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**Young carers**

* **A report published by the charity MYTIME Young Carers** finds that 46% of the young people involved are persistently absent from secondary school compared to 23% of their peers. Persistent absence of young carers in year 7 stood at 33% and rises to 53% for those in year 11. A specific problem highlighted in the report is the introduction in many schools of the 30-minute rule, meaning that if a child is more than half an hour late they are recorded as absent. The report states: “Young carers can often be late to school because of their caring responsibilities. Many have shared that now schools mark them absent if they are more that 30 minutes late, they will choose not to attend school to avoid being punished.”

When it comes to GCSE outcomes, only 64% of the young carers in the report achieved a Grade 4 or higher in both English and maths compared to 71% of their peers. Furthermore, only 37% achieve a Grade 5 or higher (compared to 51%), while only 4% achieved a Grade 7 or higher (compared to 15%).

The study also finds that 40% of young carers have been suspended from school at least once, compared to only 17% of their peers. Young carers are more than twice as likely to receive an external suspension of between 1 to 5 days from school than their peers without a caring responsibility.

Young carers are more likely to be female (58%) and many young carers have SEND (33%) and receive free school meals (60%).

The report calls for a Young Carer Champion in every school. This role would be responsible for implementing a Young Carer Strategy to identify and support pupils, delivering training for school staff, and establishing Young Carer support groups to improve wellbeing, attendance and attainment. MYTIME also wants to see a Young Carers Pupil Premium piloted in England. It is calling for young carers to be added to the DfE’s daily attendance reporting and as a criteria in Ofsted inspections, with the identification of young carers to be a compulsory part of the school census. See <https://www.mytimeyoungcarers.org/res/Overlooked%20and%20Overburdended%20-%20Educational%20Challenges%20Faced%20by%20Young%20Carers%20-%20Report.pdf>

**Bullying**

* Research published by the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/> asked children and young people aged from 5 to 18 about their **experiences of bullying**. Of the respondents, 72% said they had experienced some form of bullying, while 23% said they were frequently being bullied, rising to 29% for pupils with SEND and those in receipt of free school meals. The research also finds that 23% of the respondents had experienced some form of cyber-bullying, with 6% saying they were being frequently cyber-bullied. The findings also reveal that 37% of the respondents admitted to having bullied others, with 7% admitting that they frequently bully others, while 2% admitted to frequently cyber-bullying others. Broken down by phase, 25% of secondary aged respondents said they were frequently bullied compared to 22% of primary school pupils. Types of frequent bullying reported by the children in the survey included hitting, pushing or kicking (37%), name-calling (48%), being excluded from social groups (31%), and saying mean things about the person (55%). Pupils who have been bullied and those who bully others are significantly more likely to report poor wellbeing – with those who bully the most likely to report poor wellbeing.

It calls for a new requirement on schools to designate a member of staff as an anti-bullying lead and for a named governor to be responsible for whole-school anti-bullying strategy. It also wants to see anti-bullying training for all school staff including mandating it as part of initial teacher training and the charity is recommending the introduction of a duty to record bullying incidents to help schools develop targeted interventions. See <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/Pupil%20bullying%20wellbeing%20and%20school%20experiences%20in%20schools%20in%20England%202024.pdf>

**AI**

* **Teachers have “significant scepticism” about the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in education**, a survey reveals, <https://uk.bettshow.com/the-rise-of-ai-in-education> The findings reveal key insights into how AI is being used, the perceived advantages, and the concerns educators have. It offers a balanced view of AI’s current applications, its promise for reducing teacher workloads and the path forward for meaningful implementation. It’s a valuable resource for educators, policymakers and EdTech developers about the current landscape and the steps needed to maximise AI’s contribution to education. The whole report is well worth reading, but some of the points made are:
	+ Most schools (69 per cent) are yet to implement AI technologies
	+ For schools that have used AI, the primary motivation has been to cut teacher workload, with a quarter of teachers reporting this. Other motivations include improving student outcomes (11 per cent), assessing student work (9 per cent) and identifying areas where students need extra support (5 per cent).
	+ One in four teachers (42 per cent) reported that AI had made no change to their workload and 9 per cent reported an increase
	+ Only a third of respondents said that AI had decreased the amount of work they do, with the rest of the respondents saying that AI is not applicable to their job.
	+ There is a need fora need for more “comprehensive training and information about AI’s capabilities and limitations. Respondents who were using AI in school, more than half said the training provided by their school was helpful. But 34 per cent reported receiving no training at all and 12 per cent found their training unhelpful.
	+ There is “clear enthusiasm” for AI’s potential to “streamline routine and administrative tasks”. Some 53 per cent of teachers surveyed said that AI could help with automated marking and assessment. Other areas that teachers felt could be supported by AI included scheduling and timetabling (44 per cent), generating student reports and feedback (43 per cent) and developing lessons and classroom resources (36 per cent).

