

SESLIP Education Directors Update:

October 30th 2026

From SESLIP:

- As raised in the Education Directors meeting, ERASMUS exchange programmes are open to schools and LAs in the UK once more. There is a registration process that needs to be completed. To do this each interested school or LA needs to register with the European Commission EESCP | Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-esc/organisations/register-my-organisation> . Guidance on ERASMUS and up coming webinars can be found here: <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/events> . UK Government information about the programme is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-erasmus-programme/overview-of-the-erasmus-programme> and about the role of the British Council as the national agency: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/erasmusplus> (Thanks to Yvette Thomas, Bucks for the info)
- The SE Attendance and Engagement Network: flyer about the Network is attached, as requested. Please use the QR link to sign-up and receive more information about future events this term and next. Initiative is led by Southampton City and is funded from their successful bid for a DfE RISE grant.

In Today's Update:

- DfE: Collated guidance for schools on dealing with serious violence, latest EYFS results and 2028 GLD targets, antisemitism in schools report an DfE's response, KS4 provisional performance data, evidence call to support exclusions reform, effective travel assistance to school guidance, commissioner report on SEND services in Slough, 2026-27 teacher pay and conditions guidance, letter to teacher review body about pay floors and ceilings, case studies of approaches to belonging across 16 schools, study of school approaches to inclusive staffing models, DfE SEND training units for schools, early adopter breakfast club schools evaluation report.
- Reports: Report about the variation of access to support and opportunity for children across England, report concludes KS3 lacks clear purpose for schools or learners.
- Research: Who are the 'hidden NEETs'?
- News: LA leaders call for longer-term SEND funding strategy, LAs with deferred LSRPs, modelling the challenge to hit the DfE's attendance targets, AI slop and the negative affects on public services, headteachers' concerns about redundancies and restructuring, confirmation that NC consultation has been delayed, the Budget and schools.

1. DfE:

- Suite of guidance for schools about responding to violent incidents and preventing these. Different sections seek to clarify information sharing, safeguarding including supporting children affected by violence and approaches to preventing violent incidents. The DfE scopes serious violence to include: physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying and criminal exploitation. The DfE aims to assemble existing guidance and procedures in one place to help schools and trusts respond effectively.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-and-preventing-serious-violence-in-education>
- Early years and foundation stage profile results for 2025-26 report continuing increases, with 72.3% children having a good level of development and 70% meeting expected levels in all goals. GLD (54.8%) and expected levels also increased for children eligible for FSMs, and for children with SEND, but the disadvantaged gap has widened. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results/2025-26> . Plus the methodology paper about contextual GLD calculation for information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/contextual-good-level-of-development-gld-score-methodology/contextual-gld-score-methodology> and the 2028

targets for LAs: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-good-level-of-development-gld-targets-2028>

