. It also recommends a ban on the sale of disposable vapes and the use of any non-tobacco vape flavours. Vapes should only be sold in plain packaging, with any imagery, colouring and branding for both the packaging and vape device prohibited, as is the case for cigarettes. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/aug/28/vapes-should-be-sold-behind-the-counter-like-cigarettes-says-bma>
* **More 15-year-olds are reporting low life satisfaction in the UK than anywhere else in Europe, amid what experts are describing as a “happiness recession” for British teenagers**. The group is at the bottom of European rankings in terms of life satisfaction across 27 nations, analysis by the Children’s Society reveals, <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-08/Good%20Childhood%20Report-Main-Report.pdf> In the UK 25% of 15-year-olds reported low life satisfaction, compared with 7% of Dutch children of the same age – the lowest level among any of the countries surveyed. British girls are particularly affected, as are children from disadvantaged backgrounds, with food poverty highlighted as a key reason behind the poor wellbeing numbers. In 2021-22, children aged 10 to 15 recorded mean scores for happiness with their life as a whole, as well as with their friends, appearance, school and schoolwork, that were all significantly lower than in 2009-10 In 2021-22, children aged 10 to 15 recorded mean scores for happiness with their life as a whole, as well as with their friends, appearance, school and schoolwork, that were all significantly lower than in 2009-10. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/aug/29/uk-teenagers-low-life-satisfaction-europe>
* **Teachers should be “at the heart” of the government’s child poverty taskforce**, an education leader has said as new research reveals the extent to which teachers are being drawn into providing wider support for poorer students. Nearly three in 10 teachers in England said they personally provided food to pupils in the summer term because they were concerned about their welfare, according to a poll conducted by Teacher Tapp for charity FareShare. More teachers brought in food for pupils than in the previous year - especially in the most deprived areas, the poll shows. Some 28 per cent of teachers said they personally provided food to at least one pupil in the summer term because they were worried about their welfare. More than a third of the teachers in the latest survey said they did not personally give food to pupils last term because their school already provided it for children in this situation. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/teachers-must-be-in-child-poverty-taskforce-child-hunger>

**Health** **of children and young people**

* There is ‘real hope’ for **cystic fibrosis patients** as the NHS rolls out a life-changing new set of drugs known as ‘modulators’. Administered as tablets, the modulators tackle the root of cystic fibrosis by making the defective protein work effectively; the drugs will be available on the NHS for all cystic fibrosis patients over the age of two. There are just over 11,000 people in the UK with cystic fibrosis, which is passed on to them by two symptomless carrier parents. Often, it arrives out of the blue – to families’ utter consternation. In the 1970s, affected children rarely lived beyond 10. Improved treatments raised life expectancies to about 35 by the turn of the century, but the disease remained a significant cause of early death – until now. Indeed, researchers believe it is possible that those with the condition could now live until their 80s. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/aug/25/real-hope-for-cystic-fibrosis-patients-as-nhs-rolls-out-life-changing-drug#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWe%20are%20experiencing%20real%20hope,families%20for%20the%20first%20time>
* There is a warning over an **autumn term surge in measles cases**. There will be a nationwide vaccination campaign which aims to avoid a repeat of last year’s autumn measles outbreak among pupils. The six-week campaign aims to encourage parents to make sure that pupils are fully vaccinated against “easily preventable” diseases such as measles, whooping cough, meningitis, diphtheria and polio. It comes amid concerns that uptake of the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine is still too low in some areas of England, including London, the West Midlands and the North West. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/warning-over-autumn-term-surge-measles-cases-schools>
* The number of people diagnosed with **food allergies** in England has more than doubled in a decade and a third of those with life-threatening reactions are not carrying adrenaline pens, research has revealed. Experts at Imperial College London analysed GP records for 7 million people, <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(24)00163-4/fulltext> The number of new food allergy cases increased from 76 per 100,000 people in 2008 to 160 per 100,000 people in 2018, they found. Total prevalence grew over the 10-year period from 0.4% to 1.1%. The highest food allergy prevalence was seen in children under the age of five, 4% of whom were affected. The figure was 2.4% for children aged five to nine, 2% for 10-14-year-olds, 1.7% among 15-19-year-olds and 0.7% for adults aged 20 or over in 2018, the data showed. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/aug/28/food-allergy-diagnoses-in-england-doubled-in-a-decade-say-researchers#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20new%20food%20allergy%20cases%20increased%20from%2076,4%25%20of%20whom%20were%20affected>

