

SESLIP AD Education Network Update:

April 25th 2025

In Today's Update:

- DfE: Education outcomes for CIN (2024), level 2 & 3 attainment up to the age of 25, DfE information for schools including claiming non-domestic rate relief, guidance about supporting the children of military service personnel, updates to high needs funding operational guides, statistics comparing the rates of suspension and exclusion in spring 2023 and 2024, post-16 settings funding guidance.
- Reports: Children's Commissioner report on mobile phone use and policies in schools, use of pupil premium under pressure due to wider budget constraints, summary of reasons for changes to teacher pension scheme, the state of local government report 2025.
- Research: Paper exploring the reported sense of safety in school of year 9s finds a marked decline since before covid (40% to 26%) with an even steeper decline for female students.
- News: Children's Commissioner is critical of Ofcom's online safety regulations, interview with the incoming president of ADCS talking about SEND deficits and working with academies, young person's reflections on their experiences of school during the pandemic, interview with SofS, DfE is committed to updating gender guidance this year, early themes from the Education Select Committee enquiry into SEND, 3.2% pay award offer for support staff, new leader for NASUWT voted in.

1. DfE:

- Education outcomes for children in need (CIN) for 2024. The data show an increasing proportion are subject to suspension (between 14% & 16%, compared to 3.7% of all pupils) and permanent exclusions are now at a higher rate than in 2017-18. Increasing numbers are also issued with an EHCP or have SEN support. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/outcomes-for-children-in-need-including-children-looked-after-by-local-authorities-in-england/2024>
- Level 2 and 3 qualification attained by age 25, for the period to 2023-24. Reflecting the effects on exam assessments during the periods of lockdown, the attainment levels for 19 year olds are noticeably higher than the average in these data. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/level-2-and-3-attainment-by-young-people-aged-19/2023-24>
- DfE weekly update for LAs, including information about claiming non-domestic rates, 2025-26 funding for pupil premium, high needs and on schemes for financing schools. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfe-update-2-april-2025/dfe-update-local-authorities-2-april-2025>
- Service families' children in school: guidance for schools and LAs about good practice in meeting the education and wellbeing needs of service children. There are approximately 78,000 current or former service children in state schools in England. It includes practical advice on communicating with military bases and on transfer of pupil data, since service children are more likely to need to move school. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/service-pupils-in-schools-non-statutory-guidance/service-pupils-in-schools-non-statutory-guidance>
- Updated high needs funding operational guidance for 2025-26, which includes details about the core schools budget grant including the additional allocation towards employers' NIC. Also updated are operational guides for place planning and payments, including changes that have implications for the minimum funding guarantee. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2025-to-2026>
- Information about the changes to member contributions to the teachers' pension scheme from 2025. It offers a summary of the legislation and the reasons for the changes. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-teachers-pension-scheme-member-contribution-rate-changes-2025>
- Attached list of the 300 schools receiving capital grants towards opening new nursery provision.

- Comparative data about suspensions and exclusions for spring 2023 to spring 2024. The statistics show that suspensions increased by 12% year on year, and this is almost double the level reported prior to the covid pandemic. London and the South-east are the regions with the lowest levels of permanent exclusions. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions-in-england-spring-term-2023-to-2024>
- Funding for 16 - 19 settings for 2025-26, including information about a grant for colleges towards the cost of employer NI contributions. The funding rates for T-level providers are also set out. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-information-for-2025-to-2026>

2. Reports:

- Report from Children's Commissioner about school policies governing students use of mobile phones confirms that 90% of secondaries and nearly all primary schools have policies severely restricting the use of mobile phones during the school day, with practical adaptations to personal circumstances. It also recommends that more progress is made on online safety beyond the school gates, because schools report concerns about the online harms their children are facing but they can only do so much to keep children safe online. The publication is based on responses to a national survey of schools and colleges in 2024. <https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2025/04/cco-school-survey-smartphone-policies.pdf>
- The Sutton Trust's annual survey of schools and their use of pupil premium finds the funding is under pressure due to wider financial constraints and falls short of the support leaders want to offer pupils. One in three leaders also reported reducing amounts they are spending on trips and extra-curricular activities. <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/school-funding-and-pupil-premium-2025/>
- Findings from the state of local government survey 2025. Overall respondents were relatively agnostic about whether services are better or worse, but the level of understanding about the workings of local government are quite low, including about current devolution proposals. <https://lgiu.org/publication/state-of-the-locals-2025-2/>

3. Research

- Exploring the extent pupils engagement and feeling of safety decline as they get older and how this compares with other European countries (using TIMSS data). Among year 9s, feeling safe at school has declined from 40% up to 2019 to 26% in 2023. There has been a similar decline across Europe, but, overall, England is amongst the highest and girls in year 9 report a 10% lower sense of safety than boys. <https://repec-cepeo.ucl.ac.uk/cepeow/cepeowp25-03.pdf>

4. News:

- The Children's Commissioner criticises OFCOM's rules to protect children under the Online Safety Act as too weak and puts the onus unfairly on children and parents, rather than media platforms. <https://www.thetimes.com/uk/technology-uk/article/ofcom-puts-tech-firms-above-child-safety-childrens-commissioner-says-vlsw9g6kr>
- The in-coming president of ADCS, Rachel Wardell, highlights that LAs want to work constructively with all schools including academies. She emphasises that schools should be located where child populations are and that the Government needs to address the accumulation of SEND deficits by these being returned to the national balance sheet, a part of wide-ranging reform to the SEND system. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/interview-were-not-interested-in-making-life-difficult-for-academies/>
- Reflections on the experiences of covid-19 restrictions, then and now, from a young person who was in year 11 for the first lockdown and has been participating in the COSMO study. Both the positives of some experiences and a sense of lasting anxieties and uncertainties come through. <https://cosmostudy.uk/latest/one-of-millions-alexanders-covid-19-story>
- Wide ranging interview with the SofS Bridget Phillipson. She highlights that change is important to her and she won't be held back by private schools 'crying wolf' over VAT on fees or threats of industrial

action from teaching unions. <https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/private-schools-cried-wolf-over-vat-fees-education-secretary-says-3637496>

- DfE is committed to publish revised gender-questioning guidance for schools this year to provide necessary clarity following the Supreme Court's judgement about the Equalities Act and sex as a protected characteristic. The piece also reminds that the judgement continues to affirm that trans members of school communities should be afforded protections. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfc-commits-to-trans-guidance-this-year-after-supreme-court-ruling/>
- The chair of the HoC Education Select Committee describes early findings from their enquiry about the education of children with SEND. These include a clear sense that many parents have little or no trust in the current system, whilst too many teachers lack sufficient capabilities to teach those with additional needs and the accountability arrangements for health and education are not strong enough. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/general/what-mps-have-learned-send-support-inquiry>
- School support staff are to be offered a pay award of 3.2% this year, which is higher than that likely to be recommended for teachers. Unions will meet in early May to discuss the offer and make a recommendation to their members. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-support-staff-offered-3-2-pay-rise/>
- Former Fire Brigades Union general secretary confirmed as the next leader of the NASUWT. Despite being close to the general secretary of the NEU, the conference confirmed there are no plans to explore mergers. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/matt-wrack-confirmed-as-next-nasuwt-general-secretary/>
-