- Report of the independent review of antisemitism in schools and colleges finds that antisemitism is happening relatively frequently, with fellow students the most common perpetrators. Incidents most commonly involved stereotypes, jokes and derogatory comments and pupils who reported incidents expressed a view that only 1 in 4 responses by their school was effective. All 27 recommendations have been accepted by the DfE including: new antisemitism training for school leaders, Ofsted trust inspections will include examining how they oversee schools' handling of discriminatory incidents and that Ofsted should carry out a thematic review on how schools and colleges identify, prevent and respond to antisemitism and other forms of racism and religious prejudice.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-into-antisemitism-in-schools-and-colleges>
- National and LA-level KS4 performance data for schools in 2026 (provisional). The attainment 8 level increased slightly on the previous year, whilst there is no P8 reported because primary SATs were disrupted by Covid-19. The disadvantage gap has reduced this year, the index falling to 3.82 in 2025-26 from 3.92 in 2024-25. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance/2025-26>
- Call for evidence from the DfE for examples of practice and evidence to inform policy as part of the undertaking to reform school exclusions; open until 19 Nov. Themes include: use of internal suspensions, formal reintegration support partnerships and provision of schoolwork up to day-6.
<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-absence-and-exclusions-team/school-exclusion-reform-call-for-evidence/>
- Updated, non-statutory guidance for LAs about travel arrangements and assistance for pupils to attend school or college, particularly those with SEND. It offers ideas and practice vignettes and seeks to align with the developing SEND reforms. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-travel-assistance-guidance-for-local-authorities/delivering-effective-travel-assistance-to-schools-and-colleges-guidance-for-local-authorities>
- Independent commissioners' report on SEND services at Slough Council. In a highly critical report, the commissioners' report lists many historic and current shortcomings and concludes that an alternative delivery model (ADM) should be seriously considered, with plans drawn up over the next three to six months. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/slough-borough-councils-send-service-commissioners-report>
- Teacher pay and conditions guidance for 2026-27. The update includes providing clarity around the frequency of pay progression for upper pay range teachers, to increase flexibility around the use of inset days, to add clarity around expectations of leaders working hours and time, and an update to the TLR provisions to remove the temporary provision made last year.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6ad21656dfa45fcb6753cb0b/School_teachers_pay_and_conditions_document_and_guidance_2026.pdf
- SofS letter to STRB to instruct them to advise about how to introduce a minimum pay floor for all teachers at academies and to removing a pay ceiling for maintained school staff, and flexibility to the 195 day provision in teachers' contracts. The letter also notes that the 'have regard to' duty under the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act will come into force from Sept 2027.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6ada04d5b62d80a107bc5bc5/Letter_from_Lucy_Powell_to_Dr_Mike_Aldred.pdf
- Case study-based research into belonging and schools, setting out key principles and practical strategies used by 16 schools (8 primary and 8 secondary). When pupils were asked to define how they perceive belonging, primary pupils defined it through "tangible, observable experiences" such as buddy systems, while secondary pupils described the "importance of seeing their cultures and

interests reflected in school life”. Key themes identified were: relational practice, pupil voice and agency, celebrating diversity and challenging discrimination, cultivating a strong school identity combined with individualised approaches and a commitment to belonging beyond the school gate. Researchers found a core tension for schools: between belonging approaches and “systemic pressures, such as the staff capacity, punitive attendance policies and narrow focus on academic data”.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-belonging-case-studies-research>

- Qualitative study of inclusive staffing models in schools and trusts. Findings include: the central role of teaching staff for effective inclusion, that schools are moving away from the ‘velcro’ model of 1:1 deployment of TAs, Among the schools interviewed SENCOs were generally members of the senior leadership team, and leaders recognised that school staff need to understand types of SEND and how to support pupils with diverse needs.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6aa90c5d2344967b89b087e6/Inclusive_workforce_models_research_report.pdf

- Collection of SEND and inclusion training materials published by the DfE for mainstream schools (with several more units due in early spring term). Current topics addressed included approaches to inclusive teaching, inclusive support arrangements for all pupils and a unit on speech, language and communication. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/send-and-inclusion-training-for-mainstream-schools>
- Evaluation of breakfast club early adopter schools, drawing on qualitative research with 8 schools and a parents panel, together with survey data from over 300 schools. Arrangements varied from dual-space models (separating eating and activity areas) to single rooms and rented church halls. All offered sufficient capacity despite seasonal attendance variations. Staff-to-pupil ratios ranged from 1:10-1:13 in mainstream settings. Parents reported benefits included less stressful morning routines and the value of their child making more friends at school as well as the club helping parents to get to work on time. The report the importance of continued efforts to communicate about the clubs (perhaps another name instead of ‘breakfast’?) and the benefits such as the ‘soft start’ to the school day. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6ad8c07e4e6a61c502e89fc2/Breakfast_club_early_adopters_research_report.pdf

