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**157 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Feb 26-March 4 2022**

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**Early years and primary**

* Lee Elliot Major is leading a research project assessing the backgrounds of **children born at the start of the millennium who ended up with less than a “4” at English and maths GCSE.** The researchers have found that three-quarters of children who were struggling in language tests at age three didn’t go on to achieve a pass (grade 4) in maths and English at 16. He says this means they will struggle to read a train timetable or understand a pay slip. He is calling for a public campaign about the importance of parents spending 20 minutes a day reading with their children. “Schools are not a sufficient force in addressing the country’s scandalously high illiteracy and innumeracy rates,” he says, adding that as a minimum it is “absolutely key” for parents to read to their children in the early years. “I think the government has a real opportunity to grasp the nettle by encouraging schools to develop parental engagement plans. Otherwise I fear we will not see much change in the literacy and numeracy levels.” Becky Francis, the chief executive of the Education Endowment Foundation, a charity focusing on removing social inequality, says its research has shown getting parents involved can lead to four months’ progress over the course of a year for pupils. But the catch is there is no clear consensus on what actually works in pulling in parents. “We’ve tested several approaches but the constant message is it’s just really difficult,” she admits. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/feb/26/improving-literacy-means-a-book-or-an-ipad-at-bedtime-say-researchers>
* The DfE has issued “**How to apply to become a mentor, expert or area lead for the early years COVID-19 recovery programme**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-role-in-the-early-years-covid-19-recovery-experts-and-mentors-programmeb>
* In a study released for the 25th anniversary of World Book Day, a survey of more than 800 primary school teachers in January 2022 found that nearly four in 10 teachers (38 per cent) were **having to buy books for the classroom out of their own pocket**. Meanwhile, six in 10 teachers had **no access to new books**. The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) report found that one in four schools (25 per cent) have fewer books than they did before the pandemic, while more than 60 per cent of classrooms have no access to a budget for new books. Furthermore, 17 per cent of teachers said they relied on **donations** in order to update their book stock, while 8 per cent said they never received any new books for their classrooms. Nearly half of those surveyed - 48 per cent - were unable to change books in their classroom during the school year, "meaning the opportunity for children to discover new books and explore their tastes and interests is severely limited", the report said. Most primary school teachers (95 per cent) said they had a **book corner** in their classrooms, but more than half of these (57 per cent) contained fewer than 100 books. "This rises to 84 per cent of classrooms in early years foundation stage (pre-school and Reception) and 73 per cent of classrooms in Year 1," the report said. See <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/news/clpe-research-shows-six-in-10-primary-school-classrooms-have-no-access-to-new-books>
* New findings call into question whether "extensive" **grammar teaching** is helping Y2 pupils' writing, according to researchers. The UCL and University of York academics say today's findings, on one grammar teaching approach, match previous studies "which do not provide enough robust support for extensive grammar teaching as the best way to improve writing". They are calling for an in-depth review of the grammar requirements in England's national curriculum to ensure pupils receive "the teaching of writing they deserve". The findings are an evaluation of Englicious, a web-based resource for teachers, combining grammar teaching and links to writing. Englicious had "effectively no impact" on Year 2 pupils' narrative writing but could help pupils to generate sentences, according to the research paper. The authors suggest the curriculum should focus more on what helps children to develop their writing skills at different points in development, using teaching approaches such as sentence combining, strategy instruction and emphasising the processes of writing. See <https://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2022/research/grammar-teaching-school/>
* **Primary school admissions** will be announced on 19 April this year
* The schools minister Robin Walker has **defended primary school Sats** going ahead this year despite acknowledging that pupils "have missed a critical period of learning" because of the Covid pandemic. He said that national assessments at primary school should go ahead to assess how pupils' education has been impacted by the pandemic
* The DfE has issued its “**Early years census manual**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-early-years-census>

