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**Early years and primary**

* **Life in lockdown held back progress of under-fives** Parents spent less time reading, chatting and playing with their children during the pandemic, according to new research by the National Literacy Trust. A quarter said they did not chat with their child every day in 2021, compared with just 10% in 2019, and only half (53%) of parents said they were reading to their child daily, compared with two-thirds in 2019. And the proportion of parents who said they played with their child at least once a day in the previous week also fell from 76% in 2019 to 72% in 2021. The Trust surveyed more than 1,500 parents with children under five. Overall, the research found that fewer parents of young children engaged in “home learning activities” – reading, chatting, playing, singing or painting and drawing – in 2021, compared with 2019, despite spending more time in the home with their child due to the pandemic. Many parents struggled during the lockdowns to juggle full-time work with caring for children and supervising their learning. It was a difficult time for people with less support for families, there was less socialisation happening, and beneficial activities like going to the park or library were often unable to take place. See <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/apr/24/life-in-lockdown-held-back-progress-of-under-fives>
* The DfE has issued “**10 top tips for parents to support children to read**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-top-tips-to-encourage-children-to-read>
* **STA** has issued:
* **Key stage 2 tests: returning test scripts**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-tests-returning-test-scripts>
* **Key stage 2 tests: special consideration guidance**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-tests-special-consideration-guidance> SATs pupils will not receive special consideration for Covid-related problems except in the most extreme scenarios. Special consideration does not apply when a pupil “has been affected by illness or other issues related to coronavirus”. It also does not apply if the pupil is working at the standard of the tests but was not taught the full curriculum or had reduced preparation for the tests. This includes periods of Covid-enforced home-learning. There are only five reasons provided for why a school can apply for special consideration. Covid can only be cited as a reason when it applies to these:
	+ Death of a family member or close friend within 12 months of tests.
	+ Pupil, or close family member, diagnosed with a terminal illness in the six months before tests; or if diagnosis was made more than six months ago, the family member is approaching end of life.
	+ A traumatic incident, or significant change in pupil’s circumstances, at the time of tests or within previous two weeks.
	+ Pupil or close family member, has suffered a life-changing injury or had life-changing surgery in the six months before tests.
	+ A traumatic incident occurred in the six months before the tests and there was a related-incident at the time of the tests or within the previous fortnight.

Under the guidance, headteachers have a responsibility to ensure that pupils only sit key stage 2 exams if they are; in a fit physical and mental state, working at the standard of the tests and have completed the full programme of study. If a pupil is ill on the day of the test, schools are advised to consider making an application for a timetable variation. This would allow a pupil to take a test at a different time or on a different day.

* The DfE has issued:
* “**Providers’ finances: survey of childcare and EY providers 2021, 2019 and 2018”.**  Research into early years provider finances based on survey data from 2019. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providers-finances-survey-of-childcare-and-ey-providers-2019> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provider-finances-evidence-from-early-years-providers> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providers-finances-survey-of-childcare-and-ey-providers-2021>
* **Surveys of childcare and early years providers and coronavirus** (COVID-19) See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-childcare-and-early-years-providers-and-coronavirus-covid-19-wave-2> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-childcare-and-early-years-providers-and-coronavirus-covid-19-wave-4> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-childcare-and-early-years-providers-and-covid-19-coronavirus> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-childcare-and-early-years-providers-and-coronavirus-covid-19-wave-3>
* **Early years workforce and business planning during the pandemic**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-workforce-and-business-planning-during-the-pandemic>
* **The early years workforce: recruitment, retention, and business planning**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-early-years-workforce-recruitment-retention-and-business-planning>
* For a **summary of key points from the last two documents,** see <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/specialist-sector/early-years-sector-raises-concerns-staffing-funding-and-safety>
* ESFA has issued “**PE and sport premium: conditions of grant** 2021 to 2022”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pe-and-sport-premium-conditions-of-grant-2021-to-2022>
* The DfE has issued “**Systematic synthetic phonics** (SSP) teaching programme validation”. Guidance on how to complete the self- assessment form with the essential core criteria and supporting information. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-teaching-materials-core-criteria-and-self-assessment> and “**Choosing a phonics teaching programme**”, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/choosing-a-phonics-teaching-programme>

