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**285 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Sept 7-13 2024**

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**School management and governance**

* DfE has updated “Guidance for schools and post-16 education organisations in England on **providing free period products for pupils and students**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges>
* DfE has issued “**National Education Nature Park funding allocations**. The list of providers eligible to receive grant funding from the National Education Nature Park. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-park-and-climate-action-awards-funding-allocations>
* For the latest **SecEd bulletins**, see <https://email.sec-ed.co.uk/q/12JpfhcpVs3SzJsTTC7YkQUH/wv>

<https://email.sec-ed.co.uk/q/12JpfhcpVLyxosraW2Qa1KEL/wv>

* DfE has issued a useful collection of **The DfE’s statutory guidance publications** for schools and local authorities. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools>
* DfE has updated its manual “**Complete the school census**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>
* DfE has issued “**An overview of school capital funding**, who it's for, current and past allocations, how it's calculated and spending guidance”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capital-funding>
* DfE has issued “**Plan technology for your school**. Find out how your school can plan and use digital technology better”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-technology-for-your-school>
* For the latest **ESFA Updates**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-11-september-2024>
* NGA has issued “**Need to know: Governing board essentials for the autumn term**”. See <https://www.nga.org.uk/news-views/directory/need-to-know-governing-board-essentials-for-the-autumn-term/>
* **The ESFA is set to close in March 2025, bringing the functions into the Department for Education**. In addition, the ESFA’s Schools Financial Support and Oversight (SFSO) teams will move to Regions Group from 1 October. This will support the launch of Regional Improvement Teams by January 2025. These teams will, from early 2025, work with struggling schools to quickly and directly address areas of weakness. Other core functions will be moved into the department as part of the Operations and Infrastructure Group in March 2025. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/esfa-functions-to-move-to-the-department-for-education>
* For the latest **Education Support newsletter**, see <https://mailchi.mp/edsupport/your-october-newsletter-3177028?e=e7e9149d14>
* **NGA has been told there is no DfE funding for a national school governor recruitment drive**. Fears over supply problems for governors have grown since 2021 when an NGA report investigating governor recruitment found a lack of open and transparent processes as a big barrier to underrepresented groups joining governor and trustee boards. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/no-dfe-money-national-governor-recruitment-drive-labour>
* **The children’s commissioner has used her statutory powers to order every school in England to complete a survey about the support they give pupils and the barriers school leaders face**. Dame Rachel de Souza said her school survey, which will run until December 20, aimed to “better understand the role schools play in children’s development”. It will help to shape her recommendations to the government. For example, schools will be asked whether they provide breakfast clubs, food banks or wrap-around childcare, and who pays for such provision. But leaders will also be asked if they have been unable to provide the required support to pupils with additional needs, and about mobile phone policies. See <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/blog/school-survey-the-biggest-ever-survey-of-schools-and-colleges-in-england/>

**Academies and Trusts**

* ESFA has issued :
	+ **Academies: A to Z of terms**. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-funding-a-to-z-of-terms>. A guide to the main academy funding, finance and governance terms and acronyms, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-funding-a-to-z-of-terms>
	+ **Academies revenue funding allocations**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-funding-allocations>
	+ **Academies payments information: remittance advice notes**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-payments-information-remittance-advice-notes>
	+ **Revenue funding: payments to academies**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-payments-for-academies>
	+ **Academies budget forecast return**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-budget-forecast-return>
	+ **Academies budget forecast return: guide to using the online form**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-budget-forecast-return-guide-to-using-the-online-form>
* ESFA has issued a collection of “Collection of **Academy trust accounting officer letters from EFA and ESFA**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/academy-trust-accounting-officer-letters-from-efa>
* ESFA has issued “**Academy trusts: themes arising from ESFA's assurance work**. Findings from the Education and Skills Funding Agency's assurance work relating to the financial management and governance of the academies sector”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trusts-themes-arising-from-esfas-assurance-work>
* **Some academy trusts are “growing” their own talent by training sixth-form leavers for central team roles and encouraging them into the classroom with teaching masterclasses**. The Education Alliance (TEAL), which runs 12 schools in Yorkshire, has developed what it says is the “UK’s first virtual work experience programme” for sixth-formers and undergraduates considering teaching. Kingswood Secondary Academy in Corby, part of the Greenwood Academies Trust (GAT), has a programme that mentors sixth-form pupils interested in teaching. In a six-week taster, pupils learn the basics of teaching and modelling various teaching methods and strategies. They are expected to present their own 30 to 60-minute lesson by the end of the course. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/trusts-target-sixth-formers-in-recruitment-drive/>
* ESFA has issued “**Academies land and buildings collection tool.** Guide to help academy trusts and diocesan users submit their land and buildings collection tool to the ESFA”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-land-and-buildings-collection-tool>
* For an article on how the **Outwood Grange Academies Trust** is reorganising, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/the-og-turnaround-academy-trust-stops-turnarounds/>
* TES has issued a **MAT Tracker**, mapping the country’s multi-academy trusts. Where are MATs located and how many schools do they run. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/leadership/data/mat-tracker-multi-academy-trusts-map?utm_campaign=1813262_20240913%20Tes%20Daily%20-%20Friday&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dotdigital&utm_content=1813262_20240913%20Tes%20Daily%20-%20Friday&dm_i=5NNY,12V4E,4T4WKE,4Y6FD,1>