**Student welfare, mental health and safeguarding**

* **Thousands of girls as young as 11 are hiding signs of “deep distress” from their parents and teachers**. An analysis of data from 15,000 secondary pupils by Steer Education points to a worrying new trend of an increasingly stark divide between the mental health of girls and boys. Experts fear this could be a long-lasting result of the Covid crisis. Online responses from 92 state secondary schools in England from before the pandemic up to December 2021 show girls aged 11 were 30% more likely to suffer from poor mental health than boys of the same age. By 18, girls are twice as likely to experience mental health issues as boys. The number of girls who seek to hide their problems from others has also risen, with 60% of girls going to great lengths to hide feelings of unhappiness before the pandemic compared with 80% now. Girls are 33% more likely to experience poor mental health than those the same age as them before the pandemic while boys are 12% more likely to do so. The report suggests girls’ mental health is most at risk between the ages of 14 and 18. Compared with 2018, both boys and girls are 40% less trusting of others, 25% less likely to take risks and 25% less able to choose an appropriate response to life challenges. Between April 2021 and October 2021, the number of children aged under 18 needing care for issues ranging from self-harm to eating disorders had increased by 77% compared with the same period in 2019. See <https://steer.education/girls-mental-health-at-a-precipice-and-increasingly-worse-than-boys-data-shows/>
* The **independent inquiry into child sexual abuse** has produced report which focused on **abuse in residential schools** in England and Wales and found that despite improvements to safeguarding over the last two decades, children continued to be sexually abused, in some cases by teachers who exploit positions of trust. Schools are too often reluctant to report child sexual abuse carried out by staff and pupils, and are sometimes more concerned about preserving their reputation than protecting the interests of children. See <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/reports-recommendations/publications/investigation/residential-schools>

**In the report there are recommendations that apply to all schools and not just residential:**

* The government should introduce “**nationally accredited standards and levels of safeguarding training in schools**”. The highest level of such training should be mandatory for heads or designated safeguarding leads.
* The **Teaching Regulation Agency**, which has the power to ban teachers over misconduct, should have its **remit extended** to cover all teaching assistants, learning support staff and cover supervisors. Current TRA guidance for schools does not make clear enough that safeguarding omissions can be sufficiently serious to constitute misconduct.
* Current guidance on keeping children safe in education should provide more detail on the required supervision needed of **volunteers** in schools, according to the panel. It should make clear DBS checks are free for volunteers and should be used “wherever practicable”. Despite an increasing number of volunteers in schools, they are currently not eligible to be checked for any bans on working with children as they are “not considered to be engaged in a regulated activity”. Enhanced DBS checks are not compulsory.
* Schools should be required to **inform Ofsted** when they refer staff to the **Disclosure and Barring Service or Teaching Regulation Agency**. Current inspection arrangements are “complex and confusing” over safeguarding. Effective inspection is sometimes hampered by the DfE, inspectorates and other agencies not sharing information, and staff also being “parsimonious” with providing information
* The DfE is encouraged to hold an “urgent review” **to improve relationships, sex and health education for children with special education needs and disabilities**, in all settings. The report noted a significant proportion of young victims of harmful sexual behaviour have learning disabilities. There is no separate syllabus or guidance for pupils with SEND in the current RSHE guidance
* The ESFA has updated “Information for eligible state-funded schools and colleges about grant funding for **senior mental health lead training**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-mental-health-lead-training-grant-funding>
* Tens of thousands of children a year are **missing out on vital early help suppor**t, only to be referred again to social care within 12 months, Freedom of Information requests have revealed. The investigation by charity Action for Children highlights at least 320,000 “missed opportunities” to provide early help to children between 2015/16 and 2019/20 – an average of 64,000 children a year. Nine in 10 local authorities report cutting spending on early intervention services between 2015 and 2020. See <https://media.actionforchildren.org.uk/documents/Too_Little_Too_Late_Report_Final.pdf>
* SWGfl and The Marie Collins Foundation have created a **support service for professionals working with children and young people in tackling harmful sexual behaviours**. The support service, funded by the Home Office and in collaboration with the DfE, is available for anyone in England working with children and young people. In particular, resources are aimed at designated safeguarding leads in primary and secondary schools as well as alternative provision. Support is also available to early years practitioners, colleges and wider safeguarding professionals. The service is available by phone between 8am and 8pm Monday – Friday on 0344 2250623 or via email at hsbsupport@swgfl.org.uk .To learn more and stay up to date, sign up to the SWGfl newsletter, <https://swgfl.org.uk/about/subscribe/> and visit The Marie Collins Foundation website, <https://www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk/>
* **FASTN** is a small registered charity with the aim to improve the sustainability of families, no matter what their circumstances. They want connect people and champion the development of relationship skills in childhood that sustain positive relationships for life. This includes how to work with schools. See <https://www.fastn.org/>
* **The Association of Child & Adolescent Mental Health (ACAMH)** has recently launched an initiative aimed at teachers, to enable schools to access and use resources that can make a difference to the mental wellbeing and educational outcomes of young people. See <https://www.acamh.org/>

