

SESLIP Education Network Update: November 7th 2025

From SESLIP:

- Date to hold: Ofsted SE are planning a workshop for Education Directors and school improvement leaders on **Dec 8th** in their offices in London, to update on the progress with the new inspections frameworks and report cards, following the pilot inspections due in Nov and Dec.
- A report about the SESLIP Courageous Conversations that have taken place over the past academic year is available here: [SEND Courageous Conversations Evaluation Report](#)

In Today's Update:

- DfE: Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper is published and consultation on new post-16 vocational pathway, Curriculum and Assessment Review publishes its final report plus the DfE's response, proposed changes to Progress 8 measure to allow for more breadth of subject, DfE evidence on teachers pay, survey about SEN units from CDC (for schools), SofS's letter about delay to Schools white paper, school uniforms policy guidance, LA home-school transport expenditure, finance allocations for post-16, new compulsory reading test announced, guide to access DfE's GLD tool.
- Reports: Exploring the affect of low income / poverty on families with a child with SEND, review of teachers' experiences of CPD over the past year finds a still quite patchy offer in schools.
- Research: Analysis of school pupil premium statements, research about delayed admissions for summer-born children both LA practice and parents' reasons.
- News: Moving schools builds in a significant error factor in current severe absence data, SofS speaks to CST conference, exploring the scale of MAT finance difficulties, CEO criticises market for education as undermining inclusion, looking at 2025 performance data and best-fit in the absence of Progress 8, further constraint on MAT financial decisions, article about the survey responses for the White Working Class Education enquiry, how falling rolls is affecting primary school finances, investigation into children's online game Roblox, opinion piece: a more effective approach to 'stuck schools'.

1. DfE:

- Government has published the post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, following the Prime Minister's recent announcements. It offers further policy information about reforming the identification and support for young people who are NEET or at risk of being NEET and linking to a new Youth Guarantee scheme. There will be new systems for monitoring attendance of young people at college and to support and expect schools to target support for students at risk of being NEET. A headline target is for two-thirds of young people to participate in higher-level learning – academic, technical, or apprenticeships – by age 25 by 2040.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68f518ee06e6515f7914c7ce/Post-16_Education_and_Skills_white_paper_Accessible_Version.pdf
- Consultation about the development of a third, vocational pathway at level 3 and two new pathways at level 2 for post-16. Consultation closes on 12th January 2026.
<https://consult.education.gov.uk/technical-education-and-qualifications-reform/post-16-level-3-and-below-pathways/>
- The final report of the Curriculum and Assessment Review has been published here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-and-assessment-review-final-report> .
Among the commitment the DfE has made in response are: to introduce a new national curriculum from 2028, scrap the EBacc league table measure, make citizenship compulsory in primary schools, force all secondaries to offer triple science GCSE and introduce an oracy framework to sit alongside reading & writing. Government response to the Review is here:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/690b2a4a14b040dfe82922ea/Government_response_to_the_Curriculum_and_Assessment_Review.pdf

- Changes to Progress 8 measure: DfE publishes its proposed change to P8, over-and-above removal of the EBacc, it adds a set of 'buckets' for breadth of the curriculum to enable greater recognition of attainment in arts and/or humanities and/or vocational subjects. DfE will consult in the spring and publish its response and detailed proposal in summer 2026.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/690a8e5388a98da87e2922cb/Progress_8_and_Attainment_8_-_an_explanation_of_the_proposed_improved_model.pdf
- Government's evidence to the School Teachers' Review Body and their view is that a 6.5 per cent pay award over 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29 would be appropriate. Whilst the unions are already flagging their view of this amounting to a real terms pay cut. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-to-the-strb-2026-pay-award-for-teachers-and-leaders>
- The DfE have commissioned the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) and nasen to develop guidance to help mainstream settings deliver high quality support for children and young people accessing SEN units, resourced provision, and pupil support units (SU/RP/PSUs). The following survey seeks detailed information from schools on use of SU/RP/PSUs, views on what high quality practice looks like and the role that SU/RP/PSUs play in creating a more inclusive mainstream school.
<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=VXPIrZziGUWVT5XjXHdheL5o0w84n7VImugml6ywly9UQzVKVURVTjNGSTE2RkRFUTIFVFZYRINWNS4u&route>
- SofS's letter to the Education Select Committee setting out reasons for postponement of the Schools White Paper, largely to allow more time to shape and consult upon SEND reforms.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68f8da406a52e8a2726dc2a3/DfE_SoS_letter_to_the_ESC_22102025.pdf
- New guidance about school uniforms and limiting the costs for pupils. It sets out how schools must publish their uniforms policy and schools should limit the number of compulsory branded items of uniform and PE kit. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms/cost-of-school-uniforms>
- Data on LA expenditure on home-to-school transport for 2024-25 for pre-16 pupils and for post-16 learners who are receiving transport to education or LA-funded training. This was a voluntary data return in Feb/March 2025, with about 75% of LAs sending in a response. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/home-to-school-transport-la-data-collection/2024-25>
- Funding allocations from the DfE for all 16 - 19 providers; schools, FE colleges and other institutions. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2025-to-2026>
- SofS announces that there will be a compulsory reading test for all students in year 8. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/focus-on-reading-in-secondary-years-to-drive-up-standards>
- Guidance on access to the DfE's Good Level of Development tool. In particular how to use the function that enables comparative data to be accessed. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/compare-your-good-level-of-development-gld-data>

2. Reports:

- The Sutton Trust draws on its own survey of 4,000 parents and wider data to explore the relationship between poverty and SEND. It comes to the conclusion that policy makers should take into consideration more strongly the socioeconomic push and pull factors that affect children with SEND disproportionately as well as their experiences of school. <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Sutton-Trust-Double-Disadvantage.pdf>
- Report about teacher CPD based on a weighted sample of teachers and senior leaders finds just over a third felt their CPD during the past year had not helped them to perform their job better whilst about half reported having accessed 3 or more days of formal CPD in the past year. All participants broadly agree CPD supports whole-school improvement; however, senior leaders were consistently more positive than teachers about its impact on pedagogical skills, class management and pupil outcomes.