**Ofsted**

* For **Sir Martyn Oliver’s speech to the Confederation of School Trusts**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/sir-martyn-olivers-speech-to-the-confederation-of-school-trusts> He said Ofsted’s focus on inclusionwill not “penalise” schools that use suspensions and exclusions “legitimately”, but he was concerned about ensuring those children received high-quality alternative provision. Inclusion will be one of several new criteria in the upcoming school inspection report card. Schools will be marked on whether their “behaviour policies and practices are appropriate” and whether they have high-quality alternative provision, where relevant. The new inspection framework will have a “greater focus on pupil outcomes” but will continue to emphasise the importance of curriculum. Ofsted will be putting forward plans for a “new standalone assessment of safeguarding” in its reports. He expressed a desire to make inspection more “diagnostic”, rather than leaders waiting for Ofsted to “turn up and identify strengths and areas for development”. “What we don’t want to see is schools turning children away because of Ofsted, because they get this sense of ‘these might be difficult children and they can’t be educated here’, or ‘that might bring our school down”. Schools should not turn away “difficult” pupils over fears they will harm their result. First and foremost, schools must meet the needs of all their local children Oliver said his intention was to ensure that “schools can match the needs and provision of children, especially children with special educational needs, or who are finding learning difficult, or are economically disadvantaged, or are vulnerable, whatever is their characteristic, and making sure that their school is working for them.

 Ofsted is not directly involved in the new Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) teams that the government announced this week. However, he added that he imagines Ofsted would be a “very significant part” of the RISE teams.

* **Ofsted “can’t” judge schools on admissions, a senior official at the watchdog has insisted, following “inaccurate” reports that inspectors could mark down institutions that take too many middle-class children**. Matthew Purves, who leads Ofsted Academy, also said the inspectorate would take inspiration from its work clamping down on off-rolling as it developed plans to assess schools’ inclusivity. Ofsted Academy will publish more of its school inspector training materials before Christmas
* Ofsted has issued “**Further education and skills inspections and outcomes as of Oct 30 2024**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-management-information-from-september-2024-to-august-2025>
* Ofsted has updated “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 “**State-funded school inspections and outcomes as of 31.10.24**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/monthly-management-information-ofsteds-school-inspections-outcomes>
* Ofsted has issued “**Ofsted Parent View**, latest results”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/ofsted-parent-view-management-information>
* Ofsted has issued “**Non-association independent schools inspections and outcomes in England: August 2024**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/non-association-independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes-in-england-august-2024>
* Ofsted has issued “**Official statistics covering outcomes from initial teacher education (ITE) inspections and inspections of early career framework (ECF) and national professional qualifications** (NPQ) in the 2023 to 2024 academic year”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/teacher-development-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2024>
* **Ofsted is planning to create a new toolkit for schools when it launches its inspection framework next year**, with modifications specifically to meet the needs of special schools and alternative provision. Ofsted will include plans for the new toolkit as part of the consultation it launches in January 2025 about the creation of a new inspection framework. Ofsted wants to ensure its reformed inspection framework is “more suitable” for the inspection of SEND in mainstream schools, special schools and alternative provision. The toolkit is set to provide clear criteria for inspections and support leaders in self-evaluating their practice. Ofsted has already said that its new school inspections will have a focus on inclusion.
* Ofsted has told sector leaders that teaching could be assessed as a separate category under **draft plans for its new inspection framework**. The plans involve separating out teaching and the curriculum into separate areas. Other categories understood to be included in the new report card proposals include attendance, opportunities to thrive, outcomes, behaviour, leadership, preparation for next steps and also inclusion. This informal consultation comes after the inspectorate was warned not to draw up its new framework “behind closed doors”, following its announcement of reform in September.

