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**265 Academy and School News and Resources Update, April 20-25 2024**

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**Student behaviour**

* DfE has issued “**National behaviour survey. Findings from Academic Year 2022/23**” See [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6628dd9bdb4b9f0448a7e584/National\_behaviour\_survey\_academic\_year\_2022\_to\_2023.pdf Pages 7-10](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6628dd9bdb4b9f0448a7e584/National_behaviour_survey_academic_year_2022_to_2023.pdf%20%20%20Pages%207-10) give a summary of the findings.
* More than three-quarters of teachers (76 per cent) have said that pupil misbehaviour stopped or interrupted teaching last year.
* And 74 per cent of teachers said pupil misbehaviour had a negative impact on their health and wellbeing last year, up from 62 per cent in 2022.
* The survey showed that the proportion of teachers reporting poor pupil behaviour is growing. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of teachers said pupil behaviour was “poor” or “very poor” in May 2023, compared to less than a fifth (18 per cent) in 2022.
* The report found that a quarter (25 per cent) of teachers felt that pupil misbehaviour had led to more than 10 minutes of teaching time being lost per 30 minutes of lessons in the week before they completed the survey, up from 10 per cent the previous year.
* Less than one-fifth (18 per cent) of school leaders and teachers said that external specialist support provided to manage behaviour was timely, with the majority (52 per cent) reporting it wasn’t.
* The proportion of leaders and teachers who disagree that parents are generally supportive of the school’s behaviour rules rose year-on-year from 15 per cent in 2022 to 20 per cent in 2023.
* Almost six in 10 (59 per cent) of teachers reporting that their school had been calm and orderly “every day” or “most days” in May 2023 - down from 70 per cent in 2022.
* And fewer teachers feel confident in personally managing misbehaviour in their school. Just over a third (35 per cent) of teachers said they were “very confident” in managing this, down from 47 per cent in March 2022.
* DfE has issued “**Findings from a pilot study testing different survey delivery approaches for a pupil behaviour survey**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-behaviour-survey-pilot-study>
* DfE has issued “**Creating a school behaviour culture: audit and action planning tools.** Tools to help schools assess their behaviour culture, recognise good practice and identify areas that need attention”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/creating-a-school-behaviour-culture-audit-and-action-planning-tools>
* DfE has issued a collection of documents, “**Improving behaviour in schools**. Resources to support schools and trusts in developing, implementing and maintaining a whole-school behaviour culture”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/improving-behaviour-in-schools>

**School buildings and site**

* DfE has updated “**Guidance for responsible bodies and education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in their buildings**”, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reinforced-autoclaved-aerated-concrete-guidance-for-responsible-bodies-and-education-settings-with-confirmed-raac> and **“Identify reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in your education setting and inform the Department for Education (DfE) immediately via the structural issues form”,** see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reinforced-autoclaved-aerated-concrete-estates-guidance>
* DfE has issued “**Managing older school buildings**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-older-school-buildings>
* DfE has updated its manual “**Good estate management for schools**” See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools>
* **Government “spot checks” on deals to sell school playing fields** could be introduced in a bid to tighten up its monitoring of academy trust land sales. The measure is being considered by officials as they weigh up how best to check if conditions set by the DfE for land disposals have been met. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ministers-eye-new-spot-checks-to-monitor-playing-field-sell-offs/>