**Early years and primary**

* DfE has issued **updated provisional results for the 2024 national curriculum assessments at key stage 2**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/key-stage-2-attainment-provisional-2024>

**Attainment at expected standard**

* In individual subjects, attainment increased in reading, writing and science compared to 2023. Attainment remained the same in maths and grammar, punctuation and spelling.
* In reading, 74% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 73% in 2023.
* In maths, 73% of pupils met the expected standard, unchanged since 2023.
* In writing, 72% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 71% in 2023.
* In grammar, punctuation and spelling, 72% of pupils met the expected standard, unchanged since 2023.
* In science, 81% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 80% in 2023.
* Attainment in all of reading, writing and maths (combined) increased compared to 2023.
* In all of reading, writing and maths (combined), 61% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 60% in 2023. 45 per cent of disadvantaged pupils reached this standard, compared to 67 per cent of their peers, a one percentage point rise for both groups of pupils. In 2018-19, 51 per cent of disadvantaged pupils met the standard. For pupils with special educational needs, 21 per cent achieved the standard, up from 20 per cent last year. But it is still below the 22 per cent seen in 2018-19.
* Girls continue to outperform boys at the expected standard in all subjects except maths, where boys outperformed girls by 1 percentage point.
* The disadvantage gap index is down from 3.21 in 2023 to 3.12 in 2024. But it is still wider than the 2.91 gap in pre-pandemic 2018-19. This year’s figures are similar to where the gap stood 10 years ago (3.10 in 2014-15 and 3.15 in 2013-14).
* In 2024, pupils born in September were the highest achieving group in all of reading, writing and maths (combined), 67% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 66% in 2023. Pupils born in August were the lowest achieving group, 54% of this group met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined), up from 53% in 2023.