**Public examinations**

* DfE has issued “**Functional Skills subject content: maths**. Functional Skills subject content at Entry Levels 1 to 3 and Levels 1 and 2”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-skills-subject-content-mathematics>

DfE has issued “**Functional Skills subject content: English**. Functional Skills subject content for Entry Levels 1 to 3 and Levels 1 and 2”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/functional-skills-subject-content-english>

* The government is considering **transferring funding powers to combined authorities and combined county authorities to allow them to fund new reformed technical qualifications at level 2 and level 3.** The new powers would be in addition to the powers authorities currently have to fund other qualifications. For the consultation on this, see <https://consult.education.gov.uk/technical-qualifications-and-essential-skills/transfer-of-funding-powers-for-new-technical-quali/>
* England’s largest exam board has secured a High Court injunction to try and **clamp down on leaks** with those in breach facing a fine or prison. AQA can now use a “newcomer injunction” to pursue contempt of court action against anyone – even anonymous accounts – from obtaining or selling genuine or fake exam papers online
* Ofqual has issued “**What qualification levels mean**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean>
* For the latest **Ofqual rolling update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-rolling-update>
* Following consultation, <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-mathematics-physics-and-combined-science-gcses-in-2025-2026-and-2027> **Ofqual will change its rules to require exam boards to provide students with support materials in the form of formulae and equations sheets for GCSE mathematics, physics and combined science exams in 2025, 2026 and 2027**. The support materials will set out the formulae and equations that students must memorise in a normal year, as set out in DfE’s subject content and as included on the sheets provided for 2022, 2023 and 2024. Ofqual’s updated conditions will require exam boards to:
* publish the formulae and equations sheets for the exams in 2025 in December 2024 so that students may become familiar with them before the exams
* publish the formulae and equations sheets for the exams in 2026 and 2027 by 1 September 2025 and 1 September 2026 respectively so that students may become familiar with them before the exams
* provide clean copies with their 2025, 2026 and 2027 exam papers

This means the formulae and equation sheets to be used in the 2025 exams will be the same as those used for exams in 2024. As such, before the exam boards republish the sheets in December 2024, students and teachers may access exam boards’ 2024 sheets for practice purposes, if they wish. The decision relates to GCSE mathematics, physics and combined science exams being taken in summer 2025, 2026 and 2027.

* In the **latest JCQ update**, <https://mailchi.mp/jcq/13-november?e=0bb0930afc> you will find details on:
* Free cyber security tool for schools and colleges
* VTQ autumn/winter checklist
* VTQ results for 2025
* MIS providers' websites
* JCQ bulletin for senior leaders
* National senior leader/line manger exams conference
* Articles and resources
* Key dates
* Ofqual has issued a manual “**Ofqual Handbook: Technical Qualifications**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook-technical-qualifications>
* Ofqual has issued “**VTQ Information Hub:** guide to the data submission process”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vtq-information-hub-guide-to-the-data-submission-process>

**Early years and primary**

* **Primary schools should measure pupils’ reading fluency to help tackle the disadvantage gap and narrow the gender divide at key stage 2**, new research suggests, <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/FFT-FFF-Reading-Fluency-Report-final-Nov-11.pdf> Reading fluency is usually understood as the bridge between the decoding of words and reading for meaning. Fluency is usually measured in terms of the number of words within a passage of text that a child can accurately read aloud in one minute. It takes ‘words correct per minute’ (WCPM) as a broad indicator of fluency. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/11/measuring-reading-fluency-during-primary-education/>

The research measured how many words children in Year 1 to Year 6 could accurately read aloud in a passage of text in one minute. This revealed a wide “fluency gap” between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, with the median number of words read correctly per minute typically 10-15 fewer among disadvantaged pupils. This fluency gap “explained” around half of the disadvantage gap in key stage 2 reading tests. Given that oral reading fluency is quick and easy to assess, “it’s likely to be an extremely useful indicator for schools to measure”, the researchers conclude.

Reading fluency was also shown to impact the gap between boys and girls in key stage 2 Sats. On average, girls in the sample achieved a KS2 reading test score of 104.0, 1.7 points higher than that of boys (102.3). Just under half of this gap was due to girls having higher reading fluency, FFT found. “This would suggest that increasing the fluency of boys to the level of girls would reduce the gap in reading comprehension scores by half,” the researchers note.

They also say that the data has implications for the structure of the KS2 Reading paper - in particular its length, “as papers that are too long risk becoming assessments largely of reading speed”.

IT advocates the use of strategies to improve reading fluency. According to the EEF, <https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/literacy-early-years/Reading_Fluency_Resource_1.0.pdf?v=1657538920> these strategies can include singing with repeated refrains that children join in with, repeated reading aloud from picture books and “choral reading” where pupils read aloud in unison.