**Public examinations**

* For the latest **JCQ Update,** see <https://mailchi.mp/jcq/24-april-newsletter?e=0bb0930afc> Contents:
  + Key dates for GCSEs and A levels
  + New and updated information
  + Senior designated contacts
  + Non-examination assessments reminder
  + AI use in assessments
  + Candidate and centre authentication
  + Cyber security
  + Social media sharing
  + Fake exam papers
  + Parcelforce collections
  + Key dates for vocational qualifications
  + Timely delivery of vocational results
  + Level 1 and Level 2 Technical Award qualifications
  + Newsletter sign-up
* For the latest **Ofqual: rolling update**. Recent updates regarding regulated qualifications”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-rolling-update>
* FFT Education Datalab analysed progress 8 scores by school type, region and demographics between 2016 and 2023. The organisation took public progress 8 data, and divided schools into five equal “quintiles” based on the proportion of year 11 pupils who had been eligible for free school meals at some point in the past six years. It says that “broadly**, schools with the least disadvantaged cohorts saw the biggest increases in progress 8 scores, while those with the most disadvantaged cohorts saw the biggest falls**”. Between 2016 and 2023, the highest quintile schools – so those with the fewest poorer pupils – experienced an average increase of around 0.15, from +0.21 to +0.37. Schools in the lowest quintile saw an average fall of 0.08, from -0.17 to -0.25. See <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/04/changes-in-schools-progress-8-scores-over-time/>
* DfE has updated “**Key stage 4 qualifications, discount codes and point scores**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-4-qualifications-discount-codes-and-point-scores>
* Ofqual has issued “**Perceptions of A levels, GCSEs and other qualifications: wave 22**. Results of a survey of heads of schools, teachers, general public, parents, students, employers and higher education institutions in England”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/perceptions-of-a-levels-gcses-and-other-qualifications-wave-22>
* 36 per cent of headteachers agreed with the statement “the marking of GCSEs is accurate” and 40 per cent disagreed. The proportion who agreed represented a fall of 10 percentage points from the year before, when 46 per cent agreed. In 2021 more than half of heads (54 per cent) agreed that GCSE marking was accurate. Meanwhile, this year half of teachers (50 per cent) agreed that GCSE marking was accurate, down from 55 per cent last year and 57 per cent in 2021.
* The proportion of heads and teachers agreeing that on-screen GCSE and A-level exams would be more manageable for schools than pen and paper exams decreased slightly. Just under a fifth of heads agreed with this (19 per cent), compared with 22 per cent last year. Among teachers, 59 per cent disagreed that online exams would be more manageable for schools, compared with 51 per cent last year.
* More than half of heads and teachers (57 per cent) agreed that the right special consideration arrangements are being made for GCSE and A-level students - a slightly bigger proportion than the 52 per cent a year earlier. Similarly, just over half of heads and teachers agreed that the right reasonable adjustments are being made for students with disabilities.
* Confidence in GCSEs remained fairly constant compared with previous years. with an average score of 3.44 out of 5 for heads and 3.51 for teachers. However, nearly a third of both heads and teachers disagreed with the statement “GCSE standards are maintained year-on-year”
* General confidence in A levels slightly increased compared with last year - from 3.71 to 3.86 for heads and from 3.68 to 3.8 for teachers.
* **Ofqual has issued its approach to regulating the use of artificial intelligence in the qualifications sector**​. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofquals-approach-to-regulating-the-use-of-artificial-intelligence-in-the-qualifications-sector> Ofqual said there had been “modest numbers” of AI malpractice cases in coursework, with some leading to sanctions against students. It said it would add AI-specific categories for exam boards to report malpractice. It has also requested “detailed information” from boards on how they are managing AI-related malpractice risks. Ofqual told exam boards last year that AI as a sole marker of work does not comply with regulations, and using the technology as a sole form of remote invigilation is also “unlikely” to be compliant.