**Attainment at the higher standard**

* In reading, 28% of pupils met the higher standard, down from 29% in 2023.
* In writing teacher assessment, 13% of pupils achieved greater depth, unchanged since 2022. Before the pandemic, in both 2018 and 2019, this figure was 20%. Attainment in writing is not directly comparable to some earlier years (2016 and 2017) because of changes to writing teacher assessment frameworks in 2018.
* In maths, 24% of pupils met the higher standard, unchanged since 2023. Before the pandemic, this figure had risen from 17% to 27% between 2016 and 2019.
* Among reading, writing and maths, attainment at the higher standard is highest in reading. From 2016 to 2018, reading was also highest. In 2019, reading and maths were highest at 27%. Attainment of the higher standard in these three subjects remains lowest in writing.
* In grammar, punctuation and spelling, 32% of pupils met the higher standard, up from 30% in 2023. Before the pandemic, this figure had risen from 23% to 36% between 2016 and 2019.
* There is no higher standard for science.
* DfE has issued a collection of **Statistics for key stage 2 back to 2010**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-key-stage-2>
* DfE has issued “Technical guidance on **primary school accountability measures**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/primary-school-accountability>
* **An unpublished review by Sir David Bell, commissioned by Labour while in opposition, calls for more funding to deliver the party’s school-based nursery plan**. The DfE confirmed that Sir David’s findings would “inform” its approach to its early years reforms. **Findings**
* He urged the party to develop and publish a strategy for early childhood education and care in its first year of government if elected. His recommendations for the strategy include:
* Boost availability, affordability and accessibility of childcare
* Increase the early years pupil premium
* Develop a new 0-7 qualified teacher status (QTS) qualification
* Further regulation over the early years market
* More funding needed to deliver nursery plan, i.e, to convert over 3,000 spare classrooms into nurseries. Schools would “reasonably expect some support with capital funding costs. Further considerations for this potential government policy include “aligning nursery and school admissions” and “considering how best to deploy suitably qualified staff”.
* Increase early years pupil premium. This should be “done gradually” and alongside a wider plan to “build the evidence on effective interventions”. The focus should be on “boosting early development” and “narrowing the early attainment gap” to ensure the additional funding supports improved outcomes for children.
* Childcare expansion policy. He was “concerned” that the Labour government was left to “pick up the pieces” of the pledge and would be “inheriting a policy that is heading to the rocks”.
* New early years teaching qualification needed. “I have received vivid and compelling evidence of an underpaid and undervalued workforce, with significant shortages in key areas, as well-qualified staff seek employment elsewhere”. He recommended a simplification of qualifications for the early years, and to boost the quality and consistency of training available. The Labour government should also look to “develop a new 0-7 qualified teacher status (QTS) qualification” and remove funding for qualifications that “do not provide a stepping stone onto full qualifications”.
* Early years key to attainment-gap strategy. “Any strategy to narrow the attainment gap must have intervention in the early years at its heart”. He shares concerns along with others in the sector that the further extension of funded hours to children of working families only “risks widening the gap between the most disadvantaged children and their peers”.
* On special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), Sir David called for an incoming government to work with local authorities to make application processes for SEND funding “more consistent across geographic boundaries”.
* More regulation over early years market needed. Sir David supported “better targeted and proportionate regulation” by Ofsted and other accountability bodies in the early years sector. Specifically, he said that a future Labour government should strengthen financial oversight of childcare providers, and “consider the regulatory pressures posed by the growth of childcare chains which can become ‘too big to fail’”. The government should work with local authorities to pilot options for strengthening local government’s role in market shaping, but that “current limitations on their capacity” should be recognised.
* DfE has issued its manual “**Early years census**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-early-years-census>

**Teacher recruitment; ECTS**

* ESFA has issued:
	+ **Backfill payments for time off timetable for early career framework (ECF) mentor training** (national roll-out), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/backfill-payments-for-time-off-timetable-for-early-career-framework-ecf-mentor-training-national-roll-out>
	+ **Funding for time off timetable for early career teachers and mentors** who participated in the national roll-out of the early career framework reforms, [https://www.gov.uk/search/all?organisations[]=education-and-skills-funding-agency&order=updated-newest&parent=education-and-skills-funding-agency](https://www.gov.uk/search/all?organisations%5b%5d=education-and-skills-funding-agency&order=updated-newest&parent=education-and-skills-funding-agency)
* **Pledge for 6,500 new teachers may not be delivered for years**. A special unit has been assembled in the DfE to work on Labour's manifesto commitment, but concern grows over speediness of the plan officials are also considering whether to loosen the pledge to include retention too. The DfE also announced in July that the Department for Education would “immediately resume and expand” its flagship teacher recruitment campaign, Every Lesson Shapes a Life. But it still hasn’t explained how this has been – or will be – done. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/pledge-for-6500-new-teachers-may-not-be-delivered-for-years/>
* Researchers are to investigate whether introducing a nine-day fortnight can improve teacher recruitment and retention The study will be part of **three new research projects launched by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to “find solutions to the recruitment and retention crisis” amid spiralling teacher supply problems”**. The announcement comes after Dixons Academies Trust, which has 17 schools across Yorkshire and the Humber and the North West, moved to a nine-day working fortnight earlier this month. The EEF will also look at the impact of encouraging teachers’ planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time to be carried out off-site. The DfE has said it would clarify the position on PPA time to make it clear to schools that teachers can spend this time at home. A third project led by Teacher Tapp will use its app to identify strategies that are most likely to be effective in attracting teachers to schools with high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage.

