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**289 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Oct 5-11 2024**

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**Early years and primary**

* **Ofsted has issued a very useful collection, “Ofsted early years education research**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-early-years-survey-reports> **New reports, included, amongst other existing documents are**:
* **Best start in life part 3: the 4 specific areas of learning**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-start-in-life-a-research-review-for-early-years/best-start-in-life-part-3-the-4-specific-areas-of-learning> This review considers what it means to make progress in the 4 specific areas of learning in light of findings from research, and the implications of this for practitioners. For a **summary of the key points**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/early-years-education-too-important-to-be-left-to-chance>
* **Strong foundations in the first years of school.** See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school> This report examines how schools secure the foundational knowledge and skills that every child needs by the end of key stage 1 to give them the best chance of educational success. The report makes a series of recommendations for schools to ensure children build the foundational knowledge and skills they need by the end of key stage 1, including:
* making sure that the foundational knowledge and skills that children will need for later learning are clearly set out in the curriculum
* providing children with sufficient opportunities to practise using their foundational knowledge and skills so they become fully embedded
* making sure that teaching methods are suited to the subject being taught and what children already know
* ensuring that assessment can pick up children’s misunderstandings quickly so that teachers are able to support those who need extra help at the earliest possible stage
* making sure that end of key stage assessments do not disproportionately influence decisions about curriculum and teaching methods

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/a-strong-foundation-in-reception-and-key-stage-1-sets-children-up-for-success> for a **summary of some of the key points. Another useful summary**, is <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ofsted-some-ks1-pupils-not-gaining-foundational-knowledge/> or <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/primary/ofsted-primary-school-english-curricula-often-weak>