**Learning recovery**

* School leaders were urged this week to **sign up to the government's National** **Tutoring Programme** to ensure that exam students have access to support. In an email to heads, the DfE said the second half of the spring term is a "crucial time" for **Year 11 and 13** students and schools should sign up to the NTP "as soon as possible so your pupils can receive this help alongside pupils already receiving tutoring in other schools".
* In an email sent to school leaders, Randstad, which runs the National Tutoring Programme (NTP), said it had received feedback that teachers may want to **swap pupils out of a tuition block** once it had started because the full 15-hour course of tuition "is not required." But the DfE’s original contract agreement with Randstad for the operation of the NTP set a target that 95 per cent of pupils who start a 15-hour tuition package under the tuition partners programme must complete the block; this has caused yet more confusion
* **Tutoring providers will no longer have to ensure their catch-up reaches at least two-thirds of poorer pupils** after the target was ditched. Randstad, the for-profit contractor that runs the government’s flagship National Tutoring Programme, said the move would “remove complexities”. This has been heavily criticised. In a letter, tutoring organisations say they believe this has been ditched due to contractor Randstad’s “apparent failure to deliver…and ensure uptake of the programme”. “The programme now fails to focus on the disadvantaged pupils who need this support the most, which was its original aim.” However, a subsequent email sent to school leaders by the DfE said: "The NTP aim is to deliver a minimum of 65 per cent of tuition to disadvantaged pupils in receipt of pupil premium, and this remains a key focus for the programme given the higher learning loss among many disadvantaged pupils." This has caused total confusion. Asked about the confusion, the DfE said that the 65 per cent target for the programme as a whole remained in place, but that it had been removed by Randstad for individual tuition partners
* The DfE has updated “**School-led tutoring grant**. How schools and academy trusts should plan and deliver the national tutoring programme's school-led tutoring to help pupils catch up on missed learning”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-led-tutoring-grant>

**Disadvantaged students**

* The DfE said last month that more than 1,200 schools had signed up to the **national school breakfast programme**, which began last July and runs for two years. However, data released under the Freedom of Information act shows that 772 of those schools already ran breakfast club provision before joining the government scheme. The figures suggest that fewer than 500 schools have set up new clubs since July. Ministers said the new scheme, which has £24 million in funding, would reach “up to 2,500 schools” in disadvantaged areas.
* “**The Cost of the School Day in England**: Pupils’ perspectives” has been published by Child Poverty Action Group and Children North East and is based on the charities’ Cost of the School Day project. Findings include:
	+ Families are often expected to own learning resources for use at home and at school, such as textbooks and IT equipment.
	+ Pupils are financially excluded from full participation in subjects and activities, such as PE, music, swimming, and art.
	+ The costs associated with resources and equipment can restrict pupils' subject choices in secondary school (food technology and art, for example, can be expensive to take).
	+ Some special events like trips, fundraising activities, and celebrations can be out of reach for children in poverty, often causing “great anxiety and financial and social pressure”.
	+ Children in poverty and on free school meals often do not have the same food options as their peers at lunch-times. Many more children miss out on FSM altogether due to “restrictive eligibility criteria”.
	+ Day-to-day practices in schools often unintentionally draw attention to family incomes and make children feel embarrassed and different. These include expensive uniform policies, non-uniform days and requests from schools to bring in material possessions like pencil cases.
	+ Families are borrowing money to pay for school activities like school trips, “not wanting children to lose out on these valuable learning opportunities”.

