

## SESLIP Education Network Update:

### January 16<sup>th</sup> 2026

#### From SESLIP:

- Welcome back Happy New Year!
- I attach a slide deck share with us by Amanda Corcoran who is an LA rep on the DfE's RISE Operations Group. It was shared at the first Operations Group meeting in Dec and provides further details about Universal RISE roll-out. We can explore this further at the one-off meeting we have scheduled with DfE Regions Group about Universal RISE on 27th Feb at 10am. I have also met with the South-east rep on the Operations Group; Tony Wilson, Education Director for the Oxford (Anglican) Diocese and proposed on-going communication between him and SESLIP Education Directors.
- Colleagues from the SE19 Network have been meeting with the DfE and have various updates about SEND reforms. In particular that there will be two opportunities over the coming weeks to participate in a presentation about these: at the SE19 SEND Strategic Leads meeting on 21st Jan at noon (link: [https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_M2Y4OWY4OTMtNTdiZi00NGJkLTkxODMtMjdiYzUzMjZiMWM4%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228459d46b-1e6f-4a84-b214-6b0d49d1ddc9%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2213987922-d857-4a6f-acf9-aa786f98c761%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_M2Y4OWY4OTMtNTdiZi00NGJkLTkxODMtMjdiYzUzMjZiMWM4%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228459d46b-1e6f-4a84-b214-6b0d49d1ddc9%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2213987922-d857-4a6f-acf9-aa786f98c761%22%7d)) or at the next SEND Forum on 4th Feb (link: [https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_YWM3M2NjNDktNTdhZC00MTFILtG0YjgtNGNkMmUzMDU0NGM5%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228459d46b-1e6f-4a84-b214-6b0d49d1ddc9%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2213987922-d857-4a6f-acf9-aa786f98c761%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YWM3M2NjNDktNTdhZC00MTFILtG0YjgtNGNkMmUzMDU0NGM5%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%228459d46b-1e6f-4a84-b214-6b0d49d1ddc9%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2213987922-d857-4a6f-acf9-aa786f98c761%22%7d)).

Attached are a DfE update letter about the reforms and their 'Maturity Assessment Tool' that is offered to support self-review by SEND partnerships and to offer a flavour of what to expect when the DfE rolls out their SEND reforms.

#### In Today's Update:

- DfE: EHE and CME stats for 2024-25 and autumn 2025, updated guidance for schools on medical needs is needed, powers proposed to inspect MATs, FE Commissioner's Annual Report, Early Years Provider survey shows increasing involvement of schools.
- Reports: Looking at internal exclusions using school MIS data, analysis of secondary school behaviour policies and correlation with exclusions and school absences.
- News: Funding for SEND reform as part of the white paper, article on the DfE's regional SEND consultative meetings, analysis of school absence data from autumn 2025, discussion the phase profile of MATs - in particular whether the DfE has a view about special schools, interview with shadow education minister, delay to consultation about extending remit of RISE targeted support, Ofsted publishes first report cards under the new school inspections, inclusion project for secondaries to apply to take part in, HMCI on schools controlling mobile phone use.

#### 1. DfE:

- Elective home education (EHE) and children missing education (CME) data for autumn 2025. The EHE data shows a steady increase in the numbers of CYP year on year, by over 10%, and that 7% of EHE children have an EHCP (as compared to 5% across state schools). <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/elective-home-education/2025-26-autumn-term>. There was about a 4% decrease in the number of CYP 'ever CME' during 2024-25 and a small increase in those with an EHC plan: to 8%. It is important to note the range of children who potentially fall under CME and that the largest category CME was for those awaiting a decision about a school application. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-missing-education/2025-26-autumn-term>

- Chair of the Education Select Committee writes to ministers with concerns about continuing delays to updating guidance for schools about their role and responsibilities with pupils requiring medical support. <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/51042/documents/282966/default/>
- DfE amends the Children, Schools and Wellbeing Bill to include powers for Ofsted to inspect MATs and include powers to intervene when trusts are not meeting acceptable standards. The inspections are expected to focus on leadership, governance and impact – including how effectively trusts improve schools, provide high quality education, support staff, use resources and promote pupil wellbeing. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-introduce-academy-trust-inspections> The Bill's policy note has been updated with the rationale behind the proposed powers and the impact it is expected to have. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695e578a8ab0677c14afdfc9/childrens\\_wellbeing\\_and\\_schools\\_bill\\_2024\\_policy\\_summary\\_notes.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695e578a8ab0677c14afdfc9/childrens_wellbeing_and_schools_bill_2024_policy_summary_notes.pdf)
- The FE Commissioner's Annual Report for 2024-25. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/694540e83022cdf03a0eb806/FE\\_Commissioner\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/694540e83022cdf03a0eb806/FE_Commissioner_Annual_Report_2025.pdf)
- Childcare and Early Years Provider survey evidences the increasing part that schools are playing in nursery provision with a small increase in the number of school-based providers in 2025, when, at the same time, there has continued to be a decrease in childminders. It is noticeable that there are higher proportions of school-based providers in areas of deprivation, as a result the South-east reports the lowest proportion (11%) across the country. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/childcare-and-early-years-provider-survey/2025>