* DfE has issued “**Check you're eligible for free childcare if you're working**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/check-eligible-free-childcare-if-youre-working> <https://www.gov.uk/sign-in-childcare-account>
* There has been a significant year-on-year increase in the number of schools **lowering their statutory age range**. In 2023-24, 373 schools lowered their minimum age range to between 0 and three years old, compared with 237 schools that did this in 2022-23 - an increase of 57 per cent. Of those 373 schools, 212 were academies and 146 were maintained schools. The rest were free schools or special schools. A majority of the schools that reduced their age limit lowered it to 2 (226) or 3 (139). There had previously been a 24 per cent fall in schools reducing their lower age limit to 0-3 in 2021-22, when 312 schools did this.

The jump comes as schools are being encouraged by the government to **set up nurseries.** Schools have been urged not to rush in to this. Think carefully about details such as staffing, the need for sleep areas and even the height of toilets and sinks, as well as the required size of rooms. There are also concerns that the policy could fail to target disadvantaged communities and risks worsening the struggles faced by small schools. There is also the problem of finding quality staff. The government funding available is not that generous. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/early-years/primary-school-leaders-warned-about-opening-nurseries-early-years>

**Teacher pensions**

* **DfE would like views on the proposed changes to the Teachers’ Pension Scheme (TPS) regulations**. See <https://consult.education.gov.uk/teachers-pension-scheme-team/the-teachers-pension-scheme-amendment-regulation24/> The government is proposing the first rise in employee contributions to the teachers’ pension scheme since 2015 to avoid a shortfall in the fund. Most members of the TPS would see contribution rates increase by 0.3 percentage points from 1 April next year. However, the DfE said rates would not rise for the lowest-paid, and the monthly impact for an employee earning £110,000 a year is estimated to be £17 – which equates to just under £200 a year. It comes after the last government increased the contribution schools have to make from 23.6 per cent to 28.6 per cent. The newly proposed contribution rates for each salary tier of the TPS are as follows:
	+ 0-£34,289.99: 7.4 per cent
	+ £34,290-£46,158.99: 8.9 per cent
	+ £46,159-£54,729.99: 9.9 per cent
	+ £54,730-£72,534.99: 10.5 per cent
	+ £72,535-£98,908.99: 11.6 per cent
	+ > £98,909: 12 per cent

For a very useful summary of the proposals, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/first-rise-in-teachers-pension-contributions-since-2015-proposed/>

**Attendance**

* DfE has issued:
* **Share your daily school attendance data**. The information that schools must provide the DfE, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/share-your-daily-school-attendance-data>
* **Guidance for schools, academy trusts and local authorities using the monitor your school attendance tool**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitor-your-school-attendance-user-guide>
* **Guidance on how to access your school attendance data through the Monitor your school attendance tool**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/access-your-school-attendance-data>

**STEM**

* **A shortage of specialist science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem) teachers is denying underrepresented students potentially rewarding career opportunities**, according to a report. The report, “Progression at age 16 of young people from underrepresented backgrounds towards careers in Stem”, was produced by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) and the Centre for Education and Youth (CfEYhttps://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/progression-at-age-16-of-young-people-from-underrepresented-backgrounds-towards-careers-in-stem/), <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/progression-at-age-16-of-young-people-from-underrepresented-backgrounds-towards-careers-in-stem/> It calls for the curriculum and assessment review to consider how access to non-A-level post-16 Stem qualifications can be improved, including how to fill gaps in local provision. It advises school leaders to consider how they can implement programmes that are more focused on widening representation - whether relating to ethnic background, gender or poverty - as schools “rarely target underrepresented pupil groups” when promoting post-16 Stem opportunities. Careers leaders should continue to work with careers advisers and hubs, the EPI and CfEY report advises, to offer “real-world” examples of what it is like to work in Stem jobs, particularly focusing on representation from underrepresented groups. Students report often not having a good understanding of the wide range of Stem career opportunities, so improving awareness of the courses and routes that are available will likely increase participation.

