

SESLIP AD Education Network Update: April 25th 2024

In Today's Update:

- DfE: Ofsted RE subject report, no change from the DfE on Ofsted one word judgements, National Behaviour Survey update from summer 2023, stats on attainment by age 19, tools to support good behaviour culture in school, ITT additional payments for science and maths in some schools, exclusions and suspensions updated for spring 2023, update secondary accountability guide, updated guide for schools with RAAC, guidance for schools on generating reports on their attendance from DfE data.
- National reports: Characteristics of effective school groupings, CST presents evidence for changes to schools funding, schools reduce staffing in response to budget cutbacks, NAO on early childcare expansion: a significant risk of not working.
- Research: A structured approach to learning through disagreement in the classroom, transitions to the world of work for young people are becoming more turbulent and fragmented, trusted adults improve wellbeing among young people.
- News: MATs raise concerns about inadequate funding from the DfE, court finds in favour of school over prayer ban, interview with DfE's Safety Valve lead, DfE cuts funding to Teaching School Hubs Council, analysis of school absence so far this year, MAT CEO calls for less central control & a return to support and challenge, as DfE regional teams expand there are concerns about slow decision-making and duplication, schools having to deal with increasing parental complaints, analysis shows that suspensions & exclusions are higher in 2023-24, Progress 8 over the past 7 years, covid lockdowns likely to impact on results into the 2030s, AI use by Ofsted & Ofqual.

1. DfE:

- Ofsted subject specific report on RE. Findings include: - The RE curriculum is often superficially broad and lacking depth. - In secondary schools, teachers focus too much on what pupils need to know for exams. - That a significant proportion of schools do not meet the statutory requirement to teach religious education at all key stages. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-religious-education>
- In its response to the Education Select Committee's enquiry into Ofsted, the DfE will not change from one word overall judgements, but, with Ofsted, will publish all sub-judgements on its schools performance webpages. The DfE will also not change its double RI and academy order policy. Where the enquiry sought more transparency from Regions Offices, the DfE said that Directors can be questioned by committees but planned no new reporting on impacts or an annual report from each region. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5804/cmselect/cmeduc/689/report.html#>
- National Behaviour Survey report for summer term 2023. The report sheds light on the challenge of consistency in applying school rules and suggests there are some increases in disruptive behaviours in class and in the size of the minority of parents who are not 'generally supportive of the school's behaviour rules', plus there are small decreases in the proportion of students reporting feeling belonging at school and safe at school. To note, this is only the second year of reporting. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-behaviour-survey-reports>
- National statistics on the attainment of level 2 and 3 qualifications by the age of 19 across England, updated for summer 2023. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/level-2-and-3-attainment-by-young-people-aged-19/2022-23>
- Tools to support schools develop their climate and culture of behaviour. Materials include an audit tool, survey for students and staff and an actioning planning tool. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/creating-a-school-behaviour-culture-audit-and-action-planning-tools>

- Guidance on premium payments for teachers who have completed ITT in maths, computing, physics or chemistry for 2024 -2026. Payments range from £3,000 to £6,000 and apply in specified schools (also listed). <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/levelling-up-premium-payments-for-teachers>
- Exclusions and suspensions data updated for spring 2023, showing continuing increases in the rates of exclusions and of suspensions from school. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-exclusions#full-publication-update-history>
- Guidance on secondary accountability measures for 2023-24 that includes the information about progress 8 measures not being provided in next two years (as a result of covid disruption to tests). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6620e69b651136bd0b757d4f/Secondary_accountability_measures_-_2023-2024_guidance_-_April_24.pdf
- Updated guidance for schools with identified RAAC including temporary accommodation, exams and assessments. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reinforced-autoclaved-aerated-concrete-guidance-for-responsible-bodies-and-education-settings-with-confirmed-raac>
- Guidance for schools on using the Monitoring Your School Attendance data tool as part of the VYED service. It sets out the data categories and reports that schools can generate and how comparative information is measured. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitor-your-school-attendance-user-guide> .

2. Reports:

- Drawing on survey information from school leaders this report analyses evidence as relating to effective groupings of schools (not just trusts). There is evidence of diocesan schools being less reflective of local communities than others and of no, one type of school organisation having a qualitative advantage over another. It makes recommendations about financial reporting, school admissions and accountabilities. <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/the-features-of-effective-school-groups/>
- The Confederation of School Trusts report on schools funding. The report calls for the move to National Funding Formula (NFF) going directly to schools should be sped up. Also, NFF should include pupil premium and be for special schools and AP schools, with a protected minimum level of funding. The report also calls for a “national maintenance and rebuilding programme”for schools. It also argues for a strand of funding called 'national policy premium' for all time-limited policy initiatives. <https://cstuk.org.uk/knowledge/discussion-and-policy-papers/funding-futures/>
- This 2024 survey of school leaders reports that the number of schools that have cut back on staffing has increased from last year & year before: 74% of primaries have reduced TAs, as have 51% of secondaries, while 38% of secondary schools have cut teacher numbers. Also nearly half of schools report using some of their pupil premium allocation to cover general costs. <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/school-funding-and-pupil-premium-2024/>
- Report from the National Audit Office about the expansion of early childcare assesses it as a significant risk, particularly provision for children with additional needs, and is critical of the DfE's cancellation of its pilot. Only 9% of LAs currently report confidence that the number of places required will be in place in their area for Sept 2025. <https://www.nao.org.uk/reports/preparations-to-extend-early-years-entitlement-for-working-parents-in-england/>