**Ofsted**

* Ofsted has issued a paper which outlines **how Ofsted will use artificial intelligence (AI)** and sets out its position on the use of AI by education and social care providers. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsteds-approach-to-ai> Ofsted will train inspectors on artificial intelligence use and explore how the technology can help it to make “better decisions”, for example in its risk assessment of “good” schools, to help decide whether to carry out full graded inspections or short ungraded visits. The biggest benefits from AI could include assessing risk, working more efficiently through automation and making best use of the data – particularly text. When inspecting, it will “consider a provider’s use” of AI “by the effect it has on the criteria set out” in its existing inspection frameworks. But “importantly” it will not directly inspect the quality of AI tools. But it says that it expects school leaders to monitor the use of AI in their education settings. When judging schools’ use of AI, the watchdog expects leaders to:
  + Assure themselves that tools are secure and safe for users and protect users’ data.
  + Be transparent about their use of AI.
  + Understand the suggestions AI makes.
  + Ensure staff have clear roles and responsibilities concerning the monitoring, evaluation, maintenance and use of AI.
  + Respond appropriately to concerns and complaints where AI “may have caused error resulting in adverse consequences or unfair treatment”.
* The government has said it has “**no plans” to change single-phrase Ofsted judgments,** following reports they could be scrapped. “The government’s view is that it is preferable to have those views, decisions and consequences linked directly to the independent inspectorate’s overall findings rather than the interpretations by civil servants, politicians and the media looking through the narrative of reports and drawing their own conclusions.” The DfE also says it “**does not agree that it would be right to reduce the frequency of Ofsted school inspections** at this time, and especially in cases when schools have been judged to require improvement or to be inadequate”.

**Learning Recovery**

* **The impact of the “educational damage” of Covid on GCSE results will continue “well into the 2030s**”, a new study has warned. The paper said successive pupil cohorts were set for the biggest declines in GCSE results in “at least two decades”. Researchers predicted less than four in ten pupils in England in 2030 will achieve a grade 5 or above in English and mathematics GCSEs – lower than the 45.3 per cent who did in 2022-23. The report concludes that boys who were age 5 at the time of Covid school closures are 4.4 percentage points less likely to achieve five good GCSEs, and girls 4.8 percentage points less likely. It also forecasted an “unprecedented widening of the socio-economic gap in GCSE prospects”, in a post-Covid “double whammy”. They said this gap for pupils aged 11 at the time of Covid school closures will “widen by 4.5 percentage points for boys and by 4.3 percentage points for girls. “This equates to a 32-percentage point socioeconomic gap in standard passes in English and maths GCSEs from 2024. They forecast that the UK’s relative income mobility levels would decline by 12 to 15 per cent for generations of pupils leaving school over the next decade ”The study was the first to chart how school closures during Covid hindered children’s socio-emotional and cognitive skills at age five, 11, and 14, and predict how these will impact on future GCSE prospects and later life outcomes. **Key recommendations**
* An enrichment guarantee in schools so that all children benefit from wider activities outside the classroom that nurture socio-emotional skills. Socio-emotional skills - which include the ability to engage in positive social interactions, cooperate with others, show empathy and maintain attention - are “as important as cognitive skills” in achieving good GCSEs and decent wages after school. The report suggests placing greater emphasis on these.
* A national programme to measure pupils’ wellbeing to create greater focus on wellbeing that is strongly linked to children’s evolving skills
* A dedicated research programme to develop evidence-informed approaches to school parent and community partnerships
* Rebalancing Ofsted inspections to explicitly consider disadvantage in schools and credit those excelling when serving under-resourced communities
* A new deal for teachers clarifying working hours and supporting a more balanced school calendar to improve the wellbeing
* A UK-wide programme of undergraduate tutors” to tutor and mentor school pupils, to “tap into the volunteering instincts of the younger generation
* Spreading the school holidays more evenly across the year - by shortening the six-week summer break and lengthening the October half-term to a fortnight

See <https://news.exeter.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Nuffield-Report-April-2024.pdf>

**Science and STEM**

* **Access to practical work for GCSE science students has fallen significantly** since 2016, a report from the Royal Society has found. Just over a quarter (26 per cent) of Year 10 and 11 students reported that they had been able to do hands-on practical experiments in their science classes at least once a fortnight in 2023. This is far less than in 2016, when the figure was 44 per cent. Over the same period, the proportion of GCSE students reporting being shown a video of practical work instead of carrying it out themselves increased from 39 per cent to 46 per cent. Practical work was considered by respondents as the most motivating aspect of science lessons. Nearly three-quarters of students said they wanted to do more practical work than they do currently.