**SEND**

* For an investigation, “**The broken special needs system**” a joint investigation by Schools Week and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism which reveals the scale of the challenge ahead for SEND reforms, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/investigation-the-broken-special-needs-system/> <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/revealed-the-spiralling-cost-of-a-broken-send-system/> <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/no-place-to-go-special-schools-capacity-crisis-revealed/> <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/pupils-with-special-needs-travel-hundreds-of-miles-to-school/> It is better to read the full reports, but some of the key points are:
* More than half of special schools are at or over capacity State-funded special schools are setting up classrooms in staffrooms and converting therapy spaces as a surge in pupils with additional needs creates a places crisis. This in turn pushes cash-strapped councils into bigger deficits as they send more youngsters to costly private schools or to other schools sometimes hundreds of miles away. The places shortfall means 43,000 pupils with special needs are placed in schools outside their home area, with 3,300 in settings an estimated 20 miles or more away. More than 100 children were placed in schools in excess of 200 miles from where they live
* The special needs funding” black hole” has risen to £1.3bn, up by £465m in a single year. Three quarters of councils now have SEND funding deficits, some of which even doubled or tripled in 12 months.
* Spending on private school places by cash-strapped councils handed government bailouts to keep afloat has risen by two thirds.
* From a survey 21 councils already now reject one in every three requests for education health and care plan (EHCP) assessments.
* Ministers are considering **extending their consultation on plans set out in the SEND review**, following delays in publishing accessible versions of the documents. The green paper was launched at the end of last month, with British Sign Language and an easy-read version of the consultation promised by “early April”. But almost a month has now passed, and the additional accessible versions have still not been published. This is despite the government having had over two years to prepare the review for publication.
* There is set to be a gap of least eight months without any new area-wide **inspections of services for children with special educational needs and disability** (SEND) taking place because a new framework is still being worked on. Ofsted has now said the new framework will be implemented in 2023 but could not give an exact date, which means it will be at least eight months until any new area-wide SEND inspections take place, as the current cycle of checks is due to finish this month

**Ofsted**

* Ofsted has issued “**Ofsted strategy 2022 to 2027”.** Ofsted sets out its corporate strategy, with a summary of its core values, strategic approaches, areas of work and evaluation metrics. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-strategy-2022-to-2027> The strategy centres on the fundamental principle that Ofsted will be a force for improvement through the intelligent, responsible and focused use of inspection, regulation and insights. This strategy has a particular emphasis on giving all children the best possible start, making sure a child’s earliest experience of education is as good as it can be. **The 2022–2027 strategy includes commitments to**:
	+ Accelerate the inspection cycle so that all schools are inspected by July 2025
	+ Allow more time for professional dialogue and evidence-gathering by increasing the proportion of longer inspections in education. Currently, just one sixth of inspections for ‘good’ schools are two-day section 8 inspections – most are shorter, one-day section 5 visits. Now, a third of ‘good’ school inspections will be full, graded ones.
	+ Assess all further education colleges on how well they are meeting the skills needs of the economy within the next 4 years
	+ Enhance inspections of independent schools, so swift intervention can happen where standards are poor
	+ Review social care inspections following the recommendations of the independent care review
	+ Develop and implement a new area SEND inspection framework that holds the right agencies to account for their role in the system
	+ Work with the DfE to increase powers to act when children are educated or cared for in unregistered settings
	+ Have inspections look at how schools address harmful sexual behaviour
	+ Work with the DfE on their regulatory review looking at accountability and regulation of MATs – including how trusts will be held to account through inspection in the future.
	+ Share insights on the long-term impact of Covid and “fill gaps in knowledge by carrying out rigorous research” of areas such as multi-academy trusts and alternative provision.
	+ Create ‘state of the nation’ subject reports to build understanding around the quality of subject teaching.
	+ Develop specialist knowledge in growing areas of work, such as MATs.
	+ Develop specialist training on early years education to enhance the understanding of high-quality teaching. Ofsted also promises to improve the quality of early years providers
	+ Develop a new workforce strategy to recruit and retain “highly professional, credible people, many with specialist knowledge”. In turn, Ofsted say the average length of service for inspectors will be “at least between three and four years, with a high proportion of those who leave becoming externally contracted inspectors”.
	+ Improve the diversity of our staff, across grades and roles
	+ Ofsted say that as a result of the actions, 90 per cent of providers will agree their inspection will help them to improve standards. Additionally, nine to 12 months after the inspection “most providers” will agree they made changes to improve standards.
* For **Amanda Spielman's speech** at the 2022 Schools and Academies Show where she responded to the recent schools white paper and discussed Ofsted’s 2022–2027 strategy, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/amanda-spielmans-speech-at-the-2022-schools-and-academies-show>
* The government has announced it will turn the Oak National Academy into a **new arms-length curriculum body**, offering free, adaptable digital curriculum resources and video lessons, free for all teachers. She said the new content “should help schools adopt high-quality curriculums”, and acknowledged some schools “don’t have the time, the resource to develop their own curriculum and lesson plans”. But she warned that “too often we do see curriculums assembled as a pick and mix, rather than having knowledge build coherently on knowledge”. She said schools that used Oak resources “will need to do so thoughtfully, planning what they want to teach and how they want to sequence it, which may often be the sequence suggested by Oak, while of course being prepared to adapt their classroom teaching in response to pupils’ learning”. “New resources from Oak should help build on the Ofsted subject reviews and should complement them. I think they’ll be particularly helpful for schools with more limited curriculum capacity – to help them move in the right direction.”
* She warned against the “unnecessarily” **labelling of pupils**, and warned schools were sometimes too “quick” to take children out of normal lessons when they fall behind. “We need to be careful not to label unnecessarily, both children and adults respond to labels. Negative labels can lead to negative perceptions and lower expectations. “I’m dismayed actually how often I hear children referred to by their free school meal eligibility or as pupil premium children. Children are children. Some need some extra help and some don’t, regardless of the labels we’ve stuck to them.”
* She said she was “pleased” the white paper recognised that the “first response to children falling behind is to rely on the **skill of the classroom teacher**”. “We’re sometimes very quick to leap to an intervention and sometimes one that takes the child out of their normal lessons. “But for many this will not be the right thing to do.”
* **Inspections of multi-academy trusts** (MATs) will play an important part in the government deciding whether trusts are failing to meet national standards. She said that, at the moment, trust-level regulation looks mainly at financial compliance and good governance "but not at education, which is the very reason trusts exist in the first place".
* She welcomed the announcement of the government's **SEND Green Paper**. "These changes are long overdue. Our [SEND area] inspections have highlighted that too many children are failed by the SEND system. We have reported on flaws, inconsistencies and delays. And these have been made worse by the pandemic. Approaches to diagnosis, support and funding vary too widely across the country and I am pleased that this is what the government is trying to address." However, she warned that lessons should be learned from the 2014 reforms, which experienced problems with delivery.
* She said: "**Secondary results will be published this year** but we fully understand that this will reflect the uneven impact of Covid as well as underlying school performance, and it's still the case that performance data is only one input into inspections." She said that Ofsted would treat results "with more care" and added: "Our judgements aren't now and won't simply be a reflection of performance data."
* She added: "And while I am myth-busting I am also happy to emphasise that we don't downgrade schools **simply because pupils can't remember the names of a few rivers in geography or because they struggle to explain a key concept in history.**"
* Ofsted has issued information for lead providers about what happens when **Ofsted carries out early career framework (ECF) and national professional qualification (NPQ) inspections**. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inspecting-lead-providers-of-the-ecf-and-npq-programmes>
* Amanda Spielman has **dismissed suggestions that pressure from Ofsted is contributing to an exodus of headteachers**, instead blaming consultants “trying to make people afraid and unhappy”. “It’s hard for us to tally the narrative that comes back from certain quarters that are violently opposed to inspection in principle, with what we actually get from people we work with directly.” She said post-inspection feedback was that schools “overwhelmingly” found them to be fair and constructive, meaning there was an “irreconcilable gap in the narrative”.