**Recommendations for schools**

* Plan all teaching, events and activities with affordability and accessibility in mind. Wherever possible, remove or minimise charging for school-related activities. ​
* Explore and review current school costs. Take a holistic view of the school year and determine the cost of full participation in school life. ​
* Ensure that all staff, including non-teaching staff, are aware of the nature, causes, extent and impact of poverty and how to reduce the stigma that children can face in school. ​
* Provide meaningful opportunities for pupils and families to give feedback on their experience of school with a focus on school costs. ​

See <https://cpag.org.uk/projects/cost-school-day>

* The government is investing a new £160 million over three years to build add support for **families adopting children**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-pound-boost-for-new-families-as-adoptions-increase>

**Covid advice and issues**

* **Legal advice on three covid related issues**:
* Can you **refuse to accept a child into school who has tested positive for Covid?** *As with any other infectious disease, such as chicken pox, schools have the right to refuse the entry of a pupil with Covid-19 (or Covid-19 symptoms) if they reasonably believe that this is necessary in order to protect the school community from possible infection.*
* What do you do **if a staff member tests positive but has no symptoms and wants to work**? *With no legal requirement to self-isolate, a member of staff could have a positive test and attend school, although this would be in breach of the UKHSA guidance, Covid-19: people with Covid-19 and their contacts, which clearly states that if you have Covid you should not attend work. Employers have a general duty to protect the health and safety of their employees and, on that basis, it is likely to be a reasonable management instruction to send a staff member home if the school has evidence of a positive test but the individual is in work or attempting to come to work.*
* What happens **if a staff member repeatedly says they have Covid-19 but no test to prove it?** *Generally, employees can self-certify absence for the first seven days of absence, although, in theory, an employer is free to decide what evidence (medical or otherwise) they require from staff and when (although this should be clearly communicated, ideally in the sickness policy). Requesting evidence is also more reasonable where contractual sick pay is available to staff. If an employee is unable to work then the school could request a fit note (for absences greater than seven days) in the usual way or evidence of a positive Covid test*.
* The government updated **guidance for parents and carers who “insist” on children attending with symptoms**. It says pupils with Covid should not attend education settings “while they are infectious”. They should return only after two negative lateral flow tests from the fifth day of symptoms, and only if they feel well enough to do so and do not have a temperature. It informs them schools can still “take the decision to refuse your child if, in their reasonable judgement, it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection”. Similar wording is used in operational guidance for schools themselves, though it says such decisions can be made for pupils with either “confirmed or suspected” cases. There is no explicit reference to symptoms. A line in the advice for parents, but not schools – adds, “Their decision would need to be carefully considered in light of all the circumstances and current public health advice.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak> School leaders meanwhile are told that “in most cases” parents will agree children with symptoms should remain at home. The government has thus left schools to make their own decisions over turning pupils with Covid symptoms away, amid fears of conflict with parents. The NAHT said, schools could not be expected to manage decisions on an individual basis. “Without that clarity, there is a real risk the government could create a chaotic situation in schools and put school leaders in an impossible position.”
* Data released by the Office for National Statistics found **pupils from Reception to Year 7 suffering from long Covid** were around four times more likely to have at least one probable mental illness (30 per cent) than those without long Covid (7.7 per cent). Like primary pupils, secondary school pupils were also more likely to experience mental ill health if they had long Covid (22.6 per cent) compared with those who did not (13.6 per cent). But, unlike for primary pupils, this was not found to be statistically significant. The findings have fuelled calls for "urgent" extra resources for schools to tackle the mental health and wellbeing of pupils.
* The DfE has updated “Guidance for schools and further education (FE) providers on the initial **supply of coronavirus (COVID-19) home testing kits for pupils**, **teachers and staff**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-kits-for-schools-and-fe-providers>