The survey also found that interest in science and computing has fallen since 2019, along with students’ confidence in their abilities. Students reporting an interest in science dropped from 76 per cent in 2019 to 71 per cent in 2023 for Years 7 to 9. This is particularly marked for girls - only 65 per cent of girls in the first three years of secondary school reported being interested in science in 2023, compared with 75 per cent in 2019. Girls were also less likely to say they are “good” at science, with only 43 per cent reporting this compared with 53 per cent of boys. For Years 10 to 13, girls who did not want to pursue a science, technology, engineering and maths (Stem) career were more likely than boys to say this was because they did not enjoy Stem subjects (57 per cent compared with 41 per cent) or did not feel they were good at them (38 per cent compared with 20 per cent). In 2019, 70 per cent of Year 7s thought they might continue with science beyond GCSE. This fell to 64 per cent in 2023. See <https://www.engineeringuk.com/news-views/concerns-for-future-workforce-as-girls-turn-off-from-engineering-and-science/>

**Teacher recruitment**

* **From September, up to £6000 will be available for teachers working in key STEM and technical subjects such as maths, construction and engineering, as well as early years education**, as part of the government’s drive to recruit and retain the best staff. There is an expansion of the levelling up premium payment scheme to those working in further education and to a wider range of subjects It will also double the existing Levelling Up premium payments to school teachers of maths, physics, chemistry and computing. The £6000 incentive is being offered through the government’s levelling up premium doubling payments introduced in 2022 to support schools in disadvantaged areas across the country to recruit and retain the teachers they need in maths, physics, chemistry and computing. The programme is being significantly expanded to cover further education teachers teaching in vital subjects including early years, building and construction, digital, engineering, manufacturing and transport engineering and electronics. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/teachers-to-get-up-to-6000-extra-to-teach-vital-subjects>

For **schools**, **more details can be found at** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/levelling-up-premium-payments-for-teachers> including who is eligible and **how to apply** for 2024-2025. **For FE teachers**, the same is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/levelling-up-premium-payments-for-fe-teachers>

Also issued are **Early-career payments for teachers**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-career-payments-guidance-for-teachers-and-schools> and **Teachers: claim back your student loan repayments**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teachers-claim-back-your-student-loan-repayments>

* **Ministers have been urged by ASCL to focus on schemes that will shift the dial in the recruitment crisis** – rather than on “pitifully small” projects that do not “begin to scratch the surface”, after DfE spending on various smaller recruitment drives raised eyebrows. An example is the Scouts develop “teaching skills” as part of attaining their badges under a scheme to boost flagging recruitment by “inspiring the next generation of teachers”. Another is that £40,000 bursaries were rolled out from September 2018 in a bid to entice ex-service personnel to retrain as a teachers, but only just 12 veterans received the bursaries since 2019, at a cost of £420,000 if they all complete their courses.

