

## SESLIP Education Network Update: December 5<sup>th</sup> 2025

### From SESLIP:

- Attached is a letter from DfE Regions SE, from Kate Dethridge in response to concerns raised via SEADCS about school place planning and falling rolls and the unequal position between academy trusts and maintained schools.

### In Today's Update:

- DfE: Working lives of teachers report, QA framework and maturity scales guidance, Ofsted publishes its 2024-25 annual report, Government's Child Poverty Strategy is published, finance and asset management resources for schools, analysis of reasons for use of 'other' code for AP by schools and LAs, LA GLD reports, ECT guidance and grant funding, case studies about breakfast clubs, maintained school governance guide, evaluation of the PINS programme.
- Reports: Report highlighting the collaborative impact of education partnerships, policy-lab paper setting out ideas for schools to be better placed to support the education of children from poorer and more disadvantaged communities, case studies of schools and they seek to improve engagement from their pupils, NFER on future employment patterns and the skills students will require, Children's Commissioner's report on special school and AP, IFS paper about falling school rolls and importance of strategic place planning.
- Research: Research about the levels of internal isolation in secondary schools, analysis and modelling for school admissions with the goal of more successful schools being more easily access by children from low income households, schools acting on challenges set out in 'Mind the Engagement Gap', report on future employment (2035 onwards) calls for a focus on essential employment skills.
- News: SEND funding override will happen in 2028 and funding passed to the DfE to manage (not LAs), investigation into how DfE targeted RISE funds are being spent (incl listing the 30 schools that have received >£200,000), NAHT judicial review against Ofsted ends, ASCL blog piece on leaders' experiences from the volunteer inspections, concerns about LAs oversight of EHE, continuing teething troubles with automated DfE attendance reports, DfE regional SEND consultations with parents, local mayoral elections have been postponed to May 2028.

#### 1. DfE:

- Nov 2025 working lives of teachers and leaders report. It provides some analysis of the balance of tasks undertaken by teachers. There is evidence of some increase in access to flexible working and an increase to the proportion of teachers who are satisfied with their pay (38%) and with their job (54%).  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6926d07cce50d215cae95fed/Working\\_lives\\_of\\_teachers\\_and\\_leaders\\_-\\_wave\\_4\\_summary\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6926d07cce50d215cae95fed/Working_lives_of_teachers_and_leaders_-_wave_4_summary_report.pdf)
- Guidance for the DfE's quality assurance maturity model and framework, as discussed at the Network meeting. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/analytical-quality-assurance-at-the-department-for-education>
- Ofsted annual report 2024-25. On SEND area inspections, Ofsted commented that areas too often had multiple missed opportunities to identify children's needs early before prolonged absences occurred and so missed the chance to arrange support that could have helped them stay in school. Some areas also lacked robust processes or capacity to oversee children who were not in school. Ofsted also remain concerned that high numbers of children do not attend school on a full-time, permanent basis and there is increasing use of flexi-schooling.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6929d2b9a245b0985f0342ed/Ofsted\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2024-25.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6929d2b9a245b0985f0342ed/Ofsted_Annual_Report_2024-25.pdf)