CPD focused on workload and wellbeing was seen as most positive about retention / staying at their school. https://tdtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/CPD_Report_Digital.pdf

3. Research

- Research analysing over 1,200 schools' Pupil Premium statements and the most frequent priorities and strategies cited by schools. The challenges faced by pupils that were listed most often were: English / literacy, attendance and SEMH needs. Budgets were mostly given over to targeted academic support and high-quality teaching; staff training and additional tuition were also listed as regular strategies.
https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/projects/pupil_premium_statment_research - 2024-25 - research_report_v.1.1.0.pdf
- Updated research for the DfE about delayed admissions to Reception for summer-born children, both LA practices and the views and reasons stated by parents who seek a delay. 85% of LAs responded during the period Mar-Apr 2025 and 600 parents from within 29 LAs responded to the survey. Delayed admissions accounts for 1.6% of the total admissions to primary, and LAs reported 95% of requests being agreed to. About a third of the children had been identified as having SEND.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69020395e6e3290939a1d0e1/Delayed_admission_for_summer_born_pupils_2025.pdf

4. News:

- Some analysis of severe absence (SA) data, which suggests there is some nuance hidden within the headline number of 170,000 pupils who are SA. A subset of data highlights that a significant minority are not on their school roll for the full year; more than half of pupils who were SA were on roll at their school for less than 14 weeks; many because they moved school. The article makes the case for some changes to data to improve accuracy. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2025/10/how-many-pupils-really-are-severely-absent/>
- SofS speaking to the CST Annual Conference chooses to highlight working with parents to set behaviour expectations early. She also raises her concerns about protecting young men from online hate and radicalisation. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/schools-white-paper-will-focus-on-setting-expectations-on-behaviour/>
- Article investigating the scale of the problem of the number of academy trusts with deficits or financial concerns flagged by auditors. From FOI information as many as 75 trusts fall into this group and standalone trusts over-represented among them and views are expressed that this is a factor underlying the DfE's drive to merge with larger MATs. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/academy-schools-in-groups-plan-explored-as-sats-deficits-mount/>
- Leading trust CEO states that marketisation of education has worked to undermine inclusion. He also asks why schools are judged on the performance of students at 16 and whether outcomes at age 25 could better measure the system's effectiveness as well as calling for Ofsted to take a school's intake into account during inspections. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/specialist-sector/hyper-competition-among-schools-weakens-inclusion-leader-warns>
- More detailed analysis of the 2025 attainment data and measures such as attainment 8. Without Progress 8 for comparison the article states the least worst option is to compare a school with data from other similar schools. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2025/10/making-sense-of-school-performance-data-in-2025/>
- Discussion on a category of financial transactions for MATs that updated guidance from DfE is indicating they expect trusts to consult on more often with the Dept. These "novel, contentious or repercussive" transactions also suggest another aspect where the government is seeking a more joined up schools system. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/why-a-small-funding-rule-update-is-another-leash-on-academy-freedoms/>

- Analysis of polling from the Enquiry into White Working Class and Education, based on a structured sample of 2,000 CYP and 2,000 parents. The young people stated they were much less likely to find school enjoyable than the rest of their peer group and about half of the parents reported significant disillusionment with their children's school by year 11. <https://www.publicfirst.co.uk/white-working-class-education-survey-results-published.html>
- Article sharing some analysis about the potential financial implications for primary phase schools of the continuing decline in pupil numbers and, for many schools, numbers on roll. The data reinforces what we already know about pressures on school budgets. The impact on school closures / mergers for the period Jan - Dec 2024, was: five primary school closures and five primary school mergers across the 10 London LAs that have experienced the greatest decline in pupil numbers; and three closures and one merger in the 10 non-London LAs with the largest declines (compared to 1.3 primary closures and 0.9 mergers for every 10 LAs in England). <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/blogs/pupil-numbers-and-school-finances-what-do-we-know-about-how-demographic-change-is-impacting-on-schools/>
- Investigation into the huge online game platform Roblox, which has over 100 million active daily users about half of whom are under 13. Although claiming to have robust e-safety the journalist's 8 year old avatar is able to access inappropriate games and online experiences, such as verbal or physical assaults on their avatar. <https://www.theguardian.com/games/2025/nov/05/roblox-game-robux-children-child-kids-safety-parental-controls>
- Opinion piece from a trust CEO about how the current framing of 'stuck schools' and how to address concerns are misplaced. Context is key: not unsurprisingly most stuck schools are located on the peripheries; in coastal or post-industrial towns and isolated from educational and wider employment opportunities. Their leaders need to be supported to take risks and be part of a supportive school eco-system, rather than working in isolation. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/why-weve-got-stuck-schools-all-wrong/>
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