* DfE has issued “**Choosing a phonics teaching programme**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/choosing-a-phonics-teaching-programme>
* A NFER report for the Education Endowment Foundation, examines **the effects of the virus outbreak**. Researchers assessed the impact of school closures on the attainment and social skills of pupils in **Years 4 and 5** in the 2023-24 academic year, who would have been in Reception and Year 1 when the first national lockdown was imposed during the Covid pandemic. The Covid squeeze on pupil outcomes “has started to wane”, but the disadvantage gap continues to be “substantial” as schools deal with the long-term impact of the pandemic.
  + For year 4 maths and year 5 reading, “there was no significant difference in pupils’ performance compared with” pre-Covid levels in 2017. Meanwhile, children were at least two months ahead of expectations seven years ago in year 4 reading and year 5 maths. The NFER believes this suggests the “strategies, which schools have been putting in place to support recovery, are reducing the impact of the disruption to pupils’ learning”.
  + The gap between results for poorer children and their more affluent classmates has narrowed since 2021. However, a “substantial disadvantage gap remains”, the researchers said. “We observed a reduction in the disadvantage gap in year 4 reading and… mathematics since we first measured it in spring 2021, but we did not see this reduction with the year 5 cohort.” Overall, the disadvantage gaps are wider than those reported pre-pandemic. This shows “continued targeted approaches are needed” to address the issue
    - The disadvantage gaps for reading in spring 2024 for Year 4 and Year 5 amounted to around seven and six months’ progress respectively, according to the NFER report. Unlike the attainment gap, while the disadvantage gap has narrowed for Year 4 pupils since 2021, it has not closed among Year 5 pupils in either reading or maths. While Year 5 pupils’ reading attainment grew significantly for disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers, it increased at the same rate across both groups, meaning the disadvantage gap has not shrunk since 2021. There were similar findings in maths, where the disadvantage gap for both Year 4 and 5 pupils was around seven months’ progress in Spring 2024. The gap had closed since 2021 for Year 4 - but has remained the same in the Year 5 results, according to the report.
  + The proportion of year 5 children deemed the “very lowest attainers” for scoring fewer marks than required to be given a standardised score in NFER reading tests is double the numbers seen in 2017. Researchers also witnessed an increase in the percentage of pupils considered “unable to access the curriculum”, meaning they did not take the relevant 2023-24 assessments.
  + Among the most common challenges reported by schools were absences and “difficulties obtaining external support” for children. Seventy-five per cent also saw “increased workload due to pupils’ behaviour or wellbeing needs”. Small group sessions were most often used by the schools to aid catch-up work (82 per cent). Meanwhile, the proportion using one-to-one support fell by up to 25 percentage points between 2023 and 2024. Almost all the schools involved in the study “were prioritising additional support for very low-attaining pupils, and two-thirds (fewer than last year) were doing so for disadvantaged pupils”.
  + The report says it found the social maturity of pupils in 2023-2024 was not significantly different from that expected of children of the same age had the pandemic not happened.
  + Just over 40 per cent of the schools had accessed the National Tutoring Programme to aid learning recovery across both year groups (37 per cent for maths and 31 per cent for reading). A smaller proportion provided tutoring not funded through the NTP (12 per cent for mathematics and 14 per cent for reading). The programme, launched during the pandemic, came to its planned end in August.
* For an article “**The community is in the fabric of the building’: as UK pupil numbers fall, what will happen to empty schools?**” see <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/oct/06/schools-risk-closure-dwindling-pupil-numbers-affordable-housing>
* DfE has issued “How much **PE and sport premium funding** schools will receive for the academic year 2024 to 2025 and advice on how to spend it”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pe-and-sport-premium-for-primary-schools>
* ESFA has issued “Guidance for local authorities about the 2024 summer and **autumn termly data collection for the new early years entitlements**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-termly-data-collection-in-2024-to-2025>
* ESFA has issued “**Early years budget grant (EYBG) 2024 to 2025**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-budget-grant-eybg-2024-to-2025>
* **The percentage of primary school places that are unfilled is projected to rise from 12 per cent to 16 per cent over the next five years because of a drop in the birth rate,** according to a report published by the NFER, <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/blogs/fewer-pupils-more-unfilled-places-increasing-deficits-what-can-be-done/> Councils nationally expected primary pupil numbers to fall by 4.5 per cent between 2022 and 2028. In inner London, the drop is expected to be closer to 12 per cent. “The picture suggests that continuing falling pupil numbers will cause more primary schools to face significant financial strife in future unless they find ways to cut costs substantially or funding is significantly increased.”
* Primary schools in England struggling with falling pupil numbers could be forced to run mixed-age classes to cope financially.
* But, falling pupil rolls should not be used as an opportunity to cut the total schools’ budget.
* In extreme cases, some schools with many unfilled places could be forced to close because of budgetary pressures, according to the analysis of the impact of falling pupil rolls.
* The NFER suggests that one possible solution for managing the problem of falling rolls would be for the government to increase per-pupil funding faster than inflation.
* The government also recently announced funding for 300 schools to convert unused space into new nurseries - the first tranche of funding for a planned wider scheme. This could help schools to maintain their income levels, the NFER says. But the report warns that not all unused space in primary schools is suitable for nursery-age children, and “conversions will incur new costs, too”.
* Schools can get falling rolls funding from the government, but only if they can demonstrate that pupil numbers are expected to rise within three to five years.
* The “most obvious way” for schools to respond to falling rolls is by reducing costs. But it “may be difficult for school leaders to cut staff by reducing the number of classes in a year group, unless pupil numbers fall dramatically”.
* Schools can also reduce costs by sharing staff and office functions, or set up informal partnerships with neighbouring schools and councils to cap new admissions in certain year groups
* DfE has issued “**Phonics screening check attainment: England 2024**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/phonics-screening-check-attainment-england-2024> Attainment in the phonics screening check has increased compared to 2023
  + 80% of pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in year 1, up from 79% in 2023. But achievement rates were between 81 and 82 per cent between 2015 and 2018.
  + 89% of pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of year 2. However, again, this remains below the pre-pandemic norm of between 91 and 92 per cent.
  + Disadvantaged pupils performed less well in the phonics screening check than other pupils, and the gap has remained broadly similar. 68% of disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in year 1, up from 66% in 2023.
  + London is the highest performing region, where 82% of pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in year 1; the lowest performing regions were the North West and North East with 79%. The gap between the highest and lowest attaining region is 3 percentage points.
  + Girls continue to outperform boys. This year, 84 per cent of girls met the expected standard in year 1, compared to 77 per cent of boys.
  + There has been a slight increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs meeting the expected standard, from 42 per cent in 2023 to 44 per cent.
  + Summer-born pupils remain less likely to meet the government’s benchmark. Seventy-three per cent of pupils born in August met the standard this year, compared to 86 per cent of those born in September.
* The DfE has issued “**Statistics on national curriculum assessments at key stage 1 and phonics screening check results back to 2010**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-key-stage-1>
* DfE has updated “**Primary assessments: future dates**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/primary-assessments-future-dates>
* STA has issued “**Guidance about how schools can access and use the optional end of key stage 1 (KS1) national curriculum test**s”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/optional-key-stage-1-tests-guidance>