**From some the “Education Establishment”**

* **From the National schools commissioner Dominic Herrington**
	+ New literacy and numeracy targets will not be met if academy trusts “only operate in their own interests, and **collaboration** was key to hitting high-profile targets included in the schools white paper last month. Herrington pointed to white paper plans for a new “collaborative standard” for trusts, mandating work with partners in their area
	+ The DfE also wants to “**minimise the regulatory burden” on trusts** through an upcoming review, through an approach that is “risk-based” and promotes good practice. The white paper said the review would begin in May, and Herrington said it would be “probably next month or this term”. His comments mark a slight change compared to ministers’ recent statements and the white paper’s comments on the review. The white paper mentioned a “robust framework” for tackling failing trusts, and holding trusts accountable through inspection.
	+ Herrington praised the “**beautiful diversity” of multi-academy trusts**, and used most of his speech to sell the benefits of the MAT model. They bring “hope”, “energy” and “ambition”, acting as a “massive enabler” for professionals to come together.
* **From Schools minister Baroness Barran**:
	+ She sketched out the “**five legs” of strong MATs**, with a new definition in the pipeline. These were educational outcomes and inclusion, school improvement capacity, a strong, well-supported and resilient workforce, financial competence, and strong governance and leadership.
* **From Katharine Birbalsingh the social mobility tsar**:
	+ She **cast doubts on targets to boost literacy and numeracy**, saying she is “not sure” how they will be achieved. She told the Commons science and technology committee that the recent schools and levelling up white papers set “lovely targets”, but warned issues with teacher supply and school “culture” needed to be resolved to meet them. “Things like teacher shortages, and the culture…in our society and in our schools generally, where there isn’t enough authority in the classroom from the teacher. Those things need to be addressed and they can take some time to address.
	+ She said **girls don't "tend to fancy" doing physics** because of the "hard maths" involved. "From my own knowledge of these things, physics isn't something that girls tend to fancy, they don't want to do it and they don't like it"; there was "a lot of hard maths", which she thought girls "would rather not do". Academics have responded that, "we need to show everyone that throughout education all options are open and there are no gender differences in being able to do mathematical studies". “Society conditions so many to believe that they can't or shouldn't do something". One branded the comments "completely sexist".