**Public examinations**

* **Colleges in England are demanding a review of an "exceptional and unfair grade boundary increase" in an English language GCSE exam designed for resit students**. They say an 11-mark increase of the boundary needed to pass this summer will mean more students having to resit again, adding to financial pressures on colleges. In a letter to exam board Pearson, 30 college leaders called for the boundary needed to pass the GCSE English language 2.0 exam to be brought down. The colleges say they represent nearly 48,000 students who have been "negatively impacted by the unexpected and late decision" to change the grade boundary this year. 20.7% of students sitting the GCSE English language 2.0 exam achieved a grade 4 or above this summer, compared with 37.4% last summer. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c80ejyryz32o>
* **More than 450 school and college leaders have made a last-ditch plea with the education secretary to stop the “madness” and pause the planned cull of BTECs for at least one year**. In a letter to Bridget Phillipson, principals and headteachers warn that last month’s announcement to only “review” the previous government’s defunding plans by the end of December this year causes huge “uncertainty and anxiety” for staff and students. In July, the new Labour government announced it would only pause the defunding of a limited number of level 3 qualifications set to be defunded from August 2024 – which had minimal enrolments and were already removed from most school and college rosters. Instead, the government proposes to conduct a “focused review” of the AGQs and other qualifications set to be defunded from 2025 and beyond. This review will conclude by the end of this calendar year, meaning that schools and colleges will not know what courses they can offer in the 2025-26 academic year until December 2024 at the earliest.

**SEND**

* **SEND services in Birmingham** are slowly improving but a wider “malaise” at the council could pose a “threat” to progress, the first government-imposed commissioner has warned. John Coughlan said relationships between schools and Birmingham City Council are “under considerable general strain”, especially over SEND. But after “challenging period and slow start”, SEND improvement in Birmingham is “evidently progressing”, he said in his third annual report. See <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66b3261049b9c0597fdb0bd1/Improving_special_educational_needs_and_disability__SEND__services_in_Birmingham_third_report.pdf>
* For an article, “In this new austerity moment, a fight is on for **the rights of children with special educational needs**”, see <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/aug/25/new-austerity-moment-fight-rights-children-special-educational-needs>
* DfE has issued “**Independent schools for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities**, which have been approved under section 41 of the Children and Families Act”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-special-schools-and-colleges>

**School management**

* DfE has issued “**Schools block national funding formula: split sites funding**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-block-national-funding-formula-split-sites-funding>
* The DfE has issued a manual “**Data protection in schools**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/data-protection-in-schools>
* For the latest **ESFA Updates**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-28-august-2024>
* DfE has issued “How **regional Prevent education coordinators** (RPECs) can help education providers with the Prevent duty”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regional-prevent-education-coordinators>
* DfE has issued a collection of documents about the **teachers’ pension scheme**, including the changes that came into effect in April 2015. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/teachers-pension-scheme>
* DfE has issued “How public sector schools can join the **risk protection arrangement** (RPA), an alternative to commercial insurance, which may save time and money”, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/join-the-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa-for-schools> and “Information for public sector schools that are existing members of the RPA about membership rules and **how to make a claim**”, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-a-claim-through-the-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa>
* DfE has updated yet again its manual “**Complete the school census**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>
* DfE has issued “**How to apply to join the apprenticeship provider and assessment register (APAR)** to receive government funding to train apprentices”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-the-apar-as-an-apprenticeship-training-provider>
* DfE has updated “**Mandatory guidance on the criteria that organisations must meet to provide initial teacher training in the 2024 to 2025 academic year**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-criteria>