**Ofsted**

* Ofsted has issued “News and information about updates for each inspection data summary report **(IDSR) release**, including any new functionality, features and bug fixes”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/idsr-news-and-updates>
* Ofsted has issued “**School inspection data summary report (IDSR) guide**”. This guide provides an overview of the inspection data summary report (IDSR) for primary and secondary schools, including schools with a sixth form and gives guidance on interpreting the data. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-inspection-data-summary-report-idsr-guide>
* Ofsted has issued “**Area SEND inspections**: information about ongoing inspections”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspections-information-for-families>
* Ofsted has issued “**Inspecting schools: guide for maintained and academy schools**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inspecting-schools-guide-for-maintained-and-academy-schools>
* Ofsted has issued “**Inspecting schools: guidance for parents**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspections-a-guide-for-parents>
* Ofsted has issued a guide which explains **how it selects new schools and schools that undergo significant changes for inspection**. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/selecting-new-schools-for-inspection>
* Ofsted has issued “Management information on **unregistered schools** in England, from 1 January 2016 onwards”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/unregistered-schools-management-information>

**Oracy**

* **Oracy should become the “fourth R”, with equal status to reading, writing and maths**, supported by better teacher training, reforms to GCSE English language and investment in expressive arts and extra-curricular activities. The Oracy Commission, <https://oracyeducationcommission.co.uk/latest-news/> chaired by former ASCL general secretary Geoff Barton, concluded that oracy should be embedded “throughout the primary and secondary national curriculum”, but also more widely throughout each school’s culture. Oracy means articulating ideas, developing understanding and engaging with others through speaking, listening and communication. Polling conducted on behalf of the Commission found that over 80% of business leaders and parents support more time being spent on the development of young people’s oracy skills at school. The Commission calls for:
  + increased emphasis on oracy education to better prepare all young people to become fulfilled future citizens and combat increasing polarisation and misinformation;
  + recognition of the essential role of oracy as a building block for reading, writing and students’ academic progression through school;
  + acknowledgement of the rising importance of oracy skills in an AI-transformed labour market to ensure young people are well-prepared for success in the workplace

The Commission calls for the government to:

* Integrate speaking, listening and communication into every subject across the curriculum, as well as in extra-curricular activities
* Ensure the history and richness of the English language is a key focus of the English curriculum for all children
* Incentivise schools to provide a broad curriculum enabling children to access the value of the expressive arts and citizenship as contexts for oracy
* Make oracy a key part of the training and development of all teachers The Commission was established earlier this year to help ensure that children and young people benefit from an education that builds their language, understanding and confidence. It seeks to address inequality, polarisation and the demands of a global economy, including the increased use of AI, through oracy education.

For a **useful summary** with more detail, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/teacher-training-gcse-reform-and-investment-needed-to-make-oracy-the-fourth-r/> or <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/teachers-need-subject-specific-oracy-training>

**Attendance**

* **At least 32,000 students are likely to have been on part-time school timetables last month**, according to analysis, which is also a **very useful guide to schools on the correct usage of all the new and existing attendance codes** <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/10/usage-of-new-attendance-codes/> DfE guidance on attendance codes has been updated, with a new **code, C2**, covering part-time timetables. Code C2 was used for 0.7 per cent of secondary-aged students and 0.3 per cent of primary-aged pupils at least once during September 2024. If this was reflected nationally, it would mean around 11,000 primary-aged pupils and 21,000 secondary-aged students were put on a part-time timetable last month. According to the latest DfE guidance, the C2 code only applies to pupils who are not in full-time education for a temporary period. The code is not supposed to be used for pupils in full-time education but who only attend a school part-time - such as through flexi-schooling.