**Public examinations**

* Ofqual has issued “**Advance information for November 2022 examinations**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advance-information-for-november-2022-examinations>
* Ofqual has issued “**Perceptions of A levels, GCSEs and Applied General qualifications in England – Wave 20”** See <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1071683/Ofqual_Perceptions_Survey_Wave_20.pdf> **Understanding of GCSE and A-level exams plummeted last year** following the switch to teacher-assessed grades. Thirty-three per cent of respondents said GCSEs were well understood by people in 2021, compared to 70 per cent who said they were normally well understood. 37 per cent said they were not well understood in 2021. The figures were similar for A-levels. In 2021, 32 per cent said the qualifications were well understood in 2021, compared to 69 per cent more generally. Again, 38 per cent said A-levels were not well understood last year. Confidence in the system to investigate malpractice also dropped sharply last year, with just 49 per cent of respondents saying they were confident incidents were fairly investigated in 2021. Confidence in the system more generally was 89 per cent.
* Schools that have students with **long Covid** who are taking their GCSE and A-level exams this summer will be able to apply for a special consideration exemption if the condition worsens during the exam period. Clarification of how the guidance applies to the illness from the Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) ends months of uncertainty over whether long Covid would be counted as a special consideration reason for a student to miss an exam and receive alternative assessment. Although long Covid will remain classed as an "ongoing condition", which means students who have been diagnosed with the chronic illness must sit the exam as long as the school has made suitable adjustments known as "access arrangements", if the pupil's condition worsens around the time the exam is taking place, their school could apply for them to sit out the exam under special consideration rules. The JCQ has clarified that the current guidance, which says special consideration cannot apply to students with a long term illness or other difficulties during the course, "unless the illness or circumstances exacerbate what would otherwise be a minor issue at the time of the assessment", will also apply to students struggling with long Covid. A JCQ spokesperson said a doctor's note would not be needed to support the application as the fact that a student is struggling within an exam or over the course of a series would be "evident to the invigilation team". The JCQ has stressed that students with long Covid would only be eligible for special consideration status if previously approved access arrangements - as formulated and set out by the school's SENCO - cannot alleviate the candidate's emerging medical condition. Access arrangements might include taking the exam in a different room, being able to take rest breaks, extra time or completing the examination from home.
* Ofqual has issued details of how researchers can **access a data set shared by Ofqual, UCAS and the DfE** to conduct research in the public interest. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/data-sharing-framework-for-the-grade-project-published> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/grade-data-sharing-project> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grading-and-admissions-data-for-england-grade-framework>

**School and academy leadership**

* The DfE has issued “**School leadership in England 2010 to 2020**: characteristics and trends”. Statistics on the size and characteristics of the school leaders in state-funded schools. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-leadership-in-england-2010-to-2020-characteristics-and-trends> Some conclusions:
* The share of female heads rose from 67 per cent to 70 per cent between 2010 and 2020 – but it remains lower than their representation among classroom teachers at primary and secondary.
* Women are 14 per cent less likely to be promoted to senior leadership (assistant or deputy head) and 20 per cent less likely to become heads. By contrast, women were just as likely to be promoted to middle leadership. The average man also progresses three years faster to primary headship and one year faster to secondary headship.
* The teaching workforce is becoming increasingly diverse, including at leadership levels, but remains less diverse than the general population, the study indicates. Ethnic minority leaders made up 7 per cent of primary heads and 9 per cent of secondary heads, both up two percentage points in a decade. New-to-post teachers and leaders are also more diverse than peers already in post. But after controlling for other factors, non-white teachers were 18 per cent less likely to be promoted to middle leadership than white British ones, and 21 per cent less likely to be promoted to headship. No difference was found between white British and white Irish staff. Ethnic minority staff overall were also disproportionately in London, even when factoring in its more diverse population. But diversity among inner London secondary heads has actually fallen, from 34 per cent in 2010 to 25 per cent a decade on.
* The average age of heads fell from 51 in 2010, to 48 in 2016, but this has since stabilised at 48 in 2020. Senior leader median ages also fell from 44 to 42 in 2014, before stabilising.
* A previous trend, for increased senior leadership numbers as a share of all staff between 2010 and 2018, has also since tailed off. Maintained schools also have more leaders than academies
* The proportion of part-time leaders has risen from 7 per cent to 11 per cent over the decade. Among female leaders it jumped six percentage points to 15 per cent, but among men it stood at just 3 per cent – only half a percentage point higher
* Part-time staff, who are 51 per cent less likely to be promoted to middle leadership and 45 per cent less likely to make head.
* More than a third of new secondary headteachers left the profession within five years, according to **NAHT analysis of 2020 workforce census data**. Thirty-seven per cent of secondary heads new to post in 2015 were not in similar posts in state schools five years later, the data shows. Retention rates also fell at primary level, with 25 per cent of heads leaving earlier in the second half of the decade. The same trend was evident among deputy heads, assistant heads and middle leaders at both primary and secondary level. Of all the different roles, middle leaders at primary and secondary level continue to be most likely to leave within five years of appointment. The new figures show that five-year retention rates have deteriorated across every category of school leadership since the data was last published in 2018 NAHT pay analysis says leaders will be 21.3 per cent worse off in real terms than 2010. The minimum leadership pay band is set to rise to £42,195, but if it had risen in line with annual inflation it would stand at £52,716.The NAHT blamed “high-stakes accountability, crushing workload, long hours and inadequate school funding” – and warned leaders’ real-terms pay is a fifth lower than a decade ago. In addition, many assistant and deputy heads felt there was “just no point” progressing given increased workloads, stress and smaller pay premiums than in the past. See <https://www.naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/Press-room/ArtMID/558/ArticleID/1640/New-data-reveals-sharp-increase-in-number-of-school-leaders-leaving-the-profession-within-5-years>