**Post covid issues**

* A new report written by Tim Oates CBE, of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, finds that **while the Covid-19 pandemic may have ended, its effects on pupils and schools are far from over**, <https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/News/Press%20releases/The-COVID-19-pandemic-may-be-a-thing-of-the-past.pdf> The report draws on research showing that the lingering effects of the pandemic are deep, widespread and persistent, with different age groups affected in different ways.
* “While secondary schools are reporting an increase in reading difficulties among Year 7 pupils, poor personal organisation and challenging patterns of interaction, staff in primary schools are reporting very serious problems of arrested language development, lack of toilet training, anxiety in being in social spaces, and depressed executive function.”. These problems are “real, widespread and significant…but I do not believe that we should adapt schools to accommodate this lower level of infant development and widespread absence”. “We should urgently apply remedies to these problems and ensure the problems are diminished – hopefully to zero – rather than accept and accommodate them.”
* Schools are also facing a range of different problems, including increasing absence, widened attainment gaps, impacted reading and maths progress for certain groups, and worsening mental health and social and emotional skills.
* Oates said this impact at different age points resulted in a “sliding set of distinctive challenges – wide and deep – moving upwards through the education system”. “Put succinctly, this ‘sliding problem’ means that if a school has thought that it has solved the problems of Covid-19 impact on key stage 3 pupils, then it is important to think again, since a new problem will be along very soon, with the new intake, differently affected by Covid-19. “This is immensely hard on schools.”
* He cautions against assuming that schools are “back to normal” and warns that educational challenges will continue to unfold over the next five to 10 years as children whose early development was affected by the pandemic pass through school. Mr Oates warns that dealing with the impact of Covid-19 “will require protracted, grinding effort” and that “an evidence-driven response requires strategy and resources co-designed by schools, unions and government.”

The report recommends assessment and monitoring to understand how each child has been affected, the use of discussion to increase feelings of school connectedness, focused provision on basic skills, utilising digital resources, and strategies to improve home-school links.

* **Adolescent girls who lived through Covid lockdowns experienced more rapid brain ageing than boys**, according to data that suggests the social restrictions had a disproportionate impact on them. MRI scans found evidence of premature brain ageing in both boys and girls, but girls’ brains appeared on average 4.2 years older than expected after lockdowns, compared with 1.4 years older for boys. It is unclear whether the changes have negative consequences, but the findings have raised concerns that they might affect adolescents’ mental health and potential to learn. The researchers gathered MRI scans from 160 nine- to 17-year-olds in 2018 and used them to build a model of how the brain’s cortex normally thins during school years. Some cortical thinning is natural and an important part of brain maturation and specialisation in adolescence. The team revisited the same cohort in 2021 and 2022, after lockdowns, and collected further MRI scans from those aged 12 to 16. Compared with pre-pandemic brain development, these showed signs of accelerated cortical thinning in one area of the boys’ brains, and in 30 of the girls’ brains, across both hemispheres and all lobes. More studies are needed to see whether the brain ageing affects cognitive performance, but Kuhl notes that premature cortical thinning is linked to early life adversity and a greater risk of neuropsychiatric disorders. Cortical thinning is crucial for the brain to specialise, but that comes with a loss of cognitive flexibility that could potentially affect learning. See <https://www.theguardian.com/science/article/2024/sep/09/covid-lockdowns-prematurely-aged-girls-brains-more-than-boys-study-finds>

**SEND**

* **The government has released data on how long it took councils to decide on EHCPs**, which have soared 140 per cent in 10 years. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-29/2202> The DfE currently publishes the rates at which councils issue EHCPs within the deadline of 20 weeks. This stood at 50.3 per cent in 2023. Councils also have 16 weeks to let families know if they decide not to issue a plan. The new data shows 37 per cent of about 90,000 decisions made by councils in 2023 took more than six months. Nearly 6 per cent – about 5,000 – took more than a year.
* DfE has issued “Information about the **mandatory qualifications special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) must gain within 3 years of taking up their post**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-qualification-for-sencos>
* Research by the **Support Send Kids charity** highlights the struggle faced by parents to get the right support children with special educational needs, and delays in issuing Education Health and Care Plans and outlines the problems faced by the parents of SEND children. See <https://supportsendkids.org/?target=https%3A%2F%2Fsupportsendkids.org%2Fprofile#login>
* There have been 42 published Ofsted reports since area **SEND inspections** started in 2023; 12 have been found to have **widespread or systemic failings**. Key failings identified:
	+ Problems with the quality and timeliness of education, health and care plans
	+ Pupils’ needs not being met in schools and other settings, and long waits for accessing support services.
	+ Unacceptable’ waiting times as pupils wait for services and assessments.
	+ The sufficiency of specialist provision is a significant area of concern. Too many children and young people are unable to access the education provision they need
	+ Alternative provision used as a ‘waiting room’
	+ The level of support for pupils with SEND when they move stages in education.