The FFT analysis also shows a “notable” drop in the use of **B codes** - used for off-site learning - in September this year, compared with last year. In secondary schools, 0.49 per cent of students missed at least one session coded as B in September 2023, falling to 0.28 per cent in September 2024. The FFT blog points out that the DfE’s latest guidance makes it clear that pupils who are learning remotely should be counted as absent, rather than as a code B. The latest government guidance says that, in order for schools to use code B, a pupil has to be attending an activity of an educational nature, the school has to have approved the pupil’s attendance at the place for the activity, and the activity should be supervised by a “person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge”.

* In the autumn term of the last academic year, **Traveller children** had the highest persistent absence rate of any ethnic group, with almost two thirds missing at least one school day in 10. This is more than three times higher than England as a whole, DfE data shows. Many say they dropped out because they were being “bullied and discriminated against”. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c62djjx6xkjo>

**Teacher pay and conditions**

* Teachers and school leaders **need pay rises “significantly above” inflation** over the next five years to restore pay to 2010 levels and “repair the damage done to recruitment and retention”, unions have said. ASCL and the NAHT and the NEU, NASUWT and Community have issued a joint response to the government’s decision to accept the recommendation of a 5.5 per cent pay rise for this September. See <https://www.ascl.org.uk/News/Our-news-and-press-releases/Joint-union-response-to-STRB-report-and-Government>

The government is also proceeding with plans announced by the last administration to remove a requirement to use **performance-related pay**. The unions said this should be replaced by a “fair and transparent national pay structure based on the key principle of equal pay for work of equal value, which offers portability and fair pay progression”. National minimum pay points “should be mandatory for all teachers and school leaders”. Alongside “competitive pay levels, such a national pay structure would support recruitment, retention and mobility across the school system”. They also said their organisations were opposed to targeted pay “on the basis of location, subject or phase” Unions also want the government to scrap a clause in teachers’ pay and conditions which states they must “work such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher’s professional duties”. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/more-above-inflation-pay-rises-needed-say-unions/>

* The NEU has said has said it will be focusing reps on working to ensure new planning, preparation and assessment **(PPA) time at home** becomes “a reality on the ground”. The pledge comes after Bridget Phillipson said last term that the DfE will clarify the position on PPA time to make it clear to schools that teachers can use this time at home. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/neu-reps-to-push-home-ppa-in-mats>
* For an article “**Teachers’ maternity pay: everything you need to know**”, see <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/general/teacher-maternity-pay-all-you-need-to-know>

**Antisemitism**

* Bridget Phillipson has announced that the government is resuming the procurement of £7 million worth of funding to tackle **antisemitism in schools**, colleges and universities. £500,000 of the £7 million funding has been awarded to the University Jewish Chaplaincy for welfare support for Jewish students in universities. Some of the funds will go towards funding a project to upskill teachers and university staff in tackling antisemitism. It will also pay for an innovation fund to tackle antisemitism in Education, with a slightly broader focus on settings building resilience to mis-information. The DfE also plans to launch an innovation fund that will offer opportunities to support work at all levels of education on tackling antisemitic misinformation on social media alongside the Curriculum and Assessment Review. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/7-million-to-tackle-antisemitism-in-education-confirmed>

**ITT and teacher recruitment**

* DfE has issued “**Information about subject knowledge enhancement (SKE)** support for initial teacher training (ITT) recruitment”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/subject-knowledge-enhancement-an-introduction> and “Subject knowledge enhancement **(SKE): course directory**”, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-knowledge-enhancement-course-directory>
* Ofsted has issued information for lead providers about what happens when Ofsted carries out **early career framework (ECF) and national professional qualification (NPQ) inspection**s. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inspecting-lead-providers-of-the-ecf-and-npq-programmes>
* Ofsted has issued “**The risk assessment process that Ofsted uses to assist in scheduling inspections of early career framework (ECF) and national professional qualification (NPQ) programmes**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/risk-assessment-methodology-early-career-framework-and-national-professional-qualifications>
* Ofsted has updated **“Early career framework and national professional qualification inspection framework and handbook**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-career-framework-and-national-professional-qualification-inspection-framework-and-handbook> This includes a summary of the changes
* DfE has issued “**Use this service to check a teacher's record before they start working for your school, college, teacher supply agency, or other organisation**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-a-teachers-record>
* DfE has updated “**Funding guidance for schools and ITT providers including bursaries, scholarships and salaried route grants**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-initial-teacher-training-itt>