3. Research:

- Literature review of evidence of the valid role conflict plays in the learning process. The authors go onto introduce Constructive Controversy, a structured and evidence-based approach to creating learning experiences in the classroom where there is disagreement and learning. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/0013189X08330540>
- Comparing the transition to employment and adulthood for young people (up to age 26) born in the late 80s through to those born in 1990. An increasingly turbulent start to their working lives,

characterised by periods of unemployment, part-time employment, and inactivity, was found among those in the sample. Gender is a factor as well, with female school leavers most likely to experience turbulent transitions with longer spells of part-time work and inactivity. The authors argue for better support for young people as they find their way into the world of work, particularly for those from more disadvantaged background (whether graduates or school leavers).

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/psp.2771>

- Evaluation of a 'trusted adult' programme via Football Beyond Borders finds a significant boost to wellbeing among participating young people, as compared to a control group of similar young people facing adversity. The programme provided support within secondary schools for those at risk of exclusion, such as those with poor behaviour records, who had suffered adverse childhood experiences or who have SEND. The programme maintained or slightly increased young people's wellbeing, in contrast to the control group whose wellbeing declined.

<https://www.probonoeconomics.com/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=c7989d9a-133b-4fe9-91da-378511099018>

4. News:

- In response to receive their funding letters for 2024-25 from the DfE, MAT leaders highlight the inadequacy of their funding allocations with insufficient allowance for inflation or the increased cost of utilities. Some MATs have calculated they have little more than 1% 'head room' for staff pay awards and are warning that this is a recipe for further industrial action over the year ahead.

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/any-pay-rise-unaffordable-mat-chiefs-warn-dfe>

- Court finds in favour of London secondary school that instigated a ban on religious observance and prayer by students during breaks in the school day. The court recognised that prayer rituals by a minority of students could undermine the school's value of all students learning and socialising together. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/michaela-school-wins-high-court-battle-over-prayer-ban/>
- Interview with Tony McArdle DfE's lead on SEND Safety Valve agreements with LAs. He is optimistic that the SEND Review will enable the system to reset and improve and is of the opinion that the current crisis is rooted in the implementation of the 2014 SEND Act which set schools, councils, NHS partners and parents against one another. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/people-like-me-were-absent-when-things-were-going-wrong/>
- DfE withdraws funding from the Teaching Schools Hub Council. Reaccredited Teaching School Hubs will continue from September 2024, whilst the Council will decide what its future role will be, if it indeed has one without central funding. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfe-ends-funding-for-teaching-school-hubs-sector-body/>
- Analysis of how school attendance is looking across autumn and spring this year as compared to 2022-23 and pre-covid. There are some small improvements in both overall attendance and small reductions in persistent absence. Levels of absence remain significantly above those in 2018-19. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/04/pupil-absence-in-spring-term-2024/>
- Leader of a large MAT calls for a reset of education with less central control and tinkering, combined with the resources for success. There is a need to rebuild the culture of high challenge and high support for school improvement, with a mixed model across LAs, trusts and bodies like Challenge Partners with headteachers at the table. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/three-core-principles-to-make-better-education-policy/>
- The growing budgets for DfE's regional teams has thrown a spotlight on their scope and many frustrations with the ways they are currently operating. As their remit has grown, sector leaders are raising concerns about slow decision-making, for example about free schools and re-brokering, and duplicating complaint processes and blurring of responsibilities with Ofsted. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/academy-commissioner-costs-soar-by-40-in-a-year/>

- A poll of school leaders suggests schools and trusts are facing increasing numbers of complaints, often fuelled by social media. Schools are training senior staff in best practice in dealing with complaints. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/schools-train-senior-leaders-tackle-rising-parental-complaints>
- Analysis of trends in suspensions and exclusions, drawing on DfE's data for the whole of 2022-23 compared to a representative sample of schools for 2023-24. The piece indicates the number of pupils subject to suspension and exclusion has increased, that this disproportionately affects disadvantaged pupils (eg 15% of year 9 and 10s who are disadvantaged) and the peak year group is now year 10 (previously year 9). <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/04/exclusion-rates-in-autumn-and-spring-term-2023-24/>
- Some analysis of progress 8 trends in schools between 2016 (commencement) and 2023. Including analysis by region, school type and disadvantage intake. The strongest trend is schools with the most disadvantaged intakes showed the largest fall in P8 between 2016 and 2023. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/04/changes-in-schools-progress-8-scores-over-time/>
- Article about research exploring the long tail of Covid-19 for schools. The uneven affects of school closures on pupils, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are predicted to feature through into the 2030s unless more measures are taken to address them. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/gcse-results-will-suffer-well-into-2030s-due-to-covid-study/> plus link to the research paper: <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/A-generation-at-risk-rebalancing-education-in-the-post-pandemic-era.pdf>
- Ofsted and Ofqual publish their approaches to the future use of AI in their regulatory roles. Ofsted will train inspectors in the use of AI and expects to use it to risk assess schools before inspection, whilst Ofqual requires exam boards to set out how they rule out AI malpractice and do not permit marking exams solely with AI. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ofsted-to-explore-how-ai-can-help-it-make-better-decisions/>