**Disadvantaged students and student welfare**

* A review of the long-term outcomes for **children treated for gender dysphoria** is being drawn up by ministers, following warnings over how little is known about children who later regret the treatment. Sajid Javid, the health secretary, wants to hand new legal powers to an existing review into NHS gender identity services for children, granting it greater access to crucial data on the experiences of patients who have undergone treatment. He has concerns that some staff felt “under pressure to adopt an unquestioning affirmative approach” to children who expressed concerns about their gender. See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/24/sajid-javid-plans-review-of-impact-of-gender-dysphoria-treatment>
* There are likely to be two to three **children who were born preterm** in every classroom who may be missing out on vital support due to a lack of knowledge in schools about the challenges they might face. While it's not the case that every child born preterm will experience difficulties, the most common ones are associated with mathematical ability, social and emotional skills, and attention. On average, children are likely to have cognitive difficulties - poor working memory, deficits in visuospatial ability, processing speed and executive function. Children born preterm are at greater risk of attention difficulties, social and emotional difficulties - difficulties interacting with peers and maintaining friendships - and being shy, anxious or withdrawn. These children will often have a number of these difficulties that co-occur, but there is not a greater risk of these groups having an increased risk of conduct problems or defiance.
* Headteachers' leaders have welcomed calls for the government to inject millions more into free **school breakfasts** amid findings that some pupils are missing out owing to a "lottery" in provision. Education charity Magic Breakfast said its new research has exposed a "patchwork" of provision leading some children to come to school too hungry to learn. The report says that Wales is the only UK nation with a country-wide centrally funded free breakfast provision. The report says 55 per cent of schools in England have barriers to disadvantaged children and young people accessing provision. Key barriers include cost, staff costs and lack of perceived need. It adds that "often, free places are capped below the levels of need in an area, in line with IDACI statistics". The report also says that 18 per cent of schools in England have no breakfast provision. This includes 18 per cent of schools in England. According to the charity, two-thirds of English schools that host breakfast clubs charge parents and limit the number of free spaces available, with some families facing weekly bills of up to £25 per child. See <https://www.naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/Press-room/ArtMID/558/ArticleID/1645/NAHT-comments-on-call-for-more-funding-for-school-breakfast-provision>
* The number of **children in custody** in England and Wales is expected to double by 2024, according to a report by Whitehall’s public spending watchdog, which also highlights that black and minority ethnic children are increasingly over-represented in the youth justice system. The National Audit Office (NAO) report said in 2021 more than half (53%) of children in custody were from minority ethnic groups, up from less than a third (32%) 10 years earlier, while the proportion of black children increased from 18% to 29% over the same period. See <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/children-in-custody/>
* **Families with disabled children** who rely on specialist medical equipment say they are facing impossible choices as energy bills in the UK soar. The families said they feared their child's condition would get worse as a result of rising prices. Some said they would have to stop or cut back on using specialist equipment and aids. Many more said they would go without heating, food or new clothing. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/disability-61234993>
* Health officials say there is mounting evidence that a common virus is linked to rare cases of **hepatitis** that have been occurring in some young children. In the UK, 114 children have become ill and 10 have needed a liver transplant. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) says a strain of adenovirus called F41 is looking like the most probable cause. Most of the children affected are five years old or younger and have had symptoms of gastroenteritis illness - diarrhoea and nausea - followed by jaundice or yellowing of the skin and eyes (a sign that the liver is struggling). Experts stress that most children who catch adenovirus will not become very unwell. Cases of liver inflammation - known as hepatitis - are extremely rare, but can be very serious. There is no link to the Covid vaccine. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-61220518>

**Exclusions**

* **Permanent exclusions should be banned in primary schools by 2026**, according to a report led by a former children's commissioner, which calls for a new era of incentivising schools to be more inclusive. The Commission on Young Lives, chaired by Anne Longfield, says that no school should be judged to be "good" or "outstanding" by Ofsted without proving it is inclusive and calls for pupil wellbeing to be measured in performance tables. The report says schools should release annual figures showing how many pupils have been excluded and taken off school rolls to address concerns about the problem of off-rolling. It says these new measures would be aimed at reducing the number of pupils falling out of the school system altogether and tackling what it describes as "the culture of exclusion." The commission has said that thousands of vulnerable children are falling through gaps in the education system, "putting them at risk not only of low attainment but also serious violence, county lines, criminal exploitation, grooming and harm." Its recommendations also include alternative provision being renamed as specialist provision and for pupil referral units to be scrapped. As figures show black children are more likely to be excluded, the commission proposes making race-equality training "a core part of teacher training and reforming the school curriculum to make it more inclusive". Permanent exclusion figures have seen a gradual rise from 5,082 in 2010-11 to 7,894 in 2018-19. See <https://thecommissiononyounglives.co.uk/commission-on-young-lives-calls-for-an-end-to-exclusions-culture-as-part-of-a-new-era-of-inclusive-education-to-tackle-the-scourge-of-teenage-violence-and-exploitation-and-help-all-children-to-succe/>
* The Commission on Young Lives report also said **Black children are over-policed** **in schools**. Black children are more likely to face tougher punishments at school because they are viewed as "less innocent" and more adult-like. This process of "adultification" means black children can feel unsafe and over-policed at school. This can lead to black children being disciplined more harshly. About one in every three of state-school pupils belongs to an ethnic minority - but more than 90% of the teaching staff are white. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-61263246>