**Academies and trusts**

* Some trusts are already deviating from national pay and conditions to more “fairly” **reward part-time teachers for extra leadership and management responsibilities**, as the DfE asks STRB for a recommendation on whether changes to the pro rating of TLR payments should be made to enable “greater flexibility”. The school teachers’ pay and conditions document (STPCD), which must be followed by maintained schools and is observed by many academies, states that certain TLR payments “must be paid pro rata” for part-time staff. Unions have lobbied for that to change, warning the arrangements are “unfair, unethical and potentially unlawful”. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/teacher-pay-the-trailblazer-schools-already-flexing-tlr-payments/>
* DfE has updated “**Related party transactions**: information for academy trusts”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/related-party-transactions-information-for-academy-trusts>
* DfE has issued “**Guidance for academy trusts on how to request approval for appointing an off-payroll accounting officer or chief financial officer**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-trusts-off-payroll-appointments>
* DfE has updated “**Academies land and buildings collection tool**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-land-and-buildings-collection-tool>
* ESFA has issued “**Academy trust financial management good practice guides**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides>
* ESFA has issued “**Guidance on what academy trusts need to report under the Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) policy**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/streamlined-energy-and-carbon-reporting-secr-for-academy-trusts>

**SEND**

* **Pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools are increasingly being refused additional funding from councils in England**. For example, Parents and carers in Buckinghamshire say they have been told that the local authority will no longer accept applications from schools to fund special educational needs provision unless it involves pupils with an approved educational health and care plan (EHCP). Last year, 576,000 children and young people in England, including nearly one in 19 aged between five and 15, had an EHCP. But the County Councils Network estimates there are a further 1.2 million children with special educational needs and disabilities who may not qualify for an EHCP and could lose out on funding. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/oct/08/special-educational-needs-funding-england-schools-send>
* ESFA has issued “**High needs funding arrangements: 2025 to 2026**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2025-to-2026>
* **DNA tests on children could be used to “pre-diagnose” SEND conditions** and help to “streamline” support for those youngsters at most risk, government-commissioned research has said, in a report examining the implications of future genomics technologies on the education sector, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/genomics-in-education> The researchers also said it was “possible that future genomic screening could develop to the point where a child could be assessed for increased risk of developing autism from birth”. Most youngsters are not diagnosed for the condition “until after the age of 3”. Previous government research has said there are more than a thousand genes that relate to educational and cognitive outcomes. But the report stressed that genomics available on the consumer market “currently has little utility within education settings” However, “increased screening and marketing of education-related genomic products is anticipated in the relatively near future… there will be sufficient scientific and technological developments to perform screenings like this [for specific conditions] en-masse.”
* The contribution of schools, teachers, support staff and students has been celebrated at an awards ceremony recognising those who make a difference to the lives of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The eighth annual **Nasen Awards** saw 17 schools, individuals and organisations named as winners. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/specialist-sector/work-support-send-students-celebrated-nasen-awards>
* Young people with disabilities and additional needs in residential schools and colleges will soon be offered **free NHS hearing, dental and eyesight checks**. NHS sensory checks that were piloted by the government in 2022 and 2023 will be rolled out to educational facilities across England from next year. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/oct/05/residential-school-students-in-england-to-get-free-dental-eyesight-and-hearing-checks>