**Public examinations 2022**

* **JCQ support for Examination Officers**
	+ JCQ is will be running a series of **online support sessions** for exams officers. The sessions will cover the role of exams officers in the following:
	+ receiving and checking confidential exam material
	+ before the exam
	+ day of the exam (including invigilation)
	+ ensuring access arrangements are put in place on the day of the exam
	+ contingency planning
	+ avoiding malpractice and/or maladministration

To find out more and register for the **webinars**, see <https://www.jcq.org.uk/events/>

* Over the coming weeks, JCQ be publishing materials such as **blogs and infographics** on key processes. The first blog is on **managing timetable clashes,** see <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/supporting-exams-officers-with-timetable-clashes/>
* JCQ has issued a note on **Timetable clashes involving an AS Further Mathematics, AS Mathematics, A-level Further Mathematics, A-level Mathematics or A-level Statistics examination**. See <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Timetable-clashes-AS-A-level-Maths-exams.pdf>
	+ It has updated its unauthorised items poster to include **the ban to both smart and regular watches**. See <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/exam-room-posters/>
	+ **Results for the GCSE Autumn 2021** series were published last Thursday 24th February. See <https://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/>
	+ Now that entries have been submitted for GCSE, AS and A-level qualifications this summer, exam officers should double check with their SENCOs that all **modified paper orders** have been submitted online using AAO.
	+ There may be candidates who need to sit their examinations at home this summer due to a formally diagnosed medical or psychological condition. There may be instances where a centre will need to use additional off-site accommodation this summer due to the size of the cohort or due to building work. If so, then exam officers will need to complete the online **alternative site arrangements** form. This notifies the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. The online alternative site arrangements form is completed using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP). CAP is accessed using any of the awarding bodies’ secure extranet sites. Further information on alternative site arrangements can be found on page 20 of the ‘ICE’ booklet - ‘ICE’ – Instructions for conducting examinations - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications, see <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/>
* Ofqual has issued a collection, “**Resources to help students prepare for exams and assessments**”. A collection of resources, links and documents aimed to help students prepare for their exams and formal assessments. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/resources-to-help-with-test-anxiety>
* Ofqual has issued “How to make a **complaint about an exam board, awarding organisation or qualification** regulated by Ofqual”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual/about/complaints-procedure>
* More than 60 per cent of teachers who responded to a Chartered College of Teaching snap poll said the **advance revision aid information provided by exam boards will not be enough to help those most negatively affected by Covid disruption** over the past two years given the regional variations in student and staff absence. The College also called on the government to provide more support to schools to help the most disadvantaged students sitting exams this summer to avoid further widening the attainment gap. See <https://chartered.college/2022/03/03/majority-of-teachers-say-exam-guidance-will-not-mitigate-impact-on-most-disadvantaged/>
* There has been an update to “**Ofqual: rolling update**. Information on qualifications which have been disrupted by coronavirus (COVID-19)”. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-rolling-update>