**Learning recovery and the NTP**

* The DfE plans to **name and shame schools not using tutoring money** under a new push to “improve transparency and support uptake” of the flailing scheme. Ofsted would also check schools’ tutor figures under the plans. Publication of the data would likely be at the end of the academic year. Government could use data from two mandatory collections for the school-led tutoring money. The first is the school census, undertaken once a term. Schools must record all pupils who have received tutoring through the grant this year. The second is an end-of-year statement from the Education and Skills Funding Agency, released in June. However, the proposals are being strongly challenged by sector leaders, who fear it will push failure of the scheme on to schools. Government figures show two in five schools have not used the National Tutoring Programme this year.
* The DfE has issued “**Example lessons for remote teaching**”. Lesson plans shared by schools to help teachers adapt their practice for remote education if required. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/example-lessons-for-remote-teaching> The purpose of the lesson plans is to help teachers consider how they might adapt their teaching practice for the remote context. The examples are intended as a source of ideas, not as teaching resources or lessons the department expects schools to teach
* Many struggling schools will miss out on levelling-up support because of the "blunt" way it is being targeted, analysis suggests. The government's White Paper, announced the creation of 55 **Education Investment Areas** (EIAs) to target "school improvement interventions" and support disadvantaged pupils. But research by SchoolDash suggests **that the exact local authority that a school sits in is a "very poor" predictor of its need for support**. More than a third (34 per cent) of primary schools in areas not designated as EIAs had lower KS2 attainment levels than the average primary school within an EIA. And, among secondary schools, for Attainment 8 and Progress 8, which measure students against their GCSE results, the figures were 38 per cent and 39 per cent respectively. See <https://www.schooldash.com/blog-2204.html#20220428> Analysis completed by FFT Education Datalab also suggests that two-thirds of pupils missing the expected standard in all three assessment areas of reading, writing and maths at KS2 in 2019 went to school outside the 55 EIAs. Within the EIAs, there were 72,289 pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at KS2 in 2019, according to the analysis. However, in areas outside the EIAs, there were 107,067 pupils who did not meet those standards three years ago.

**Covid and finance**

* The DfE has updated “**COVID-19 12 to 15 vaccination programme funding** for schools: conditions of funding”. Allocation of funding and terms and conditions for schools and other eligible settings for 12 to 15 vaccination programme funding. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-12-to-15-vaccination-programme-funding-for-schools-conditions-of-funding>
* ESFA has updated “**Coronavirus (COVID-19) workforce fund for schools** **and colleges**” How to submit a claim for eligible costs related to staff absences during the period 22 November 2021 to 8 April 2022. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-workforce-fund-for-schools-and-colleges>
* ESFA has issued “**Coronavirus (COVID-19) mass testing funding for schools and colleges**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-mass-testing-funding-for-schools-and-colleges>
* ESFA has issued “**Coronavirus (COVID-19) recovery premium funding: allocations**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-recovery-premium-funding-allocations>

**ITT and Early years teaching**

* Ian Bauckham who chaired the recent review of the initial teacher training market said criticism of the new **Early Years teaching policy** was “being heard”, and those in power were “looking at how they can streamline and make sure that what we are asking mentors and early career teachers to do is reasonable and manageable given other workloads”.
* **Almost half of the initial teacher training (ITT) age phase partnerships have been rated less than "good" under Ofsted's new framework** since inspections began last year, based on the published reports so far. However, the most recent batch of published reports shows a more positive picture for the sector with a clear majority of partnerships getting "good" judgements. So far, 21 out of the 46 (46 per cent) age phases inspected by the watchdog have been graded below "good" since inspections began under the new Ofsted framework in May 2021. Of the 35 providers that have been inspected under the current framework, 14 (40 per cent) had a less than "good" judgement for all or part of their provision. Of the 21 inspection judgements that were less than "good", 14 age phase partnerships received "requires improvement" grades and seven were judged as "inadequate". A further 23 were judged as "good" and two as "outstanding". The latest 10 published ITE inspection reports saw seven receive "good" grades, two receive "requires improvement" grades and one that was graded as "outstanding". The latest published reports are based on inspections that took place in January and February of this year. Before inspections began under the new framework, all initial teacher training providers in the country had been judged to be "good" or "outstanding" by the watchdog at their most recent inspection.