**Early years, primary and childcare**

* The DfE is **seeking views on its proposals to strengthen the safeguarding requirements within the statutory framework for the EYFS.** See <https://consult.education.gov.uk/early-years-safeguarding-health-and-wellbeing/early-years-safeguarding-consultation/>
* DfE has issued a **consultation** until May 20 “**Experience-based route for early years practitioners**” A technical consultation to test a proposed model for the experience-based route, proposed eligibility criteria and process requirements. See <https://consult.education.gov.uk/early-years-qualifications-unit/experience-based-route-for-early-years-practitione/>
* STA has issued “**Key stage 2 report template for teachers to use when completing statutory end of year reports for parents**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-comparative-report-template>
* The STA required schools to opt out of receiving the optional **KS1 SATs materials** for seven-year-olds, despite the tests becoming non-statutory this year. Schools that did not want to receive physical papers had to opt out by mid-November. Of 16,033 eligible schools, just 1,073 declined the papers – about 7 per cent, even though perhaps only around 60% of schools have indicated that they will be using them. NAHT has pointed out the waste of money involved
* ESFA has updated “**PE and sport premium: conditions of grant 2023 to 2024**. Allocations for 2023 to 2024 and the terms and conditions that local authorities, maintained schools and academies must follow”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pe-and-sport-premium-conditions-of-grant-2023-to-2024>
* **The government has accepted going ahead with its expansion of funded childcare for working parents, without running tests first**, could be a "significant risk", the public spending watchdog says. The National Audit Office (NAO) said the decision to cancel a £35m pilot in a small number of areas had created uncertainty about whether nurseries and childminders would be able to roll it out nationally. The NAO recommended the DfE continuously review the expansion in case it needs to relook at the timeline due to concerns about place numbers and staffing. The DfE itself says the likelihood of delivering the number of places needed was amber-red which means “problematic”. The report said the **DfE was on track to meet its more modest target for April 2024, it warned that “later milestones will be more challenging**” and that there remained “significant uncertainties around whether the sector can implement the changes and be financially sustainable” The report also highlighted **concerns** that:
  + the attainment gap could increase between children from more affluent families and their more disadvantaged peers
  + rapid growth in nursery places may displace those children who may be more challenging or costly to support
  + quality could be jeopardised with large numbers of new or less qualified staff entering the workforce.

See <https://www.nao.org.uk/reports/preparations-to-extend-early-years-entitlement-for-working-parents-in-england/>

**SEND**

* A survey suggests that up to a third of children in an average classroom are hindered from keeping up with lessons because of their reading ability and need additional help. However, while 69% of the teachers in the research said they felt well-equipped to address the needs of students with differing reading skills, 84% admitted to sometimes feeling at a loss as to how to help struggling readers in their lessons. Teachers also report that parents often struggle to encourage their children to read at home, especially due to digital distractions and also because parents themselves sometimes do not read much. **Teachers in the study said that around a quarter of their pupils are being taken out of lessons and classrooms for around 2.5 hours a week due to reading interventions (2.7 hours a week in primary schools and 2.3 at secondary). This equates to roughly 16 days of classroom time a year**. More than half of the teachers (58%) said sufficient time is given to developing reading skills across the curriculum and 66% of the secondary teachers agreed that it is their school’s responsibility to teach phonics The study however finds that not all teachers are supportive of the common strategy of sharing the books they are reading with pupils – 60% of the respondents said that their school asks them to do this, but 47% are reluctant to share their book choices due to privacy concerns or because the books they choose are “low-brow” or controversial. Other approaches being implemented in schools include daily reading time (79% primary; 65% secondary). See <https://reports.gl-assessment.co.uk/turning-the-page/>
* DfE has updated 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>
* The government is “actively looking” at **increasing the £10,000 place funding special schools receive for each child**, which hasn’t risen once since being introduced 10 years ago. Special schools receive £10,000 for each commissioned place and then top-up funding from their council, based on the child’s needs. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfe-actively-looking-at-reforms-to-10k-special-schools-place-funding/>

**Academies and trusts**

* **Falcon Education Academies Trust** was set up by the government in 2019 with an ambitious remit: to take on the most challenging schools struggling with long-term underperformance. But just five years later, the last of the turnaround trust’s academies was approved to be rebrokered, with the trust set to close, DfE documents show. Before the DfE decided to close it, it only had the chance to take on four schools: Thornaby Academy in Stockton-on-Tees, Oulton Academy in Leeds, King Solomon International Business School in Birmingham and Mercia Academy in Derbyshire
* **The gender pay gap at the country’s biggest trusts has hardly closed despite the roll-out of schemes** such as “unconscious gender bias” training, enhanced maternity leave and the appointment of “diversity champions”. The average pay gap at the 20 largest trusts was 32.3 per cent last year (meaning women are paid 67.7p to every £1 for men). It constitutes little progress on the 32.5 per cent gap in 2022 and 33 per cent in 2021, although the gap did narrow at 12 of the 20 biggest trusts. Of the 100 public bodies with the largest pay gaps, 97 were trusts, analysis has found. This is in part because most of the lower-paid and often part-time roles in schools are done by women, as opposed to women in the same role as men simply being paid less. See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/06/gender-pay-gap-in-great-britain-smallest-since-reporting-first-enforced>
* DfE has updated “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>
* ESFA has updated “Information to help **academy trusts submit their budget forecast return** to the Education and Skills Funding Agency”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-budget-forecast-return>
* ESFA has updated “**Academy trust financial management good practice guides**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides>
* ESFA has updated “ **A guide for schools opening as academies to estimate their revenue funding**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/estimating-your-academy-funding-allocation>