**School finance**

* Schools’ rising financial surpluses mask “cruel **divides between the haves and the have not**s”, MPs have warned. Schools **reducing staffing, SEND support and narrowing curricula** to maintain their finances risks "damage to children's education". It added that the DfE's decision to change how it calculates pupil **premium funding** allocations means that more deprived schools were "faring worse" than less deprived schools. The department "has little assurance" that the extra £4.7 billion committed for school funding in the 2021 spending review "will be enough to **cover cost pressures** including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic" The government must “thoroughly investigate” both **regional divisions** and the scale of cuts to subjects and staffing, according to a report by parliament’s **Public Accounts Committee**. **Local authority-run** secondary schools among the worst hit. The cross-party group of MPs have made three major recommendations:
* One in 10 maintained schools are in deficit. Official figures show some areas do not have a single school spending more than it receives, but others have as many as 46 per cent in deficit. In 26 areas, more than one in five schools are in the red. The report says maintained secondaries face particular pressure. It recommended: “The department should thoroughly investigate **geographical variation** in the financial health of maintained schools, determine the underlying causes and decide whether some schools or local areas need extra support.”
* MPs said the department had not carried out its own research into the **impact of financial pressures** on school provision, despite a 2019 Ofsted study highlighting cutbacks, and a study must be published
* The committee has echoed a recent National Audit Office call for the government to probe **academy trusts building significant reserves**. MPs noted that almost a quarter of trusts had reserves worth more than a fifth of their annual income in 2019-20. “A significant amount of funding is not being spent on educating pupils currently in school,” they concluded.
* It called for the long-awaited **SEND review** to be published, and said it was "concerned about the financial sustainability of the SEND system - for example, some local authorities are struggling to cover the high costs of places in some private special schools."
* They also raised concerns about the government’s **national funding formula**, introduced in 2018-19 to make the funding of England’s schools more fair and transparent, which has resulted in rebalancing of funds away from deprived schools with a higher proportion of children eligible for free school meals.

See <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmpubacc/650/summary.html>

* The DfE has issued “**Schools’ costs**: technical note. Information to help schools, academies and others understand costs for schools in England”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-costs-technical-note>
* ESFA has issued “Guidance for the **view my financial insights (VMFI) tool** which provides users with insights into the financial position and performance of schools”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trusts-view-my-financial-insights>
* ESFA has issued “The **impact of school resource management advisers** (SRMAs). Find out how the SRMA role can have an impact on improving outcomes for pupils”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-impact-of-school-resource-management-advisers-srmas> <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/two-hackney-schools-set-to-save-15-million-over-3-years>
* The ESFA has updated “**Dedicated schools grant (DSG): 2022 to 2023**”. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-dsg-2022-to-2023>
* ESFA has issued “**Coronavirus (COVID-19) no recourse to public funds**: free school meals. Information about how to make a claim for additional pupil premium funding”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-no-recourse-to-public-funds-free-school-meals>

**Attendance**

* The DfE has updated the case study, “**Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/improving-attendance-good-practice-for-schools-and-multi-academy-trusts> and “**School attendance: guidance for schools”**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>
* The government has announced it will **only collect Covid attendance data from schools once a week from Monday**. In an email to headteachers, the DfE said schools would only need to fill out its educational setting status form weekly on Thursdays. The government will also reduce the number of questions asked, but will still collect data on school closures, attendance and absence rates, cancellation of breakfast or after-school clubs. Data on the use of the National Tutoring Programme, currently collected every three to six weeks, will also continue. The daily form will “remain open” to report school closures, with settings asked to report these on the day they happen. The future use of the form will be reviewed at Easter. In its email to heads, the DfE encouraged more schools to sign up to its pilot of a live attendance tracker, launched in January in a bid to cut absences.

**ITT, ECF and professional qualifications**

* The DfE has updated **“National professional qualifications frameworks**: from autumn 2021”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-frameworks-from-september-2021>
* Ofsted has issued “**Early career framework and national professional qualification inspection framework and handbook**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-career-framework-and-national-professional-qualification-inspection-framework-and-handbook>
* **Full inspections of lead providers of the government’s early career framework and national professional qualifications won’t start until next year**, Ofsted has announced. The watchdog had said it expected to begin inspections this spring. Ofsted said it would instead start monitoring visits in the summer, with full inspections not due to start until the spring of 2023. Only government-funded lead providers will be inspected, though Ofsted will also visit a “sample” of delivery partners, which include schools, academy trusts and teaching school hubs. It will not inspect ECF training in schools that choose to run their own induction programme, or make judgments on the content of ECF and NPQ programmes of education. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-to-inspect-delivery-of-early-career-framework-and-national-professional-qualifications> <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/03/02/new-inspection-framework-lead-providers-ecf-npqs/>
* The DfE has updated “**Mandatory guidance on the criteria that organisations must meet to provide initial teacher training** (ITT) until 31 August 2024”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-criteria> Teacher trainers will be allowed to ask the government to relax requirements for trainees to have taught in at least two schools and for courses to cover four consecutive school years if Covid has got in the way. Various other rules have been relaxed over the period, including a change which allowed trainees to get qualified teacher status based on progress in 2019-20 and 2020-21.
* The DfE has issued “**Monthly statistics on initial teacher training** (ITT) recruitment”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monthly-statistics-on-initial-teacher-training-itt-recruitment>