**Schools and universities**

* **Cambridge University** has dropped its high entry requirements to offer 52 **students from disadvantaged backgrounds** the chance to study at the institution. The university usually requires A\*AA at A level to get on degree courses, but its new one-year foundation course offers places to those who achieve BBB. The Cambridge Foundation Year course will be fully funded. The first intake of students will begin in October and then be given the chance to study for a degree.
* Plans to deny student loans to pupils who fail to achieve grade 4 in their English and maths GCSEs could **deprive around one in four disadvantaged pupils of a university place**, the Institute for Fiscal Studies has warned. Setting a minimum GCSE threshold for student finance would also have excluded almost one in 10 entrants to education degree courses in the middle of the last decade. The think tank analysed the potential impact government proposals would have had on students who sat their GCSEs in 2011 and 2012. They focused on these cohorts so they could observe their degree outcomes. The analysis found that almost one in four undergraduates from those cohorts who were eligible for free school meals at the age of 16 would not have been able to access student loans if a GCSE English and maths requirement was in place. This compares to 9 per cent of state school pupils not eligible for free school meals, and just 5 per cent of private school pupils. The analysis also found a GCSE requirement would have a “much bigger impact” on participation by black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani students than on white British students. While around 7 per cent of white British undergraduates would have been affected, 18 per cent of Bangladeshi and Pakistani students would have been hit, and 23 per cent of black undergraduates. The IfS did find that students who did not achieve the minimum qualifications at school had worse degree outcomes than their peers. But it also found that close to 80 per cent still graduate, with around 40 per cent doing so with a first or upper second class degree. See <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/16039>

**Energy**

* Around one in six headteachers expect their **energy bills** to treble over the next year, with many anticipating cuts to support staff spending, maintenance and school equipment. New survey data from the NAHT found school leaders were anticipating an average 106 per cent increase in costs. But 16 per cent of the 1,000 survey respondents, most of whom work in primary schools, are expecting an increase of over 200 per cent. As a result, 64 per cent are planning to reduce energy consumption, while more than half are cutting investment in school equipment and maintenance. Forty per cent of heads said they would reduce teaching assistants, while 15 per cent said there were reducing the number of teachers, or their hours. Continuing professional development will be reduced for 46 per cent of heads, while a third will cut non-education support and services for children. See <https://www.naht.org.uk/News/Latest-comments/Press-room/ArtMID/558/ArticleID/1648/Rapidly-rising-energy-costs-could-negatively-impact-education-and-hamper-recovery-efforts-say-school-leaders>

**The DfE has changed its tone** on how schools should deal with soaring costs. In February, they claimed that rising bills would have a “relatively small impact” on school budgets, and said they could shoulder “cost pressures” from recent rises in core funding. But now, a spokesperson said the department was “looking carefully at how these rises will impact schools and considering what additional support we could offer”.

**Education news for schools**

* The DfE could face a possible legal challenge over the procurement process for the long-anticipated £121 million **Institute of Teaching** (IoT) contract. The Ambition Institute led consortium, which had bid for the contract, is understood to be considering legal action after DfE named rival School Led Development Trust (SLDT) - comprising the Harris Federation, Outwood Grange Academies Trust, Star Academies and Oasis Community Learning - as the preferred bidder last month; the challenge is focused on the procurement process and not the decision to name SLDT as the preferred bidder
* Children spent a quarter of their time in class **daydreaming**, according to new research from Queen's University Belfast (QUB). The study conducted by the School of Psychology involved 97 children aged six to 11 years old. Results suggest that while daydreaming is inevitable, it can affect the ability to learn. The report said that knowing more about daydreaming in children could help with finding ways to reduce it in school. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-61221195>
* **AQA** has **introduced four new GCSE drama texts by writers from ethnic minority backgrounds**. From September, students studying GCSE drama will be able to study more black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) playwrights, including The Great Wave by Francis Turnly and The Empress by Tanika Gupta. A-level drama students will be able to study The Convert by Danai Gurira and Three Sisters by Inua Ellams. The news follows an announcement from Pearson in 2021 that pupils taking **Edexcel's** GCSE drama qualification would study a **more diverse selection of texts**, including Bola Agbaje's play about race, identity and youth culture, “Gone Too Far!” and the North Korean-based drama “The Free9” by In-Sook Chappell.
* The DfE has updated “**Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts**. Schools and multi-academy trusts (MATs) share their different techniques for improving attendance rates in their settings. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/improving-attendance-good-practice-for-schools-and-multi-academy-trusts>
* **Climate change and the environment** are the two issues that children are most concerned about, according to a survey. According to a survey of parents, environmental concerns outweighed a slew of other concerns, including crime, racial and gender inequality, homelessness, and Brexit.