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

* Students have said they are worried about how the **shortage of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) medication** will impact their exams, with some rationing tablets. Since September, there has been a shortage of ADHD medication due to an increase in demand and manufacturing issues. Some students have been rationing his medication "to stretch it out" because of fears that they will not have enough for the exam season. The NHS has differing advice, external about stopping ADHD medication, depending on the drug being used. For users of guanfacine it is advised not to stop suddenly, however, it is “usually safe” to stop medications such as methylphenidate, lisdexamfetamine and atomoxetine without needing to reduce the dose first. It is advised in all cases to seek medical advice first before stopping or reducing medication. See <https://www.derbyshirehealthcareft.nhs.uk/getting-help/understanding-your-medication/national-supply-shortage-adhd-medication#:~:text=you%20run%20out.-,It%20is%20important%20to%20receive%20health%20advice%20before%20stopping%20any,to%20reduce%20the%20dose%20first>
* **Children are “saturated” with betting promotions and gambling-like content while using the internet**, despite restrictions on ad campaigns targeting young people, new research reveals. GambleAware, the charity funded by donations from gambling firms, commissioned research that found the risks of online gambling were not understood by children because of the “blurred line” between betting ads and popular online casino-style games. It warns gambling ads with cartoon graphics are likely to be strongly appealing to children. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/apr/21/uk-children-bombarded-by-gambling-ads-and-images-online-charity-warns>
* **Levels of school absence have risen along with an increase in mental health problems among young people**, research by the Centre for Mental Health and the Children and Young People’s Mental Health Coalition has found. The report warns that “**punitive approaches to improving attendance”, such as fining parents, do not work** and could risk worsening the situation for families struggling with poverty and unmet mental health needs. The report also highlights that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and pupils affected by the cost-of-living crisis are much more likely to miss school. See <https://cypmhc.org.uk/not-in-school-barriers-to-school-attendance/>
* **Great Britain has the worst rate of child alcohol abuse worldwide**. The analysis found that Great Britain had a significant issue with underage alcohol abuse. More than a third of boys (35%) and girls (34%) had drunk alcohol by the age of 11, and by 13, 57% of girls and 50% of boys in England had consumed alcohol – the highest rate included in the analysis. More than half of girls (55%) and boys (56%) in England from higher-income families said they had drunk alcohol in their lifetime, compared with 50% of girls and 39% of boys from lower-income backgrounds. The analysis also found that girls aged 13 and 15 in Great Britain were drinking, **smoking and vaping** more than boys the same age. Forty per cent of girls in England and Scotland had vaped before 15, and did so at a higher rate than countries such as France and Germany. About 30% of girls aged 15 and 17% of boys the same age had vaped in the past 30 days in England, according to the research, and at a higher rate than other countries including Ireland, Canada, Denmark, Norway and Portugal. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/apr/25/uk-has-worst-rate-of-child-alcohol-consumption-in-world-report-finds>
* DfE has issued “Evaluation of the **virtual school heads** national extension to all children with a social worker and evaluation of the pupil premium plus post-16 programme”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-virtual-school-heads-extension-and-the-pupil-premium-plus-post-16-pilot>