2. Reports:

- Children’s Commissioner report on the state of childhood across England, broken down by LA. Using data, supported by interviews with children and young people, the report highlights the contrast of opportunity between LA areas across themes including: feeling safe, access to healthcare, education and inclusion, opportunity and NEETs and children in care. Among the recommendations are that the forthcoming devolution white paper should prioritise children, including a deputy mayor for children in all areas, and a number of specific, statutory, multi-agency duties on partners and single ID for children & standard data set. <https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2026/10/The-Childhood-Lottery-Report.pdf>
- Report exploring KS3, largely based on survey data with teachers, parents and students, concludes that KS3 lacks clear purpose, is overshadowed by the demands of KS4, offers inconsistent experiences for learners and, although teachers recognise problems, the system limits their opportunity rethink KS3. Recommendations include that the DfE should be clearer about the purpose of KS3 and design curriculum, assessment and accountabilities around this clearer purpose. <https://pf.global/reports/reclaiming-key-stage-3.pdf>

3. Research

- Not all NEETs are the same: research to understand those young people who are NEET, aged between 18 and 24 and not claiming any form of benefits: “Hidden NEETs”. This is estimated to be about a third of the total. Not claiming benefits also means these young people are ineligible for key support programmes such as work coaches and the Youth Guarantee. Who are they? The majority are from

better-off families and living at home, supported by them, have better health and higher levels of qualifications and are 'closer' to the jobs market. Is it questionable to expend too much resource tracing these young people who are more likely to make their own way into employment? About 1 in 5 are from low income households, however. https://ifs.org.uk/sites/default/files/2026-08/IFS%20REPORT%20-%20Off%20the%20radar%20-%20who%20are%20NEETs%20not%20claiming%20benefits_1.pdf

4. News:

- Leaders from the F40 group of LAs call on the Government to have a long-term funding strategy for SEND if the SEND reforms are to be a success. These LA leaders raise concerns that the reforms are being shaped without there being a clear picture of the future model of funding for SEND, both for schools and trusts and for LAs. Meanwhile there are other major changes happening such as changes to pensions and falling school rolls. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/dfe-warned-it-must-provide-long-term-send-funding-plan-for-schools>
- Ongoing coverage from Schools Week about local SEND reform plans (LSRPs). This piece includes a map of LAs with deferred LSRPs and those not yet published in the public domain. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/revealed-what-send-reforms-are-proposed-for-your-area/>
- Really informative article about the target to improve attendance and how the respective numbers across severe, persistent and majority of pupils means that to achieve the target changes in attendance are, ideally, necessary across all three groups of pupils. In fact there is a case for saying there is a perverse incentive to not focus too hard on severely absent learners, who are very likely to require significant support to change habits or address personal / family challenges (and unfortunately severe absence is increasing rather than reducing). The article also illustrates how challenging the 1.4% increase in attendance by 2029 is. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2026/09/achieving-the-white-papers-attendance-target/>
- Survey by the NAHT finds over a third of leaders are aware of consultations or discussions about possible redundancies or restructures with the most common root causes being insufficient funding and falling rolls. Although schools funding is set to increase, it is estimated much of this will be absorbed by increasing demand for support for pupils with SEND. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/primary/school-funding-third-of-schools-considering-job-cuts-restructuring>
- DfE confirms that the National Curriculum consultation has been delayed. A spokesperson stated: "We will consult on curriculum and assessment reform arrangements by the end of the year and publish the final content as soon as possible next calendar year, giving schools time and support to prepare for first teaching in September 2028." Teachers and leaders voiced their frustrations about the delay and the knock-on of further reducing time available to prepare for its implementation. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/national-curriculum-consultation-delayed-until-later-year>
- Education and the budget. There was limited reference to education and schools in the budget. Mainstream school spending is projected to decrease by an average of 0.7% annually in real terms between 2023-24 and 2031-32, accompanied by a larger fall of 2% a year in pupil numbers between 2028-29 and 2031-32. Whilst annual LA SEND deficits will increase from £2.8 billion in 2025-26 to £5.7 billion in 2027-28. There are small pots of money for books in early years, school PE and sport partnerships and to address misogyny. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/budget-2026-everything-schools-need-know>
-