**Academies and Trusts**

* The government is expected to set an ambition for **all schools to become academies** by 2030 in its upcoming white paper. Nadhim Zahawi previously told leaders he would not set an “arbitrary” deadline, but insiders say the education secretary is keen to see the government’s academies reforms completed within eight years. Ministers are drawing up plans to incentivise schools to convert rather than forcing them. Around 10,000, (45 per cent) of schools are now academies following extensive growth over the past 11 years. Ministers believe that by working with dioceses to convert around 4,000 Christian faith schools, they can raise this figure to around two thirds in the coming years, leaving around 8,000 schools left to transition. The government has already announced plans to consult on moving schools with successive ‘requires improvement’ ratings into “strong” trusts, though it has since emerged that just 155 schools are likely to be affected.

Schools in some parts of England are more than 10 times less likely to be academies as other areas, with great regional variation. For a **detailed survey of the position in different regions**, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/the-schools-resisting-ministers-all-academies-academy-land-ambitions/>

* 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 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>

**Education news for schools**

* **Schools are said to be misusing Ofsted language and “exporting pressure” onto teachers** by judging lessons based on curriculum intent. Teacher Tapp statistics revealed that around one in five teachers reported receiving feedback on curriculum intent following a lesson observation. More than one in 10 have been asked to judge a lesson on its relevance to the curriculum. Curriculum intent was introduced under the 2019 new inspection framework as part of the quality of education judgment. It is described as the extent to which a school’s curriculum “sets out the knowledge and skills that pupils will gain at each stage”. But a 2019 Ofsted blog titled “Busting the ‘intent’ myth”, states that when evaluating intent “inspectors will primarily consider the curriculum leadership provided by senior, subject and curriculum leaders”. It “isn’t the role” of classroom staff to focus on intent and it would be “harmful” for them to focus on this aspect of curriculum. It means “they will be less focused on pedagogy and delivery, and therefore less focused on meeting individual pupil needs
* Schools **are resorting to fundraising after the barrage of recent storms** caused tens of thousands of pounds worth of damage. Leaders warned that the destruction “could have been deadly” had the closures not been put in place. While the cost of most repairs will be covered by insurance, classroom displays, decor and books might not be covered. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/flooded-classrooms-and-collapsed-roofs-schools-count-cost-of-storms/>
* Headteachers are being urged to be more "aware" of students who are **coming out as transgender**, after research showed they are much less likely than other staff to know this is happening. The survey also showed that the majority of headteachers (79 per cent) wanted more help and guidance on how to best support trans students in school. See <https://www.justlikeus.org/blog/2022/02/28/teachers-want-guidance-support-transgender-pupils-research/>
* An expected surge in pupils applying for state secondary school places has failed to materialise in London, Manchester and other parts of England, allowing more families to gain their first choice of schools. The number of **applications for year 7** places in London fell by 1% compared with last year, despite the baby boom of a decade earlier, suggesting that population movements after the Covid pandemic and Brexit remain unsettled. Applications in Kent, Essex Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester were little changed. Other parts of England did see strong increases in demand for places in September, including Birmingham, Cornwall (both up 8%) and Oxfordshire (up 5%). Councils had been braced for an influx of applications as the children of the baby boom of 2010-11 come to the end of primary school this summer and will transfer to secondary schools in autumn. For more details, see <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/mar/01/no-year-7-surge-as-school-first-choices-rise-in-parts-of-england>
* The **NFER** has issued a review of recent research and thought leadership pieces on future employment skills suggests **problem-solving, critical thinking and communication** will become increasingly essential in the next 15 years as technology becomes more embedded in the workforce. The research highlights that to help current and future students flourish in the 21st century, England must change its approach to assessment and qualifications. If no change to assessment is made, these problems will persist. The consensus established by the IAC found that a tired, outdated, oversized curriculum leaves little opportunity for the development of the types of skills this NFER research has highlighted will be important for future life and work. See <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/news-events/press-releases/action-needed-to-ensure-future-workers-have-problem-solving-and-critical-thinking-skills/>
* The DfE has updated “**Subject content for modern foreign language GCE AS and A levels for teaching in schools from 2016**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-as-and-a-level-modern-foreign-languages> This is the present curriculum before the changes in 2024
* Former education secretary **Gavin Williamson has been knighted**. Sam Freedman, a former DfE adviser, accused the government of “waiting for a major war to sneak out the knighthood” because of their embarrassment.
* **Teachers at 23 private schools are resuming strike action** over the Girls' Day School Trust's planned pension scheme changes