See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/irresponsible-delay-ofsted-send-inspections-failing-areas>

**Ofsted**

* Ofsted has issued:
* **Area SEND inspections**: information about ongoing inspections, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspections-information-for-families>
* **Early years inspection handbook**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif>
* **Further education and skills inspection handbook,** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook-eif>
* Ofsted has enlisted the help of a national children’s charity and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) as it **develops a new “criterion” for inclusion in the new inspection report cards.** The National Children’s Bureau (NCB) has been awarded a £90,000 seven-month contract to “conceptualise vulnerability and inclusion for Ofsted”. It will help Ofsted understand the evidence for how best to support vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils.; the EEF is also involved in that work, it is understood. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ofsted-enlists-charities-help-as-it-plans-inclusion-criterion/>

**Plans for Ofsted to scrutinise inclusion risk schools being blamed for a crisis that is “way beyond their control**”, NAHT is warning.  There are fears that it will place new demands on schools before reforms to exams, the curriculum, performance league tables or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) funding have been made. Ofsted’s attempts to measure inclusion would not address factors driving the SEND crisis such as the lack of access to specialist services, school funding pressures and local authority capacity, it warned. Another area of concern is who decides how to define inclusion, and how Ofsted’s new standard will marry up with other aspects of education policy. For example, having fewer EHCPs could mean a school is less inclusive - but could also reflect a setting where “needs are met and so escalation to EHCP is not often required”. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/reform-risk-blaming-schools-wider-send-crisis-ofsted-warned>

**The EPI has already launched a data tool for multi-academy trusts and local authorities to assess inclusiveness**. These include metrics on whether school admissions reflect the local pupil population The tool also looks at managed moves, off-rolling and the attainment and progress of disadvantaged and low prior-attaining pupils. See <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/effective-school-groups-pupil-attainment-and-inclusion/>

* Ofsted has issued the latest **Further education and skills inspections and outcomes: management information from September 2023 to August 2024**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-management-information-from-september-2023-to-august-2024>
* Ofsted has issued “**State-funded school inspections and outcomes: management informatio**n” as of Aug 31 2024 See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/monthly-management-information-ofsteds-school-inspections-outcomes>
* **Concerns have been raised over Ofsted’s decision to delay return visits to areas found to have widespread failings in special educational needs provision**. Experts claim it is “irresponsible” for these visits to have been put on hold at a time when the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system is widely regarded as being in crisis. This comes as analysis of published SEND inspection reports for the 12 areas found to have “widespread and systemic failings” - the lowest rating - sets out the huge scale of the problems identified in these authorities. The analysis also reveals that nearly one in five areas has not had a SEND area inspection for five years or more, amid concerns over a SEND “accountability gap”. Ofsted had announced that its SEND area inspections are under review and, until this is completed, it will not carry out monitoring visits. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/irresponsible-delay-ofsted-send-inspections-failing-areas>
* **The new Ofsted Academy is planning to crackdown on the “big industry” in “pirated” Ofsted materials**. The newly appointed chief of the Ofsted training arm told Tes that he is concerned about use of inaccurate materials which can lead to some headteachers becoming “prey” to education consultants. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/ofsted-academy-crack-down-on-pirated-materials>
* Several schools are ahead of Ofsted and **drawing up their own report cards** See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ofsted-the-schools-already-drawing-up-their-own-report-cards/>

**Welfare of the workforce**

* The NASUWT has moved a motion at the TUC Congress in Brighton calling for **miscarriage** to be included within statutory maternity, paternity and parental bereavements rights so that workers experiencing the trauma of miscarriage have the right to paid time off. It has also called for for **suicide prevention training** to be introduced in all workplaces.
* **The government is being urged to develop a “clear and explicit strategy” to protect the mental health of the school workforce**, as data published today shows an increase in the number of staff seeking support because they were at **risk of suicide**. The call for action comes after the charity Education Support identified 153 callers to its helpline as being at risk of suicide in the past quarter - the highest figure for a three-month period on record. The figures show a 33 per cent rise on the previous quarter - when 115 were recorded - and a 40 per cent rise on the first quarter of 2023-24, when 109 callers were recorded as being at risk. The proportion of callers - including both teachers and other education staff - identified as being “with suicide risk” rose to its highest-ever level in the past quarter, with 11.8 per cent of the 1,297 individual callers identified as “at risk” in the quarter to 30 June 2024. In 2023-24, 8.8 per cent of callers were identified as a suicide risk in total, slightly down from the 9.3 per cent recorded in 2022-23. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/labour-government-need-clear-strategy-teacher-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