**Education news for schools**

* **EEF** produce excellent resources as well as support for schools. You can register for their regular updates at <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/sign-up?mc_cid=660e5d7331&mc_eid=af2bafba5e>
* The Commons Education Select Committee has launched an inquiry into the **attainment gap between girls and boys**, which it said exists across all age groups and nearly all ethnic groups. The GCSE attainment gap between girls and boys was at its narrowest in 14 years for 2022-23. However, 24.9 per cent of girls achieved a grade 7 or A, compared with 19.1 per cent of boys. Experts and organisations can submit written evidence to the inquiry online until 17 May, <https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/3401/>
* **The BBC plans to use a multimillion investment in artificial intelligence to transform its educational offering** and attract the licence-fee payers of the future. After being heavily relied upon by desperate parents during the pandemic lockdowns, the BBC is to announce a new £6m investment in BBC Bitesize to make learning more personalised and interactive for students from primary school onwards. The money is part of an effort to lock in young users’ relationship with the public service broadcaster. The BBC is also testing out a new service for A-level students, providing content to help them widen their knowledge around a subject. Piloted around English literature, students studying Jane Austen could find they are offered a BBC adaption of Pride and Prejudice. See <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/apr/21/bbc-to-invest-6m-in-ai-education-services-bitesize>
* For an article, “**British Muslims tell their stories of prayer at school**”, see <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/apr/21/soaked-and-muddy-british-muslims-tell-their-stories-of-prayer-at-school>
* Children are being “locked out of emulating their heroes” due to **falling PE provision**, Sir Keir Starmer has said. The Labour leader says his party has committed to halting the decline in children’s access to team sports, claiming there is a “widening access gap” between state and private schools. It comes as the number of hours of PE taught in secondary schools fell to just under 286,000 in 2022-23, 4,000 hours less than the previous year and around 40,000 less than in 2011-12. The party has pledged to provide equal access to sports for girls and boys and reform the curriculum to ensure children at state schools do not miss out on PE. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/labour-keir-starmer-decline-pe-curriculum-reform>
* The regional director for London, **Claire Burton**, has been named as acting director general for the DfE’s Regions Group, while John Edwards, who currently holds the role, is taking leave to recover from surgery.
* **The Education Endowment Foundation** (EEF) has published an update to its popular implementation guidance. **The new edition of A School’s Guide to Implementation** (Sharples et al, 2024) is based on a review of the latest educational research and practice into what has and has not worked in the classroom in the past. See <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/implementation>
* For the latest **STEM newsletter**, see <https://email.stem.org.uk/q/11oBrIRqQBsnc6mWc47gQFe/wv>