**School management**

* The DfE has updated “**The risk protection arrangement (RPA) for schools**” Public sector schools can join the risk protection arrangement (RPA), an alternative to commercial insurance, which may save time and money. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa-for-schools>
* For the **latest ESFA Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-2-march-2022>

**Post 16**

* **Changes to student loans** in England announced by the government last week **will hit lower-earning graduates even harder than first feared,** costing them an extra £28,000, according to updated analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies. The IFS had previously calculated that lower- and middle-earning graduates would end up paying an additional £15,000-£19,000 towards their loan over their lifetime as a result of the changes, while the highest earners stood to benefit. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/mar/02/student-loan-changes-hit-lower-earners-harder-than-first-thought-ifs>
* Ofsted has issued “**Further education and skills inspections and outcomes** as at 31 August 2021”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2021>
* The DfE has issued “**NEET age 16 to 24: 2021**”. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/neet-age-16-to-24-2021> The not in education, employment or training (NEET) rate decreased for the overall 16-24 age group at the end of 2021 to 10.5%, the lowest in the series. The fall is driven by a decrease in the NEET rate for those of post-compulsory education age 18-24 to 12.6%, the lowest in the series. The NEET rate for the younger 16-17 group, who have been required to participate in education or training since 2013 legislation, has remained fairly stable in the latest year and is again one of the lowest in the series at 3.0%, with just 4.3% not in education or training. In 2021, nearly a quarter of all 16-24 NEETs were inactive due to being ‘long term or temporarily sick’. This has increased from 2012 when this was one in ten.
* ESFA has listed the **ICT user and related qualifications at level 2 that the Education and Skills Funding Agency will stop funding from 1 August 2022**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/level-2-information-and-communication-technology-ict-user-and-level-2-functional-skills-qualifications-in-ict-with-removed-funding-approval-from-1-a>
* A consultation has been launched seeking views on plans to **reform post-16 qualifications at Level 2 and below**. Qualifications will be streamlined and strengthened so that young people and adults have a clearer choice of options available to them. Employers will play a key role by setting standards that will define the core knowledge, skills and behaviours expected for all technical qualifications at Level 2. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special educational needs or disabilities, who are more likely to take these qualifications, should benefit from higher-quality courses that provide the support they need to fulfil their potential. The current qualifications landscape is confusing with around 8,000 qualifications available at these levels, many of which cover the same or similar subjects. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-post-16-qualifications-at-level-2-and-below> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/post-16-qualifications-boosted-to-help-more-people-to-progress> **For the consultation until** **April 27**, see <https://consult.education.gov.uk/post-16-qualifications-review-team/review-of-post-16-qualifications-at-level-2-and-be/>