**Attendance**

* Data from the children's commissioner's office for the 12-month **period between the spring terms of 2022 and 2023 suggested 11,600 children were missing from education at some point during that time.** <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/children-missing-education-the-unrolled-story/> Children missing from education (CME) are those of school age who are not registered pupils at a school or receiving suitable education elsewhere, such as at home. Many of those had worked their way back into the education system by the end of that period. However, 2,900 were last recorded as being missing from education, meaning they were not registered at any school or known to be learning at home or somewhere suitable elsewhere

Hundreds of children with special educational needs (SEN) are completely missing from education in England, analysis suggests, Children with SEN make up 22% of the 2,900 children not enrolled at a school or being suitably educated elsewhere - which is disproportionately high, as 16% of children in state education have SEN, the report says. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9qg94d45zxo>

**Student behaviour**

* **More than a third of teachers and leaders think student behaviour will be worse this year**, and concerns are growing about the impact of poor student conduct in schools, a poll shows. Some 37 per cent of teachers and leaders who responded to a YouGov survey expect student behaviour to be worse this year compared with the previous academic year, with 11 per cent saying they expect behaviour to be much worse. More than 1,000 teachers and leaders across the UK, almost six in 10 respondents also said they had last year seen an increase in complaints from parents about the school’s behaviour policy and rules. In the survey, commissioned by education technology exhibition Bett, more than a quarter of respondents said they were likely to leave the teaching profession within the next two years because of student behaviour. Almost all of those in the YouGov survey said that inappropriate or inconsistent boundaries at home caused poor behaviour at school to some extent. More than a third of respondents were concerned that it would take longer for classroom behaviour to settle down to manageable levels this year, compared with last year. And almost half said they received more questions from parents about the school’s behaviour policy last year compared with previous years. Asked what top three measures would have the most impact on improving student behaviour at their school, 57 per cent said reducing class sizes, while half said increased support for students with behavioural challenges and consistent application of the school’s behaviour policy by all staff members. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/pupil-behaviour-in-schools-will-get-worse-say-teachers>

**From the DfE**

* From the DfE:
* Labour has announced plans for a **children’s wellbeing bill**, which includes free breakfast clubs in every primary school and requiring all schools to teach the national curriculum. On when it would be introduced, the DfE said it would come “as soon as parliamentary time allows”.
* There are **no quick fixes to problems faced by families with children with special educational needs and disabilities**, the schools minister has said. Catherine McKinnell said the 38 safety valve deals will “continue to operate as they are agreed, but we will look at the use of ‘safety valve’ agreements going forward”. These are controversial deals where councils receive government bailouts in exchange for sweeping reforms to their SEND provisions. Ms McKinnell said the newly elected Labour government wanted to increase “inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools” and improve early identification of special needs.
* The new education secretary wants **“a clearer insight of what it is going on in the local community**, so the services available for local families”. She says we need “a much clearer sense of the schools that are doing everything they can to be inclusive, to be community schools”. She also says we need to be “moving towards a system that is rooted in partnership and collaboration”.

**Diversity**

* **Chances for progression are “stacked against” non-white teachers**, a school leader has warned. Evelyn Forde, former president ASCL, said that she does not believe the government is aware of “systemic racism” in the teaching sector; she wanted the pipeline of applications to ITT from people of colour to be “unblocked”. “Whether we like it or not, our system is systemically racist, and it is stacked against us in terms of progression”. Ms Forde also said that school governors, who are involved in the hiring process of school leaders, are “not diverse enough” and said there are some who would look at people of colour and think that it’s “quite risky to have a Black or Asian leader leading our school”. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/chances-progression-stacked-against-non-white-teachers-evelyn-forde>
* **The English literature curriculum ought to include more “inclusive and diverse” contemporary stories that are “relevant and relatable” to young people’s lives**, Malorie Blackman has said. She said in the foreword to a Lit in Colour campaign report that it could encourage more children to read for pleasure. She also said that no child should feel that studying English at school is irrelevant because “they never see themselves” reflected in the literature. “There will always be room for the classics in the UK English literature curricula, but a space and place needs to be made for more inclusive and diverse contemporary stories across all educational boards,” she wrote. The campaign – created by Penguin Books in 2020 in partnership with the Runnymede Trust – aims to help schools make the teaching and learning of English literature more inclusive of writers of colour. See <https://litincolour.penguin.co.uk/#:~:text=Our%20Lit%20in%20Colour%20research,demographics%20of%20the%20school%20population>.