**Education news for schools**

* **The panel supporting Professor Becky Francis’ government curriculum and assessment review has been revealed**:
* Dr Vanessa Ogden - CEO of the Mulberry Schools Trust
* Sir Ian Bauckham (observer) - chief regulator of Ofqual
* Cassie Buchanan - CEO of the Charter Schools Educational Trust
* Funmilola Stewart - trust leader for anti-racism and ED&I at Dixons Academies Trust
* Gary Aubin - SEND consultant at Whole Education and EEF SEND associate
* Professor Jo-Anne Baird - director of the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment
* John Laramy - principal and chief executive at Exeter College
* Jon Hutchinson - director of curriculum and teacher development at the Reach Foundation
* Lisa O’Loughlin - principal and CEO of the Nelson and Colne College Group
* Nic Beech - vice-chancellor of the University of Salford
* Professor Zongyi Deng - professor of curriculum and pedagogy at University College London
* **Some teachers feel as though they have to “follow a script” due to the pressures of the accountability system**, a teachers’ leader has warned, and cautioned that school improvement and efficacy may have gone “too far”. “I really worry about those schools where teachers feel they have got to follow the script, that there is a right way of doing things - a perceived right way of doing things,” Dame Alison Peacock, chief executive of the Chartered College of Teaching, has said, <https://www.hamilton-trust.org.uk/primary-futures-podcast/the-future-of-the-teaching-profession-with-alison-peacock-and-samantha-twiselton/> “Everyone is constantly, metaphorically, looking over their shoulder to check that they are doing what they are supposed to be doing”. More emphasis needed to be placed on schools “supporting” their staff and early career teachers; there is a need for early career and trainee teachers to “get a sense of belonging” from schools and to feel that the reason they came into the profession “is being fed, rather than disappointed, which can happen”. Educational research should be about “encouraging teachers to ask questions of their own practice”, and cautioned against the type of pedagogy that leaves teachers on their own “with the door shut”.
* The Competition and Markets Authority has closed its investigation into school information management provider **Education Software Solutions** after finding that schools have been able to switch to alternative providers. The watchdog today concluded that “intervention is no longer needed”, and that continuing to investigate the company, which is the largest provider of school information management systems (SIMS) in the UK, would be “unlikely to have further positive impact on the sector”. ESS’ share of the MIS market in England is declining, falling from approximately 50 per cent to 46 per cent in just a few months. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/competition-cma-investigation-sims-provider-ess-closes>
* For the latest **STEM newsletter**, see <https://email.stem.org.uk/q/11oBrIRs4DdXP5Ie9E1hFgI/wv>
* **Parents are routinely paying more than double the price for branded school uniforms compared with similar items offered by supermarkets and high-street stores**, analysis reveals. Despite government guidance to reduce costs, the analysis shows that parents who are required by state schools to buy clothing featuring official school logos are still paying significantly more than for unbranded blazers, jumpers, ties and sports kit. Research published by the Children’s Society found last year that parents spend an average of £422 a year on secondary school uniforms and £287 on primary uniforms. Many schools now put affordability “centre stage” following the statutory guidance, but research by the Children’s Society suggested not all schools had complied. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/aug/31/branded-uk-school-uniforms-cost-double-high-street-prices-analysis-reveals>

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* DfE has issued “Find out **how you can become a further education teacher**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teach-in-further-education>
* DfE has issued “Links to the **local skills improvement plans** for each area of the country and details of the designated employer representative body that leads on the plan”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-employer-representative-bodies>
* DfE has issued “Letters to devolved areas outlining **adult education budget (AEB**) and free courses for jobs (FCFJ) funding for the 2024 to 2025 financial year”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-devolved-grant-determination-letters-2024>

**Tony Stephens**