**NPQs**

* **One of the government’s lead providers of national professional qualifications (NPQs) will quit the scheme** – claiming its ability to support schools “as effectively and impartially as possible” has been “constrained” by relying on taxpayer cash. Teacher Development Trust (TDT) joint-CEO Gareth Conyard announced the decision, branding the NPQ market “increasingly dysfunctional”, with “unequal relationships” forming between providers and the DfE”. The DfE is scaling back their free NPQ programme; it’s understood they were capped at just 10,000, down from 40,000 in 2023-24. In April, the Education Development Trust also reached the “regrettable conclusion” to pull out of being an NPQ provider shortly after the DfE announced its offer of free courses for all schools would be scaled back. EDT and TDT were two of nine organisations named by the DfE as lead providers of NPQs in 2021. From this Autumn, only teachers and leaders in the top half of schools with the most youngsters on pupil premium are eligible for funded NPQs. Government also recently introduced a new NPQ for SENCOs, which is mandatory. Demand for the NPQ this autumn left providers overwhelmed as an application deadline for funded training approached last month. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/lead-npq-provider-lastest-to-pull-out-of-scheme-after-cuts/>

**Edurio report**

* **Pupils feel less happy at school and are less likely to find what they learn interesting than three years ago, while staff are more likely to report bullying or physical violence**. Edurio’s ‘high-quality and inclusive education 2024’ report, published today, also found that just 32 per cent of students polled were likely to recommend their school to others ,<https://home.edurio.com/resources/insights/high-quality-inclusive-education-report-2024>
  + Just 47 per cent of 102,782 students said they felt very or quite happy at school. This is the first time in the survey’s history that the proportion of happy pupils has dropped below 50 per cent, Edurio said. About one in one pupils (19 per cent) reported feeling not very or not at all happy.
  + Just 28 per cent of 76,534 students said they always or quite often found what they learned at school interesting, while 35 per cent rarely never enjoyed them. This was down three per cent on last year and 14 per cent since 2020-21
  + Just 68 per cent of school staff surveyed in 2023-24 felt respected by students, down from 76 per cent in 2021. Edurio called this a “worrying trend” . Incidents of emotional and physical violence against staff have also risen for the third year in a row, with nearly one in four experiencing some form of violence, the firm reports.
  + But more than half of staff reported feeling well-supported in lesson preparation, which is above pre-pandemic levels, it said. And support for marking and assessment has improved over the past three years, with 44 per cent of indicating positive experiences in 2023-2024

**Attitudes of girls**

* For the **Girls’ Attitudes Survey 2024** from Girlguiding, see <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/globalassets/docs-and-resources/research-and-campaigns/girls-attitudes-survey-2024.pdf>
* **Sexism and safety** • 3 in 4 girls aged 11-16 see or experience sexism. This increases to 95% for young women aged 17-21. • 47% of 11-21-year-olds feel less safe as a result of sexism, a significant rise compared to 10 years ago. • 69% of girls aged 7-10 feel they’re expected to behave differently because they’re a girl.
* **Online harm** • 77% of girls and young women aged 7-21 have experienced online harm in the last year. • Half of girls and young women aged 11-21 want online platforms to remove harmful content to make them feel safer online. • Over 1 in 5 girls aged 7-10 have seen rude images online. This has doubled since 2021.
* **Climate change** • 51% of 7-10-year-olds are concerned about loss of nature and animal habitats. • Almost 2 in 3 girls and young women aged 11-21 now think the government is most responsible for tackling environmental issues. • Over a third of 7-21-year-olds are angry that more isn’t being done by people with power to address climate change.
* **Appearance and wellbeing** • 60% of 11-16-year-olds tell us they’ve received negative comments from other people about their appearance. • 1 in 3 girls and young women say they lack confidence in their appearance. This increases with age. • 1 in 3 girls aged 7-10 (34%) feel they’re expected to look different because they’re a girl (up from 23% in 2014).
* **Cost-of-living crisis** • 1 in 3 girls and young women aged 11-21 say the cost-of-living crisis has negatively affected their mental health and wellbeing. This rises to almost 1 in 2 for 17-21-year-olds. • 57% of 11-21-year-olds are worried about not having a secure income or being able to afford a home in the future. • 54% of 11-21-year-olds are worried that artificial intelligence may take away their jobs
* **A more equal future** • Half of girls feel anxious for their future. • 44% of 7-21-year-olds are hopeful and 43% are curious about the future. • 82% of 11-21-year-olds feel that there should be more opportunities for younger and older people to help each other. • 2 in 3 girls and young women aged 11-21 think that confidence will be one of the most important attributes for a successful future.

