SESLIP Education Directors Update:

November 20th 2026

In Today's Update:

- DfE: Final Milburn report about reducing NEETS, NFF and central services and high needs block allocations for 2027-28, school budget support allocations for 2026-27, consultation about Children not in School registration, safeguarding guidance for work experience, DfE response to HoL inquiry into falling school rolls, call for evidence to inform new guidance on exclusions, autumn 2026 suspension and exclusions data, multiplication tables check data, consultation about statutory regulation of child employment, consultation about possible EdTech certification scheme, Reception quality CPD webinars.
- Reports: Report reviewing the progress to date of this Government's school-based nurseries programme.
- Research: Research exploring data about those who are NEET their risk factors, but also highlighting the limitations of the data and evidence, particularly for 'what work', exploring the history of Bloom's taxonomy.
- News: Coverage of the Milburn report addressing NEETs, DfE urged to be more ambitious on GLD, Ofsted to make further changes to inspections 'during this year', taking stock of the new school report cards, KS3 Alliance opinion piece, how engagement falls steeply for years 7 and8 students, further analysis of GCSE trends by sex, "inclusion is simple", QTS exemption for vocational teachers, analysis of the local area SEND inspections this year, DfE piloting work to rollout a single identifier for children, discussion about the state of autism and its identification, report calls for mandatory regulation of counsellors, Reform-led LAs spending analysed.

1. DfE:

- Final report of the Milburn review about young people who are NEET and youth employment: 'From a Welfare State to a Working State'. The report builds on the 'case for change' report published in May and sets out a proposal for a 10-year programme to make significant lasting reductions to the numbers of young people who are NEET (currently over 1 million). Proposals include: schools being accountable for the destinations of their former pupils (work or training) as well as for attainment and a new 'ready-for-work' standard, mandated work experience offer for students, further ambition targets for GLD and additional testing during KS 3. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-a-welfare-state-to-a-working-state-a-new-settlement-for-the-next-generation
- Funding for 2027-28: national funding formula allocations broken down by LA and school, together with the central schools services block formula and allocations for LAs. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-tables-for-schools-and-high-needs-2027-to-2028 Plus the high needs funding allocations and guidance and formula for 2027-28: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2027-to-2028 This includes the option for LAs to transfer funding in 2027 to 2028 from their high needs budget to the schools budget to provide upfront SEND funding for mainstream schools.
- Consultation on statutory guidance for a 'children not in School' register which runs until 3 Feb. It includes scope of children to be included on a register and the information that should be recorded, as well as updates to EHE guidance such as mandatory meetings prior to deregistration and education provision. https://consult.education.gov.uk/non-school-education-division/children-not-in-school/
- Guidance for employers providing work experience for school pupils, with a particular focus on safeguarding and requirement for DBS checks. Specifically, DBS checks are not routinely required, but an employer must not allow an employee to undertake work experience supervision where it knows, or has reason to believe, that the individual is barred from working with children. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/work-experience-placements-for-under-16s-dbs-

checks-and-regulated-activity/work-experience-placements-for-under-16s-dbs-checks-and-regulated-activity--2

- Findings from the House of Lords inquiry into falling school rolls, sets out evidence for this being a key pressure for the education system, but also for wider public services as well. IT calls for a response from Government to say it is learning the lessons from falling rolls in the primary sector and making preparations for falling rolls in secondary schools. It the DfE's response it comments that Government cannot insulate schools from the realities of changing demographics and it will continue to review funding arrangements, including whether further support may be appropriate. https://committees.parliament.uk/work/9788/falling-primary-school-rolls/publications/3/correspondence/
- School budget support grant allocations and guidance from October 2026 to cover additional staffing costs as a result of the teachers pay award and the support staff pay awards. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-budget-support-grant-2026-sbsg-26
- Call for evidence to inform further guidance and changes; consultation runs until 19 Nov. Themes being considered include: internal exclusion, reintegration following suspension and schoolwork during first five days of suspension. https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-absence-and-exclusions-team/school-exclusion-reform-call-for-evidence/
- Autumn 2025 and autumn 2026 exclusions and suspensions data. These show an overall reduction in the suspensions rates in schools, however the bulk being in secondaries hides the fact that there is an increase in primary suspensions and no change in special schools, with a similar pattern for exclusions data. https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions-in-england/2025-26-autumn-term
- Multiplication tables check data for year 4s from summer 2026 show a continued increase in attainment, which is reflected across pupil characteristics including for those eligible for FSM and with SEND. https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/multiplication-tables-check-attainment/2025-26
- Consultation about changes to the regulation of child employment, which closes on 13 Dec. The draft guidance sets out new statutory regulations and guidance, largely based on existing law and bylaws, but seeking views on options to modernise categories or time-limits. The minimum age for employment is proposed to remain at 14, and there are proposals for a statutory child employment permit system. https://consult.education.gov.uk/child-employment/child-employment-regulatory-framework/
- Consultation about the introduction of a DfE certification scheme for Ed Tech and AI for use in schools, open until 4 Feb. The focus includes practical considerations for the use of tech by schools and trusts as well as how it might operate for tech companies. https://consult.education.gov.uk/edtech-regulation-policy-team/education-technology-safety-assurance-certificatio/
- The latest webinars from the Reception Quality series for CPD. Recently added topics include learning environments in Reception, and using the GLD data tool. https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/reception-quality-webinar-series