## **2. Reports:**

- Analysis by the company that runs the Arbor information system about the use of internal exclusion by schools using its platform (about 1,200 secondaries and 8,500 primaries). 64% of secondaries had used internal exclusion in the previous year, whilst this figure is 5% of primary schools. Their detailed analysis then focuses on only schools that have used internal exclusion. For secondaries 18% of students are recorded as having at least 1 internal exclusion last year and the rates of internal exclusion are on a gradually upward trajectory. The main challenge is that the DfE has no record of internal exclusions, yet it is a feature of school life for thousands of schools. <https://thekeygroup.com/news-insights/how-prevalent-are-internal-exclusions>
- Exploratory analysis of behaviour policies from secondary schools in 3 London boroughs and the extent that the tone and strategies in their policies correlate to levels of suspensions, exclusions and absences. Among strategies correlated with levels of exclusion were punitive approaches to minor infractions, whilst restorative approaches and explicit support for groups of vulnerable learners correlated with lower absence rates. <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/do-behaviour-policies-matter-exploratory-analysis/>

## **3. News:**

- The schools minister confirms to Parliament that the schools white paper would “set out additional funding for both schools and local authorities to drive forward much-needed reform of the SEND system”. For 2025-26 there is still some uncertainty about levels of funding formula and uplifts to HN funding and no announcements yet about historic high needs deficits held by councils. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/extra-send-cash-coming-says-dfe-as-councils-woes-deepen/>
- Reflections on the DfE regional consultation sessions with parents and local practitioners. The minister commented that accountability, greater support for parents and better partnership between health, local authority and schools had been consistent themes. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/send-roadshow-sessions-have-shaped-our-thinking-insists-gould/>

- Article analysing autumn term 2025 attendance data from 10,000 schools. Whilst unauthorised absences were similar to 2024, the second half of last term showed greater illness absence reflecting the earlier than usual 'flu season'. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2026/01/pupil-absence-in-autumn-term-2025-26/>
- Article discussing the lack of strategic steer from the DfE about the make-up of MATs, in particular around specialist provision; is it better placed in specialist trusts or as part of a generalist trust? The only suggestion from the DfE is that it will encourage all schools to be in a "group", though it is not known how this would be defined. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/call-for-ministers-to-settle-debate-over-make-up-of-mats/>
- Interview with shadow education minister where she offers her account of the years of the Rishi Sunak government and the revolving door of Tory secretaries of state. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/baroness-barran-shadow-education-minister/>
- Further consultation by the DfE to extend the remit of its RISE targeted support teams to include schools with low levels of P8 or other low attainment measures, has been pushed back to later this term. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/rise-consultation-pushed-back-to-this-term/>
- Ofsted publishes report cards for the first 22 schools that volunteered to trial the new schools inspections. Some teething issues were made note of during inspections that included: inspectors returning to a school to gather evidence missed in the inspection, some disappointment about the extent contextual information was taken into account and that the new report format was found to not be user friendly by some parents. Some schools testified that the inspection process was more collaborative and transparent and that the nominee role was a positive development. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/ofsted-publishes-first-school-inspection-report-cards>
- Opportunity for secondary schools to apply to take part in a three-year project to test developing Internal Provision or in-school support for students as a way to promote inclusion, reduce suspensions and maintaining learning. The participating schools will also be part of a community of practice to share ideas and approaches and collaborate with developing solutions. <https://the-difference.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/The-Difference-Schools-Partnership-Brochure.pdf>
- Heads are urged to think carefully about mobile phone use in schools by Ofsted's chief inspector and that they are often a distraction and a source of anxiety for students. This aligns with the tone of the inspection toolkit that states: inspectors will assess whether schools "have high expectations for all pupils' attendance, behaviour and attitudes...including expectations related to mobile phones". <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/ofsted-headteachers-need-to-think-about-phones-in-schools>
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