**Staff health and welfare**

* The **NASUWT** is highlighting the significant toll which the failure of employers and governments to value teachers and provide them with safe and healthy working conditions is having on **teachers’ mental and physical health**. The Union’s recent wellbeing survey of nearly 12,000 teachers found that 91% feel their job has adversely impacted their mental health in the last 12 months and 64% their physical health. As a result of their work, 87% said they have experienced anxiousness in the last year and 81% loss of sleep. 16% said they had undergone counselling, 13% said they have begun using or increased their use of antidepressants and 7% prescription drugs. 3% reported self-harming because of work-related pressures and a further 3% said they had been admitted to hospital in the last year. In addition, teachers continue to face the impact of the pandemic with many teachers getting Covid multiple times as they face workplaces with few, if any, Covid safety measures in place and no access to free tests. Teaching and the education workforce has the second highest prevalence of Long Covid. See <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/article-listing/teachers-unsustainable-mental-physical-toll.html>

**Academies and Trusts**

* The government’s turnaround trust, **Falcon Education Trust** has taken on its third academy 19 months later than planned and its first primary school. The King Solomon International Business School joins Thornaby Academy in Stockton-on-Tees and Royds Academy in Leeds. It had planned before Covid to reach three schools by September 2020.
* An “**orphan” school** left waiting 11 years for a sponsor is due to become an academy next month, as its deficit balloons to £6.3 million. The DfE admitted that intervention in failing schools was too slow, revealing the government has a six-month target for transferring failing academies to stronger trusts. Yet **Hanson School in Bradford** is one of 44 “inadequate” schools currently waiting longer than six months to become academies, raising fresh questions about maintained schools being left behind. Delta Academies Trust is now set to take the school on
* ESFA has issued “**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> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-budget-forecast-return-guide-to-using-the-online-form>

**School management**

* The DfE has updated “**Integrated curriculum and financial planning (ICFP**)”. How schools can use ICFP to create the best curriculum for pupils with available funding. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/integrated-curriculum-and-financial-planning-icfp>
* ESFA has updated “**Incentive payments for hiring a new apprentice**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/incentive-payments-for-hiring-a-new-apprentice>
* The DfE has yet again updated “**Complete the school census**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>
* ESFA has issued “**Local authorities planning calendar**. Important dates for payments, publications, and local authority actions in the 2022 to 2023 financial year”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authorities-planning-calendar>
* The Competition and Markets Authority is investigating whether England’s largest school information management system **(SIMS)** supplier is “abusing a dominant position” to push new three-year contracts onto schools. ESS announced last autumn that it was scrapping its normal one-year rolling contracts in favour of three-year deals from this April, prompting a backlash in schools who felt they had little time to find new deals. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/watchdog-probes-sims-provider-over-abusing-dominant-position/>
* ESFA/DfE have issued:
* **Teachers’ pension grant: 2022 to 2023 allocations**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-pension-grant-2022-to-2023-allocations>
* **Teachers’ pay grant: allocations for 2022 to 2023 financial year,** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-pay-grant-allocations-for-2022-to-2023-financial-year>
* **Teachers' pay grant methodology**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-pay-grant-methodology>
* **Guidance on the pension grant, supplementary fund, and pension funding for local authority centrally employed teachers, and music hubs**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-pension-employer-contribution-grant-tpecg>
* ESFA has issued information for local authorities **on the school improvement monitoring and brokering gran**t. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-improvement-monitoring-and-brokering-grant-allocations>
* For the latest **ESFA Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-27-april-2022>

**Post 16**

* The **Skills and Post-16 Education Act** has now become law. For a summary of its content, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/skills-bill-becomes-law>
* The DfE has issued a collection, “**FE Choices**”. FE Choices provides comparable information to help learners and employers make informed choices about education and training. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fe-choices>
* The DfE has issued findings from the **employer pulse survey** 2021 conducted by the Department for Education in England. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employer-pulse-survey-2021>
* The DfE has issued findings from the **further education (FE) COVID-19 learner and apprentices experience survey** conducted in the 2020 to 2021 academic year. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fe-covid-19-learner-and-apprentices-experience-survey-report>
* ESFA has issued “**16 to 19 funding**: how it works”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-how-it-works>
* ESFA has issued “**16 to 19 funding: maths and English condition of funding**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-maths-and-english-condition-of-funding>
* Britain risks being left behind in the increasingly intense battle for investment from overseas unless it can **improve the level of skills** on offer to foreign firms, according to a report from the Skills Taskforce for Global Britain. It warns that it is no longer enough to base the UK’s appeal on cheap labour, as other countries increasingly use well-trained workers as a magnet to attract companies. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/apr/24/uk-needs-better-skills-to-win-foreign-investment-battle-finds-report>
* ESFA has issued a list of organisations that provide **traineeships**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traineeship-providers>
* The DfE has issued “**Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 16 to 25 in 2021**”. Information on the attainment of young people aged 16 to 25 in 2021, based on matched administrative data. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/level-2-and-3-attainment-by-young-people-aged-16-to-25-in-2021>
* The DfE has issued a collection of statistics on **the attainment of 16- to 19-year-olds in England**, including exam results and performance tables from 2009. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-attainment-at-19-years>
* ESFA has issued **T Levels resources for teachers and careers advisers**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-levels-resources-for-teachers-and-careers-advisers>

**Tony Stephens**