**EEF regional partnerships**

* Around 300 schools across England will benefit **from 10 new regional partnerships to improve teaching and educational outcomes for local pupils, specifically those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds**, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) announced today. Each two-year partnership will be led by an EEF-supported Research School, a network of schools that champion the use of evidence-informed education in their area. Each Research School has teamed up with organisations in their local area, such as local authorities and multi-academy trusts, to identify and address a specific challenge facing disadvantaged pupils in their area.<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/300-schools-across-england-to-benefit-from-10-new-local-partnerships> The new partnerships and their themes are:
	+ Dudley: Improving reading comprehension in KS1 and KS2 – led by St Matthew’s Research School, in partnership with Dudley Borough Council, Dudley Academies Trust and Haybridge Teaching School Hub
	+ Manchester: Improving writing for four- to six-year-olds – led by Manchester Communication Research School, in partnership with Manchester County Council and the CLIC Trust
	+ South London: Supporting disciplinary reading in key stage 2 – led by London South Research School, in partnership with Southwark Diocese Board of Education (SDBE) and SDBE MAT
	+ Wiltshire: Improving early years communication and language skills through high-quality interactions – led by Somerset Research School, in partnership with Wiltshire local authority
	+ Stockport: Developing oracy skills in young children – led by Alexandra Park Research School, in partnership with Stockport Council
	+ Havering: Improving reading fluency and comprehension in key stages 2 and 3 – led by North London Alliance Research School, in partnership with London Borough of Havering
	+ Lancashire: Supporting communication and language in reception – led by Lancashire Research School, in partnership with Lancashire County Council
	+ Leeds: Supporting social and emotional development for pupils in key stage 1 – led by Huntington Research School, in partnership with Leeds Learning Alliance
	+ Worcestershire: Transforming literacy leadership for disadvantaged children and young people – led by Billesley and Tudor Grange Research Schools, in partnership with Worcestershire County Council
	+ Gloucestershire: Improving writing across key stages 2 and 3, for disadvantaged pupils – led by Gloucestershire Research School, in partnership with Gloucestershire Council

**Disadvantaged students**

* **Youth club closures in the 2010s resulted in lower GCSE results and increased offending among young people**, a study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies suggests, <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/how-cuts-youth-clubs-affected-teen-crime-and-education> Teenagers affected by austerity-induced youth club closures performed 4% worse in exams at age 16 and became 14% more likely to commit crimes. The report estimated that for every £1 saved from closing youth clubs, “there are societal costs of nearly £3”. Research earlier this year by Unison found 1,243 council-run youth centres closed between 2010 and 2023.
* **Young people from working-class backgrounds are being “blocked” from entering the creative industries**, which remain “elitist” and inaccessible, according to research. A report from the Sutton Trust, <https://www.suttontrust.com/news-opinion/all-news-opinion/research-reveals-stark-class-inequalities-in-access-to-the-creative-industries/> found stark overrepresentation in the arts for those from the most affluent backgrounds, which it defines as those from “upper middle-class backgrounds”. About 7% of people educated in the UK attend private fee-paying schools. However, 43% of Britain’s best-selling classical musicians and 35% of Bafta-nominated actors are alumni of private schools. Additionally, more than half (58%) of classical musicians have attended an arts specialist university or conservatoire, and one in four attended the Royal Academy of Music for undergraduate study. These institutions are dominated by students from the most affluent backgrounds. Twelve per cent of classical musicians attended Oxford or Cambridge. Among the top actors, 64% have attended university, with 29% attending specialist arts institutions (including conservatoires). A total of 9% attended Oxbridge and a further 6% attended other Russell Group institutions. The trust called for a range of measures to improve access to the arts. These included introducing an “arts premium” so schools could pay for arts opportunities such as music lessons, and ensuring that conservatoires and creative arts institutions that received state funding were banned from charging for auditions. It also suggested socioeconomic inclusion should be a condition of employers receiving arts funding, and that unpaid internships lasting more than four weeks should be banned.
* The EPI calls for **better targeted funding towards “persistently disadvantaged” pupils,** and said doing so could cost as little as £80 million a year <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/tackling-the-persistent-disadvantage-gap-a-new-approach-to-deprivation-funding/> The current system allocates extra funding based on free school meals eligibility at some point in the preceding six years. But researchers have warned pupils who are persistently disadvantaged – those eligible for free school meals for at least 80 per cent of their time in school – are much further behind their peers, on average, nearly two years behind their peers “Even more distressing is that, for this very vulnerable group, the gap today is as wide as at any point in our time series. For all our efforts from national policy to the classroom, we have not made any real impact for children living in persistent poverty.” It recommends that the government targets at least £640 million to this group by the end of the spending review period, money which can be found from the forecast reduction in pupil numbers. The report then outlines three options for directing funding to pupils in this category.
* DfE has issued “Information on **looked after children** at both national and local authority levels for the financial year 2023 to 2024”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2023-to-2024>
	+ The number of children looked after (CLA) by local authorities in England was 83,630 - very similar (down <0.5%) to last year. This is a rate of 70 children looked after per 10,000 children - the same as last year.
	+ The numbers of children looked after starting (CLA starting) has remained similar to last year at 33,050 (down <0.5%) but children looked after ceasing to be looked after (CLA ceasing) have increased to 33,620 (up 6%).
	+ The number of CLA who were adopted was similar to last year at 2,980 (down <0.5%).