**Government plans to impose VAT on private schools**

* **Government plans to impose VAT on private schools** **from 1 January next year may have to be delayed** because of warnings from unions, tax experts and school leaders that meeting the deadline will cause administrative chaos and teacher job losses, and put pressure on the state sector. Numerous organisations in the education sector, including ones that back the principle of imposing VAT, are calling for a delay until next September See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/oct/05/doubts-grow-over-labours-vat-plan-for-private-schools>

But, the Treasury minister James Murray has **rejected calls to delay plans** to add VAT to private school fees, saying the government needed to start raising funds as soon as possible in order to deliver on its educational ambitions for state schools, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/oct/08/vat-private-school-fees-no-delay-says-minister>

**Claims that England’s grammars will be “swamped” in September by pupils priced out of private schools by VAT on fees are unfounded**, data from more than half of selective state schools suggests. The number of children registered to sit the 11-plus entrance tests for grammar schools next September has fallen slightly compared with last year. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/oct/05/grammar-applications-drop-despite-claims-swamped-after-vat-private-school-fees>

Private schools say the impending addition of VAT to school fees is a big factor in the **drop in pupil numbers this year**, ahead of the cost of living and the falling national birthrate. The Independent Schools Council (ISC) said a survey of 1,185 member schools in the UK found their rolls fell by 1.7% when the school year started last month, compared with 2023. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/oct/04/private-schools-say-drop-in-pupil-numbers-due-to-impending-vat-on-fees#:~:text=Private%20schools%20say%20drop%20in%20enrolments%20mainly%20due%20to%20impending%20VAT%20on%20fees,-Survey%20by%20Independent&text=Private%20schools%20say%20the%20impending,and%20the%20falling%20national%20birthrate>.

**Public examinations**

* DfE has updated “**Approved key stage 4 qualifications** (GCSEs, Technical Awards, AS levels and graded music exams), **discount codes and point scores** for reporting in the 2014 to 2026 school and college performance tables”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-4-qualifications-discount-codes-and-point-scores>
* For the latest **Ofqual Rolling Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-rolling-update>
* For “**A-level exam dates 2025**: timetables and other key information”, see <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/secondary/a-level-exam-dates-timetables>

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

* **School staff admit to having spent as much as £40m of their own money buying items for children whose families cannot afford basic hygiene products** – some are even washing pupils' clothes for them. Survey findings, <https://smolproducts.com/pages/clean-up-child-hygiene-poverty> reveal that 80% of school staff say they have seen a rise in “hygiene poverty” in the last year, with 26% having seen children missing whole school days because of it. A study published by the Clean Up Child Hygiene Poverty campaign and involving more than 500 UK teaching staff reported students regularly arriving at school in dirty uniforms and with unclean hair or teeth. Teaching staff in the survey estimate that they have spent an average of £27 of their own money in the last year on hygiene products for their students – which would equate to more than £40m across the country. The campaign has been launched by Smol – a cleaning products company – and the charity The Hygiene Bank, with support from the NASUWT.

Ruth Brock, CEO at The Hygiene Bank, added: “Hygiene poverty is a silent crisis that impacts not only children's health and wellbeing, but also their ability to participate fully in school – potentially limiting their life chances. The **Hygiene Bank** is a community-led national charity and social movement tackling hygiene poverty in the UK. Smol, meanwhile, has provided mini-laundrettes to 100 UK schools since 2020 as part of its Suds in Schools initiative to help schools support children and their families with access to clean clothes, <https://thehygienebank.com/>

* **Teachers are picking up the pieces of the deepening crisis in children and young people’s mental health**, with many regularly helping pupils in distress on top of their classroom duties. Teachers say they are playing an important role in supporting pupils’ often fragile mental wellbeing because so many who need help from the NHS are not receiving it, a UK-wide survey found. Three in four teachers put a pupil’s psychological needs ahead of teaching the curriculum at least once a week. That can involve them breaking off from lessons to come to the aid of a young person in distress or making adjustments in class to help them. One in five do so every day Teachers also believe an average of almost one in four (24%) of those they teach need some form of support with their mental health, according to the research by the charity YoungMinds, which questioned 1,002 primary and secondary school teachers. YoungMinds also found:
  + 78% of teachers say pupils’ mental health has got worse since they joined the profession.
  + 76% say only half or fewer of the pupils who they believe need help with their mental health receive it.
  + 74% say poor mental health support is damaging pupils’ ability to learn.