- Cross-departmental Child Poverty Strategy is published. Among the commitments is a new legal duty for LAs to notify schools when a child is placed in temporary accommodation (amendment to the Children's Wellbeing & Schools Bill) as part of reducing days of schooling lost by children in temporary accommodation (currently 172,000 children).  
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6931e272502f392086ee8c5d/child-poverty-strategy.pdf>
- Collection of resources from the DfE to support schools and trusts with the effective management of their finances and assets, including workforce planning, estate management and procurement. Specifically it includes a framework for supply teachers which schools will be expected to use with the cap on agency charging rates. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/maximising-value-for-pupils-guidance-for-schools-and-trusts>
- Report analysing the use of 'other' codes when placing in AP and the reasons for the choice of the code, both for pupils with an EHCP and for majority of those placed by school or LA.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6926ea55a245b0985f0340a9/Use\\_of\\_the\\_code\\_Other\\_in\\_Alternative\\_Provision\\_placement\\_reasons.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6926ea55a245b0985f0340a9/Use_of_the_code_Other_in_Alternative_Provision_placement_reasons.pdf)
- Update to the early years GLD guidance, including how to access LA reports.  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/compare-your-good-level-of-development-gld-data>
- Allocated SEND high need place numbers for 2025-26.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-allocated-place-numbers>
- Guidance for supporting early career teachers (ECTs) together with grant funding to support the provision of mentoring and time off timetable.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-for-time-off-timetable-for-early-career-teachers-and-mentors-who-participated-in-the-national-roll-out-of-the-early-career-framework-reforms>
- Case studies of schools from different phases setting up breakfast clubs.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/free-breakfast-clubs-school-case-studies>
- Latest iteration of the maintained school governance guide, which has moved to digital publication. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maintained-schools-governance-guide/maintained-schools-governance-guide>. Together with the latest suite of governance resources, with an updated recruitment guide. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/effective-governance-resources>
- Interim evaluation report of the partnership for inclusion of neurodiversity at schools (PINS) programme. Whilst modest impacts were noted, the roll out faced implementation difficulties with many schools only being able to access some aspects of support.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69247a90f2b88d41c7ba7ed5/FINAL\\_Partnerships\\_for\\_Inclusion\\_of\\_Neurodiversity\\_in\\_Schools\\_PINS\\_interim\\_evaluation\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69247a90f2b88d41c7ba7ed5/FINAL_Partnerships_for_Inclusion_of_Neurodiversity_in_Schools_PINS_interim_evaluation_report.pdf)

## **2. Reports:**

- Report by the Association of Education Partnerships shares the work of several of the local education partnerships, which involve schools – both maintained and academies – in partnership with LAs and given a delegated mandate on aspects like school improvement, professional development, boosting inclusion. Strategically the report highlights that partnerships can bridge the fragmentation of the middle tier of education and ensure a place-based approach to education with a shared and collaborative moral purpose. <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/d1a1f3d55d.html>
- UCL policy-lab discussion paper about why schools fail poor students and what actions can be taken to address this. Among its proposals are to replace the current accountability system with one which rewards schools for tackling disadvantage with drive and energy, and for collaborating with others to maximise impact. It advocates a 'test-learn-grow' model for schools with a set of outcomes linked to better opportunities for poorer pupils and to shift from 'inspection after the event' to modelling excellence supported by research such as that set out by the EEF. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/policy->

[lab/sites/policy\\_lab/files/stop\\_failing\\_poor\\_children\\_-\\_october\\_2025\\_-\\_report\\_by\\_jonathan\\_slater.pdf](#)

- Following the research about the varied level of engagement in learning at schools across their pupil body, this report offers examples of how schools have responded to the findings earlier this year and approaches that have helped to reduce the engagement gap. Key areas for actions by the schools include: engagement is a lead indicator and declines precede declines in attendance, attainment, and wellbeing; transition matters: the sharp national decline between Year 6 and Year 8 can be addressed in school; safety and trust are very important and experienced very differently across a student body, particularly by gender and phase, and is best dealt with through targeted action.  
<https://www.tep.uk/research-and-resources/acting-on-the-engagement-gap-insights-from-the-research-cohort>
- The NFER's large scale report on the skills and learning for future employment opportunities. The report identifies six essential employment skills (EES) that are the key skills for the future and to enable someone to remain reliably employed: communication; collaboration; problem-solving; organising, planning & prioritising; creative thinking and information literacy. This is with the backdrop of employment opportunities being particularly affected by the development of AI.  
<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/skills-imperative-2035-final-report/>
- Children's Commissioner's School Census report on special schools and AP, which includes a call to rename the sectors / phases. The report highlights the additional challenges these phases face with supporting their pupils, including poverty and access to opportunities, including post-16; and for AP in terms of risk around crime and safety. There are some questionable criticisms about AP and 'not knowing all their pupils', which don't appear to take into account the regular movement in and out of AP. <https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2025/12/cc-School-Census-Special-and-alternative-provision.pdf>
- The demographic changes to the child population across the UK: those of compulsory school age will fall by about 6% over the coming decade. The report calls for a coherent process for making decisions on school closures and school places planning: "The current system in England is highly complicated, given the fragmentation of responsibilities across councils, academy trusts and the Department for Education." Although there is optimism the powers for LAs in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill will support improvement. <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/demographic-change-and-schools-across-uk-lessons-history>