**For statistics for previous years**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-looked-after-children>

**ITT and teacher training**

* **The government has scrapped an “excessive” requirement that mentors of trainee teachers undertake 20-hours of training** with “immediate effect”, just two months after it was introduced. It says “We have removed the 20-hour general mentor training and the 6-hour refresher training minimum time requirements, with immediate effect”. “While there is no longer a minimum training time requirement, accredited ITT providers should ensure that all mentors receive sufficient high-quality training to ensure they can effectively support a trainee teacher to obtain the knowledge and skills they need to successfully complete their ITT school placement.” Schools will still be able to claim up to 20 hours of funding per mentor for this academic year.
* The government will also launch a **new re-accreditation round for initial teacher training providers** in spring next year to “ensure ongoing coverage and efficient delivery”, with those approved able to deliver training from September 2026 or 2027. But only providers that were previously accredited, are a lead partner currently or have now received two consecutive ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’ ratings will be eligible to apply.
* DfE has issued “**Express an interest in applying to be accredited to deliver ITT courses** leading to qualified teacher status from the 2026 to 2027 or 2027 to 2028 academic year”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-itt-accreditation-expression-of-interest>

**Academies and trusts**

* DfE has issued “**Academies chart of accounts and automating the accounts return”**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-chart-of-accounts>
* **Academy trusts have been left up to £100,000 out of pocket following the government’s sudden decision to scrap capacity funding** – with fears expansion bids could be stopped in their tracks. Leaders revealed that the move to scrap the latest round of trust capacity funding (TCaF) has left them having to absorb six-figure costs and wondering “where trusts sit” in the education landscape. The DfE also axed the trust establishment and growth (TEG) fund and academy conversion payments. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/funding-cut-may-force-trusts-to-scrap-expansion-plans/>
* DfE has issued “**Guidance for academy trusts planning to make organisational changes or close an academy** by mutual agreement with the Secretary of State”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-significant-changes-to-an-existing-academy>

**Exclusions and behaviour**

* Analysis, by FFT Education Datalab, <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/11/exclusions-and-suspensions-in-2023-24/> suggests that **exclusions and suspensions have increased again in 2023-24** year on year - and were most common in Years 9 and 10. Almost one in five disadvantaged students in Years 9 and 10 were suspended or excluded at least once in the past academic year, according to an analysis of school attendance registers. Some 19 per cent of disadvantaged students in these year groups had been suspended or excluded at least once. For compulsory-aged pupils, from reception to Year 11, the combined exclusion and suspension rate for 2023-24 was 11.2 per cent - up from 9.4 per cent the previous year. The percentage of pupils with one or more exclusion or suspension in the 2023-24 was 4.2 per cent - up from 3.7 per cent in 2022-23.
* More than a quarter of primary teachers and SLT members (27 per cent) reported that they have used a form of **restraint on a pupil** since the new academic year started in September, according to polling of more than 7,000 teachers by Teacher Tapp. This figure is three times higher than the proportion of respondents in secondary school who reported needing to use restraint (9 per cent). But most teachers have had no training in how to restrain a student. Most respondents said they have received no training on restraint (54 per cent), and a quarter said they have not had any training in the past two years. Secondary teachers are more likely to report that they have not had training - 70 per cent compared with 38 per cent of primary school respondents. Teachers from both primary and secondary phases are more likely to have restrained a pupil in a school serving a more disadvantaged area. The Use of reasonable force guidance, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a819959ed915d74e6233224/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf> which covers how and when teachers and staff should use restraint, physical intervention and restrictive practices, has not been updated since it was first published in 2013.

**Curriculum review**

* Becky Francis has revealed ‘**emerging themes’ from the ongoing curriculum review**. Currently roadshows are being held around the country to gather views for the review panel to consider:
* Teachers feel “disempowered and de-professionalised by over stipulation and the challenge to cover content” in the curriculum. Assessment and exams “dictate curriculum, and this has led to “de-prioritisation of certain subjects” and reductions in enrichment activities.
* There are also concerns about “an ongoing lack of awareness of vocational routes at post-16” and inclusivity challenges for pupils “who struggle to progress and achieve for a range of reasons”.
* There has been appreciation of the “relative balance of breadth and depth” and “of our universal offer and entitlement to 16 and of diversity of options and pathways at post-16’.
* There’s an appreciation of the ambition for all expressed in the present national curriculum and of different things that have gone well. Reading is often mentioned as one example, and another is a well sequenced curriculum.
* One of the concerns “running through the review’s work is that by alleviating accountability and prescription, we risk facilitating poor practices that further marginalise disadvantaged young people.