See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/oct/10/teachers-mental-health-support-pupils-uk>

**School management**

* ESFA has issued “**Estimating pupil numbers (EPN):** how to complete your return for 2025 to 2026”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/estimating-pupil-numbers-epn-how-to-complete-your-return-for-2025-to-2026>
* For the latest **ESFA Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-9-october-2024>
* For the latest **Education Support Newsletter**, see <https://mailchi.mp/edsupport/your-october-newsletter-3177108?e=4c833362b8>
* DfE has issued “**Condition Data Collection 2 (CDC2) programme**”. Find out about the CDC2 programme and when preliminary meetings and school site visits will take place. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/condition-data-collection-2-cdc2-programme>
* DfE has updated “**Find, join or create a network for school business** professionals”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/join-or-create-a-network-for-school-business-professionals>

**Education news for schools**

* DfE has updated “**School and college voice: omnibus surveys for 2023 to 2024**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-voice-omnibus-surveys-for-2023-to-2024>
* **Dr Patrick Roach**, the general secretary of the NASUWT will stand down from the role next year. The trade unionist’s first term comes to an end in 2025, and he has announced today he will not seek re-election.
* The NEU has called for **philosophy** to be embedded in England’s school curriculum, allowing more time for pupils to discuss difficult world topics such as conflict in the Middle East. See <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/oct/07/philosophy-school-curriculum-england-discuss-hard-topics-gaza-war-neu>
* For an article, “Researchers say understanding the **concept of working memory** is crucial. But to make a difference in schools, better training, screening, assessments and curricular design are needed”, see <https://www.tes.com/magazine/teaching-learning/general/what-is-working-memory-educations-unfinished-revolution>
* **An extra hour spent in school per week** is associated with a small improvement in GCSE outcomes, according to a report by the Education Policy Institute (EPI), <https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/length-of-school-day_attainment_final_oct24.pdf> An additional hour of school a week in primary schools is associated with improvements in key stage 2 scaled scores of 0.053 and 0.066 for maths and reading, the study found. At secondary, an additional hour of weekly school time was associated with almost a fifth (0.17) of a grade improvement in one GCSE subject. Its impact was greater on languages than on English, maths, science and humanities. However, in response to this finding, the NAHT warned that the identified gain is minimal and “unlikely to be the ‘game-changer’ the previous government implied it could be”. The report recommends further research into the type of activities undertaken during additional hours that lead to improved outcomes for pupils. “Outstanding” secondary schools had marginally longer average school weeks - over 20 minutes longer - than senior schools with lower Ofsted ratings.
* The chief executive of Teach First, **Russell Hobby**, has announced that he will step down from the role in the summer of 2025.
* For the latest **SecEd bulletin**, see <https://email.sec-ed.co.uk/q/12JpfhcpYhSbEPuCNS2WevdF/wv>
* For the latest documents from **EEF**, see [newsletters@eefoundation.org.uk](mailto:newsletters@eefoundation.org.uk)
* The **School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB)** – which was abolished in 2010 by the previous government - is to be reinstated in recognition of the vital role support staff play in the workforce and young people’s education. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/school-support-staff-body-reinstated>

**Post 16**

* ESFA has issued “**College corporation financial management good practice guide**s”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/college-corporation-financial-management-good-practice-guides>
* DfE has issued **“Statistics on participation and learner outcomes in the further education (FE) and skills sector**, including apprenticeships, reported from January 2014 to date”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>
* DfE has issued “**Further Education Condition Data Collection 2 (CDC2) programme**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/further-education-condition-data-collection-2-cdc2-programme>

**Tony Stephens**