**OECD report**

* From the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) study,** which compares the state of education in about 50 countries:
* **Primary school teachers in the UK face bumper classes of 27 children**. Only classes in Chile are bigger with 28 pupils, while in Japan classes at primary level are also 27-strong. Luxembourg and Croatia by comparison have just 15 children a class, while the OECD average is 21. The report also shows the UK’s ratio of pupils to teachers is the fifth highest behind only India, Mexico, Colombia and Brazil.
* **The UK has one of the lowest expenditures per child on pre-primary education among the world’s leading economies**, a report shows. In early childhood education, expenditure per child in the UK is around $6,893 (£5,260), according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s latest Education at a Glance study. This compares with around $11,735 (£8,960) per child on average across OECD countries that have data available. UK is the only OECD country where the child-to-teacher ratio in pre-primary education increased by more than 5 per cent per year. On average, across OECD countries with available data, 32 per cent of children under the age of 3 from lower-income households attend childcare, compared with 50 per cent of those from higher-income households. It says the enrolment gap across income levels is more pronounced in Ireland and the UK, where the cost of childcare is “relatively high” for parents.
* **Regional disparities** in educational attainment were bigger in the UK than many other OECD countries. While 71% of 25- to 64-year-olds in London have a degree-level qualification, in north-east England it is 42
* It found **teachers in the UK are younger**, and therefore less experienced, than their counterparts in most other countries. It also highlighted teacher retention problems in England, with 9% of teachers quitting the profession in 2022-23, which is at the top end of the scale when compared with other countries featured in the report

See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/sep/10/uk-primary-class-sizes-among-biggest-in-industrialised-world-report-finds> Also <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/fixing-the-foundations-of-opportunity-education-secretary-speech>

**Community cohesion**

* The previous government’s decision to abandon **community cohesion** programmes in English schools was an act of “political vandalism”, according to one of the country’s most prominent experts on race riots. A number of race relations experts back a joint call from the thinktanks British Future, Belong and the Together Coalition, who are urging Keir Starmer to use this month’s Labour party conference for a “state of the nation” address that tackles the root causes of this summer’s riots and sets out how his government will rebuild community cohesion. The organisations’ report, After the Riots warns that simply moving on from the violent disorder could “risk recurring episodes of the kind of disturbances we have seen, and increased polarisation and social conflict in future”. See <https://www.britishfuture.org/after-the-riots/>

**Youth unemployment**

* **Youth unemployment has risen to a post-pandemic high**. There were 597,000 young people aged 16 to 24 who were unemployed in May to July 2024, an increase of 51,000 from the previous year, according to figures released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The unemployment rate for 18- to 24-year-olds increased to 13.3%, up from 12.3% in January to March. The rate for 16- to 24-year-olds was even higher, at 14.2%. University graduates have described the process of finding a first job as “hostile and impersonal”, leading many to work for minimum wage instead. Figures from the Office for National Statistics have showed a trend for employers to hire older workers in recent years. Between August 2023 and August 2024, there was a decrease of 127,000 payrolled employees aged under 25. During the same period, payrolled employees aged 35 to 49 increased by 114,000. See <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/sep/10/peoples-futures-on-the-line-amid-surge-in-youth-unemployment-unions-warn>

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

* **Vaping** damages young people’s lungs as much as smoking, according to research that has prompted fresh debate over the health risks of e-cigarettes. The study compared vapers and smokers in a strenuous exercise test and found both groups emerged as being less fit and much more out of breath than people who have neither habit. The study adds to growing evidence that long-term use of vaping is harmful and challenges the idea that vaping could be a healthier alternative to smoking. The proportion of adults in Britain using vapes has climbed steadily over recent years, from 4.2% in 2014 to 11%, with many smokers using them as a way of kicking that habit. But the proportion of 11 to 17-year-olds vaping has risen much more sharply over the same period, from 1.3% to 7.6%. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/sep/08/vaping-damages-young-peoples-lungs-as-much-as-smoking-study-suggests>