**School management**

* DfE has issued “Make a claim through the **risk protection arrangement (RPA**)”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-a-claim-through-the-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa>
* DfE has issued “Explains the financial health and resource management standards schools need to confirm they have met in the **schools financial value standard (SFVS)**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-financial-value-standard>
* DfE has issued “**GOV.UK One Login makes securing and completing an apprenticeship easier**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/govuk-one-login-makes-securing-and-completing-an-apprenticeship-easier>
* DfE has issued a collection “Information for local authorities, schools and colleges about **high needs funding arrangements**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/high-needs-funding> For high needs funding arrangements: **2025 to 2026**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2025-to-2026>
* For the latest **ESFA Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-13-november-2024>

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

* **The proportion of young people in Great Britain with a gambling problem has more than doubled**, <https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/report/young-people-and-gambling-2024-official-statistics/ypg-2024-executive-summary-headline-statistics> with a shock rise, to 85,000, in the number of children classified as having a gambling problem under widely used diagnostic criteria. Nearly one in 10 reported that gambling by family members had caused problems at home, while there was an increase in the number who said their own habit led them to lose sleep, skip school or miss homework. About a quarter (27%) of young people aged 11 to 17 said they had gambled using their own money in the past year. The majority placed bets either on legally permitted activities such as seaside arcades, or in informal settings such as among friends. But the survey found there had been a “significant increase” since 2023 in the number of young people who have placed bets online, often using family members’ accounts. Overall, the proportion of young people in Britain with a gambling problem has more than doubled from 0.7% to 1.5% compared with 2023, the data found, equivalent to about 85,000 children. That proportion rose to 1.7% among boys, 1.9% among all children aged 14 to 17, and as high as 3% for young people living in Scotland. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/nov/07/proportion-of-young-people-in-the-uk-with-gambling-problem-has-more-than-doubled-official-data-reveals#:~:text=Overall%2C%20the%20proportion%20of%20young,equivalent%20to%20about%2085%2C000%20children>.
* **Child Poverty Action Group is calling for an urgent review of the free school meal threshold, after revealing the extent of school dinner debt incurred by schools**, <https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-11/Cost_school_meal_debt.pdf> Managing a means-tested school meal system is “complex” and “time-consuming” for schools. On average, primary schools in England and special schools had around £1,000 of dinner money debt at the end of the academic year 2023-24. Overall, debt has risen by around 50 per cent over the past two academic years, with schools reporting debt ranging from £3 to £22,000. The report found that dinner money debt particularly affects pupils just outside of FSM eligibility, with the charity previously estimating that a third of school-age children who live in poverty are ineligible for FSM. Children in primary schools are often still given lunches even if there is no credit on their lunch account, the report found, which is how dinner money debt is incurred. The charity called for the government to move towards removing means-testing from school lunchtime altogether. Schools use different approaches to manage school meal debt, which include providing different meal options or alternative lunchtime arrangements for those with outstanding debt (9 per cent of schools) and encouraging families to move to packed lunches (45 per cent of schools). However, this can mean children have a “tough time in the dining hall”, schools fear, with staff reporting that children feel embarrassed or upset if they don’t have a packed lunch or have to have an “alternative lunch”.