### **3. Research**

- University of Manchester research into the prevalence and impact of internal exclusion or isolation in secondary schools, drawn from data from across the city of Manchester. Whilst there are challenges for the analysis, including a lack of agreed definitions of 'internal isolation', that the impacts were based on self-reporting by students and there is no comparative data to draw on, the headline finding that 8.3% of pupils reported being placed in isolation at least once a week, for an average of 8.5 hours, deserves further investigation. Vulnerable student groups, such as those with SEND and eligible for FSM, were disproportionately more likely to have experienced higher levels of internal exclusion.  
<https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/berj.70049>
- University of Bristol research about the inequitable access of poorer families to high quality schools for their children. They use Progress 8 data as a proxy for the more effective schools and highlight that those eligible for FSM are nearly half as likely to attend the more effective secondary schools than their peers. The authors preferred propose reserving 15% of places in each school for FSM pupils, to boost access to top schools for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, as their analysis suggested that this would lead to a lower level of disruption to current patterns of school admissions and could be workable with the religious nature of certain schools. The paper offers a thorough analysis of the challenges and legal framework of school admissions and well thought out academic

modelling of how to engineer change, even if many practicalities are left to one side (such as grammar schools). <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/economics/documents/modifying-school-choice-for-more-equitable-access-in-england-2025.pdf>

#### 4. News:

- The Government's announcement about SEND funding in the Budget: confirmation that the statutory override will end in 2028 and that the costs of SEND funding will then be included in the DfE's budget (not passed to LAs to fund). No further details, including about the treatment of the SEND deficits in individual LAs up to that date. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/government-faces-6bn-send-shortfall-once-override-ends/>
- Investigation of expenditure on RISE by the DfE so far. It find that nearly £19 million of RISE funding over the past two years has been allocated to 126 schools in the first two cohorts of the programme. With an average allocation of £147,000 each, the total cost of the first three cohorts of RISE would be about £32.8 million and then up to £53.8 million if this pattern is repeated across all the schools listed as 'stuck' by the DfE in June. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/revealed-how-rise-money-being-spent>
- The NAHT has not been give leave to appeal against the decision to not allow it to seek judicial review of the new Ofsted inspection framework on grounds of the increase in high-stakes accountability and pressure and workload for heads. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/naht-loses-appeal-against-ofsted-judicial-review-refusal/>
- Article from ASCL on their take on the new schools inspection framework so far. Whilst positive comments on the collaborative approach built into the inspections, inclusion focus and the nominee role, there was also feedback that workload for schools has been higher in terms of preparations and concerns about judgements being drawn from the 'deep dive' into 6 pupils. <https://www.ascl.org.uk/News/Blog/November-2025/Ofsted%E2%80%99s-Renewed-Framework-The-good,-the-bad,-and>
- Article exploring elective home education (EHE) and safeguarding risk concludes that too many LAs do not enable EHE officers sufficient ease of access to records of safeguarding concerns for EHE children. This combined with the lack of capacity in many LAs to pro-actively review the suitability of education provided for children who are EHE, leads to the article questioning the preparedness of LAs to assume responsibilities for an effective register of children not in school. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/safeguarding-risk-data-missing-from-councils-home-education-records/>
- Although updates to recent attendance reports for schools have some potential, there are problems with the comparator schools generated automatically by the platform. Too many comparators are not similar or serve communities far away from the school with the data report. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/leaders-still-facing-problems-with-ai-attendance-reports/>
- Minister to take part in a series of regional conversations with parents about a national support framework for SEND, across early identification, local provision, effective practice and fairness. This all part of testing proposals for reforms of the SENDAP system in England. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/specialist-sector/dfe-public-view-national-send-support-framework>
- LGR delays: mayoral elections in greater Hampshire and greater Sussex have been postponed until May 2028. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yig2r7z9zo>