**Schools and universities**

* For the **Guardian Best UK universities 2025 – rankings**, see <https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2024/sep/07/the-guardian-university-guide-2025-the-rankings>
* For an article, “**I chose to live at home as a university student. Here’s why I’d recommend it**”, see <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/sep/09/i-chose-to-live-at-home-as-a-university-student-heres-why-id-recommend-it> and “**How to afford university: from loans and grants to part-time work**”, see <https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/sep/08/how-to-afford-university-from-loans-and-grants-to-part-time-work>

**Education news for schools**

* The government is being urged to **take action against schools trying to encourage teachers to opt out of the Teachers’ Pension Scheme (TPS).** At the TUC Congress in Brighton, the NASUWT teaching union said thousands of teachers were being given the option of leaving the scheme in return for higher salaries. There have also been reports of private schools trying to encourage teachers to leave the scheme. The NASUWT’s call comes after the biggest multi-academy trust, United Learning, revealed its plan to introduce an alternative pension scheme, which would offer teachers the chance to earn more take-home pay. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/take-action-over-mat-teacher-pension-move-dfe-urged>
* **Emma Balchin** is the new Chief Executive of the National Governance Association
* **The NEU has announced a formal strike ballot over pay for members at 40 sixth-form colleges between 14 September and 7 November**. Although academised sixth-forms have been guaranteed funding to implement the 5.5 per cent pay uplift, this has not been offered to non-academised colleges, the NEU said. ASCL has also raised concerns about parity in teacher pay between schools and sixth forms. See <https://neu.org.uk/latest/press-releases/sixth-form-pay-ballot>
* **Helen Hayes has been elected as the next chair of the Commons Education Select Committee**. Ms Hayes is the Labour MP for Dulwich and West Norwood and has been an MP since 7 May 2015. She most recently worked as a shadow education minister between 2021-24 and has also held the position of shadow minister in the Cabinet Office. In her election statement, Hayes pledged an “ambitious programme of inquiries” if elected on issues such as a fit-for-purpose skills system, SEND reform, reviewing the school curriculum and scrutinising the work of the government’s child poverty task force, <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/203/education-committee/news/202704/nominations-open-for-the-education-committee-chair/>
* STEM Learning is running its **Protecting our Planet Day** on 12 November 2024. Register for POP24 and pop in and out of sessions across the day with your class or whole school, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/protecting-our-planet-day-2024-tickets-932271488117?aff=oddtdtcreator>
* Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds or with SEND will get targeted support to unlock their musical potential, thanks to a new scheme designed to break down the barriers to opportunity and advance their talents.  The government’s **Music Opportunities Pilot** will expand on Young Sounds UK’s existing programme – Young Sounds Connect – which offers pupils across primary and secondary schools the opportunity to learn to play an instrument of their choice or how to sing to a high standard by providing free lessons and supporting young people to progress, including taking music exams. Backed by £5.8million, co-funded by the government and partners including Young Sounds UK, Arts Council England and Youth Music, the programme aims to inspire the next generation of British musicians across twelve areas including Sunderland, Bury, Bradford and Stoke on Trent to help ensure the arts remain a cornerstone of the nation’s identity.  The pilot scheme will run over four years. Young Sounds UK will work in collaboration with local Music Hub partners that support and enable access to music education for children and young people in England in order to deliver the programme. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/music-pilot-launched-to-help-break-down-barriers-to-opportunity> <https://www.youngsounds.org.uk/music-opportunities-pilot/>
* For information about **SSAT**, see <https://www.ssatuk.co.uk/?xc=98f87032-a947-48c6-9458-f57fe1151673&utm_campaign=13%2F9%2F2024+AM+Newsletter&utm_source=force24&utm_medium=email&utm_content=textlink>

**Post 16**

* ESFA has updated “**Funding guidance for T Level providers**.”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-level-funding>
* DfE has issued **“Functional skills subject content at entry level and level 1**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/digital-functional-skills-qualifications>
* DfE has issued a collection of “**Statistics: further education and skills”.** See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>

**Tony Stephens**