**Education news for schools**

* The **Centre for Education Systems** has been established, particularly to review policy decisions made by the DfE. See <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/accountability-curriculum-international-review-ces-exemplar>
* University graduates across the UK are being urged by a campaign group to check whether they are due a **refund on their student loan repayment** after it was revealed that nearly £200m was overpaid last year. Save the Student's comments come after figures were published which show that hundreds of thousands of people currently paying off their loans are eligible for a share of £184m in refunds. It is easy to check whether a refund is owed by logging on to the government's Student Loan Company portal, where individual refunds could range from tens of pounds to more than £1,000. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c86q4qz7dnpo>
* **Companies should be made to give work experience to children as young as primary school age** to help tackle the “absence epidemic” in schools, the head of the UK’s biggest airport group has said. Ken O’Toole, the chief executive of Manchester Airport Group, said firms had a “moral obligation” to offer opportunities to young people long before they turn 15, the age most UK schoolchildren complete a two-week work placement. O’Toole said: “The government should make it mandatory for businesses to provide real workplace experiences to youngsters of all ages – from primary school through to working age. See <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/nov/08/work-experience-school-absences-manchester-airport-boss-ken-o-toole>
* Dame Christine Lenehan was appointed as ministers’ “strategic adviser” on SEND last week. She will play a “a key role in engaging the sector, including leaders, practitioners, children and families”. Lenehan has said **“clarity” was needed on the statutory override, which has allowed councils to keep the deficits off their books, but is due to expire in March 2026**, with a situation where four in 10 councils may be at risk of declaring effective bankruptcy when the override ends. Currently, 4.8 per cent of pupils in schools have an EHCP, but numbers are expected to double by 2032 without policy interventions.
* **Hundreds of schools in England are still at risk of collapse from crumbling concrete**, according to previously unpublished figures. Official data, confirmed the presence of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (Raac) at 235 DfE sites. Experts have warned that schools forced to evacuate children after finding crumbling concrete could face years in portable buildings and temporary classrooms after the previous government dragged its heels on funding. See <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/nov/12/hundreds-of-english-schools-still-at-risk-from-crumbling-concrete>
* To sign up to receive all the **latest EEF news updates & resources**, see <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/sign-up>
* England’s biggest local authority has admitted it cannot afford to provide school improvement support, just days after ministers confirmed they want councils to help drive their new standards agenda. **Kent County Council** – which has a £200 million SEND budget deficit – said its “current financial position” meant it could no longer pay for support for schools. Schools must now pay themselves for help – with specific support for struggling schools pulled altogether. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-improvement-unaffordable-for-countrys-biggest-council/>
* Headteachers of council maintained schools are launching a collective group to give them a “voice” in policy-making after being “marginalised” by the Conservatives. As well as influencing policy, the new **Maintained School Collective** <https://www.maintainedschoolcollective.com/> wants to provide a supportive network for council schools to collaborate, sound out innovative ideas and share professional development. More than 100 schools have expressed an interest in joining. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/new-body-council-school-heads-demand-a-say-in-policy/>
* Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspectors found “widespread and/or systemic failings” at **Derbyshire’s local authority and health services** – giving it the lowest rating for a SEND inspection. “Overcrowded special schools are being pushed towards crisis point”. They had significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes” of children with special needs. See <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80460?utm_source&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=report>

**T Levels**

* A report published by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) <https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/T-Level-Report-final_1.pdf> **found T-levels were not “currently suitable” for many level 3 students** as over one-third of drop-outs leave education and training altogether. Nearly one in three students doing a T-level in health and science drop out in their first year. The think tank recommended the government completely overhaul or abolish the “failing” T-level transition programme (TLTP), which was recently renamed the T-level foundation year. The TLTP was rolled out as a one-year post-GCSE study programme designed to get students T-level ready. But fewer learners are moving onto a T-level from the programme. Just 15 per cent of TLTP students progressed to a T-level in the 2020-21cohort, falling to 8 per cent in the subsequent year’s cohort. Of those who do progress to a T-level, more than one in four withdraw within their first year, researchers found. Ministers should also pause the defunding of existing alternatives to T-level qualifications, the report said. While 88 per cent of academic students and 72 per cent of vocational learners passed their level 3 qualification, just 44 per cent of T-level students achieved a full level 3 qualification in 2021-22.

**Post 16**

* DfE has issued “Statistics providing an overview of **higher-level learning** across the further and higher education sectors in the academic year 2022 to 2023”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/higher-level-learners-in-england-2022-to-2023>
* **Almost three quarters of universities in England will face financial problems next year** - despite tuition fees increasing. England’s universities face financial turmoil with nearly three in four expected to be in the red next year, according to gloomy forecasts from the higher education regulator. The Office for Students (OfS) said the sector would have to take “bold and transformative action” to compensate for a £3.4bn drop in income forecast for 2025-26, with universities needing to consider mergers or cost sharing. See <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/bold-and-transformative-action-needed-to-address-financial-sustainability-ofs/>
* DfE has issued a manual “**Further education estates planning**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/further-education-estates-planning>
* **Teachers in 32 sixth form colleges have voted to take strike action** after the government snubbed them in this year’s school teacher pay award. Union leaders have not, however, put forward dates for picket lines as they seek “urgent clarification” from the government on whether the £300 million announced at the budget for further education should be spent on pay. The summer announcement to award a 5.5 per cent pay rise to school teachers in 2024-25 came with £1.2 billion to go towards the cost of teacher and support staff pay rises, which was accessible to schools, as well as sixth form colleges with academy status. But ministers offered no funding for pay to the 40 sixth form colleges that have not academised, leaving those colleges to award rises from their own funds. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/sixth-form-college-teachers-vote-to-strike-over-farcical-pay-situation/> <https://neu.org.uk/latest/press-releases/sixth-form-college-strike-days-announced-2024>

**Tony Stephens**