**School management**

* For the latest **Education Support Newsletter**, see <https://mailchi.mp/edsupport/your-october-newsletter-3176724?e=4c833362b8>
* DFE has issued “**Children looked after return 2024 to 2025: guide**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-looked-after-return-2024-to-2025-guide> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-looked-after-return-2024-to-2025-technical-specifications>
* DfE has issued “Information for large employers **about transferring unused apprenticeship levy funds to another business** to pay for their apprenticeship training and assessment”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transferring-your-apprenticeship-levy-to-another-business>
* ESFA has updated **“Section 251: 2024 to 2025** Information for local authorities, schools and the general public about local authority education funding and expenditure plans for 2024 to 2025”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-251-2024-to-2025>
* ESFA has issued “Guidance for local authorities on how to complete the **section 151 officer return and the schools financial value standard assurance statement for the 2023 to 2024 financial yea**r”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/submit-your-section-151-officer-return-and-schools-financial-value-standard-assurance-statement>
* ESFA has issued “**Schools financial value standard**”. 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>
* More than half of schools have **trained senior leaders to support complaints management** in the last year amid an explosion in the number of parental grievances, a poll suggests. Over four in 10 schools (43 per cent) have **instructed legal advisers** to support the management of such complaints, according to a snap poll carried out by law firm Browne Jacobson, and two-thirds of leaders (65 per cent) polled felt that complaints had increased. The most frequently cited reason behind complaints was support for pupils with special educational needs (75 per cent) and general behaviour and discipline issues (74 per cent). Meanwhile, seven in 10 (71 per cent) school leaders believe parents and carers are quicker to escalate concerns to the formal stage of the complaints process, with half in strong agreement this was the case. The majority of respondents (90 per cent) said that complaints management was having a detrimental impact on staff wellbeing, with other issues cited including the quality of education being delivered (53 per cent) and staff retention (48 per cent). See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/schools-train-senior-leaders-tackle-rising-parental-complaints>
* DfE has updated “**School census 2024 to 2025**: technical information”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2024-to-2025-technical-information>
* For the latest **ESFA Updates**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-24-april-2024>
* ESFA has updated “**Mainstream schools additional grant 2023 to 2024**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mainstream-schools-additional-grant-2023-to-2024>
* The education secretary has said she will look at “how we can fund” any pay rise recommended by the School Teachers’ Review Body (STRB), but said a **pay grant would be “hard to guarantee**”.
* DfE has issued “**Basic need capital funding** allocated to each local authority to create new places from 2011 to 2026”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/basic-need-allocations>
* DfE has issued “**School workforce census**: guide to submitting data”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-workforce-census>

**Post 16**

* ESFA has issued “**Funding values for colleges, training organisations and employers** with an adult education budget, apprenticeship, advanced learner loan or traineeship contract for 2021 to 2022”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2021-to-2022>
* ESFA has issued “**Complaints about post 16 education and training provision funded by ESFA**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-post-16-education-and-training-provision-funded-by-esfa>
* DfE has issued “**LEO Graduates and Postgraduates Outcomes: 2021 to 2022**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/leo-graduates-and-postgraduates-outcomes-2021-to-2022>
* DfE has issued **a collection back to 2010 of statistics on the attainment of 16- to 19-year-olds in England, including exam results and performance tables**.See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-attainment-at-19-years>
* DfE has issued “**Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 16 to 25 in 2023**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/level-2-and-3-attainment-by-young-people-aged-16-to-25-in-2023> In 2022/23:

**Level 2**

* + 85.5% of 19 year olds were qualified to Level 2, an increase of 2.5 percentage points.
  + 78.0% of 19 year olds achieved Level 2 in English and maths, the highest on record.
  + 27.7% of 19 year olds who had not achieved Level 2 in English and/or maths at 16 had achieved both by 19, a fall of 9.1 percentage points from the series high in 2021/22.

**Level 3**

* 61.3% of 19 year olds were qualified to Level 3, a fall of 0.9 percentage points from the series high in 2021/22 but the level remains above pre-pandemic proportions.
* 14.5% of 19 year olds had achieved a level 3 in maths. Level 3 maths attainment increased in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to a series high of 15.0% driven partly by the changes to exam grading during Covid-19 and the increase in attainment via core maths. Level 3 maths attainment is now at pre-pandemic levels.
* DfE has issued “**Progress on the rollout of T Levels** and actions being taken to scale up the programme”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-level-action-plan>
* DfE has issued “Technical education learner survey 2023: **progression of the first T Level cohort**. A report on T Level learners' outcomes, destinations, future plans and course experiences”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-education-learner-survey-2023-progression-of-the-first-t-level-cohort>
* DfE has issued “**Higher education entrants and qualifiers by their prior attainment**. Statistics on English-domiciled first degree higher education entrants, including their attainment at levels 2 and 3, and how many qualified within 5 years. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-entrants-and-qualifiers-by-their-prior-attainment>
* DfE has issued “**Guide to post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below in England**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-post-16-qualifications-at-level-3-in-england--2>
* DfE has issued a collection of research documents, “Data and research to help understand current and **emerging skills gaps** and the type of jobs people take after training”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/job-and-skills-data>

**Tony Stephens**