2. Reports:

- Report about the DfE's school-based nurseries programme and how far it is increasing places for children from more disadvantaged homes. Whilst the report recommends continuation of the programme, more clarity about its purpose and gathering evidence about whether the haste to increase numbers of childcare places comes at a sacrifice of quality. The report includes helpful case studies as well as descriptions of practical challenges faced by schools and providers. https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/room-to-grow.pdf

3. Research

- Rapid review of datasets and panel collections which are of relevance to young people who are NEET finds that these datasets are effective at identifying those children and young people more at risk of becoming NEET, such as household poverty, having SEND or significant periods of school absence. However, these datasets offer little at helping to explain why some young people become or remain NEET while others with apparently similar circumstances do not, so the evidence base for strategies that can make a difference is currently quite weak. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12889-026-30087-4
- Research discussion paper exploring young people with SEND who are more likely to be NEET than others with SEND. It partly highlights that those with an EHC plan are at a lower risk up to 25 due to the provisions in their plan. Those with SEMH and/or autism are more likely to be NEET and this increases further when they are also of a disadvantaged background. There are, however, many gaps in understanding too.
https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10224213/1/Sideropoulos_Leftbehindtwice.pdf
- Interesting article exploring the origins of Bloom's Taxonomy. Although the six categories appear in the original 1956 handbook, there was no pyramid and there is little clarity except it gradually emerged through the 60s and first published in 1972. https://carlhendrick.substack.com/p/the-untold-story-of-blooms-taxonomy

4. News:

- Much of this week's education coverage has been on the Milburn report about reducing NEETs. Examples include: opinion piece by the Prime Minister in support of the report: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/nov/15/britain-young-people-crisis-alan-milburn-review-welfare-childhood ; summary of key points for schools: https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/milburn-review-key-information-for-schools-neet-crisis and a summary from the BBC, with more information on expectations of employers and changes to welfare: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq074grvdpz2o and cautious responses from headteacher and other school association bodies in particular about the work readiness measures: https://schoolsweek.co.uk/milburn-review-leaders-cautious-about-school-work-readiness-standard/ critical analysis of the report by academics: https://theconversation.com/the-milburn-report-sets-out-a-plan-to-improve-the-lives-of-young-people-who-are-neet-experts-respond-296758
- In line with proposals from the Milburn report, the DfE is urged to go 'further and faster' with its GLD targets amidst signs that the current national target of 75% of children might be achieved a12 months before the deadline of 2028. https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/early-years/dfe-urged-go-further-faster-school-readiness-target
- HM Chief Inspector acknowledges that further changes to the school inspection framework will be made as a result of concerns voiced by the SofS, as well as school leader representatives. Some will be implemented during this academic year, whilst others will be scheduled for the annual update in Sept 2027. https://schoolsweek.co.uk/some-ofsted-reforms-could-happen-really-quickly-says-oliver/
- Taking stock of a year's worth of Ofsted school inspections against the new report cards. There are very few judged as exceptional in any inspection areas, while a third of inspections reported at least one area as 'needs attention'. 90% or more schools were graded as at expected standards or higher for inclusion and for 'personal development and wellbeing'. There also appears to continue to be a correlation between having a more deprived intake and higher proportions with SEND and somewhat lower grades as a result of inspection. https://schoolsweek.co.uk/what-can-we-learn-from-the-first-year-of-ofsted-report-cards/
- Opinion piece by the chair of DfE's KS3 Alliance. She welcomes the steer from the DfE that GCSE courses should wait until year 10 and highlights the importance of taking the opportunity KS3 to support students to make sure their foundations for learning are in place, particularly in literacy and

numeracy. She also highlights that the key test here is working hard to engage students in their learning, so taking flexibilities to grow belonging and motivation in learning. https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/secondary/why-educations-missing-middle-needs-two-year-limit-gcses

- Looking at the evidence of the importance of engagement and belonging in KS3 and the importance for transition to secondary school to be seen as a longer process rather than an event that happens over a matter of days. Evidence shows that students level of engagement with learning drops more steeply between years 7 and 8 than at any other time in school and, for girls, this is a markedly steeper decline than for boys. https://www.tep.uk/news-updates/what-engagement-research-tells-us-about-the-early-secondary-years
- Digging deeper into 2026 GCSE results data, which, in terms of gender, showed some small closing of the gap between boys and girls. This analysis concludes that this is partly as a result of trend changes for those older students sitting GCSEs: the negative trend affect of these students is more marked for female students than males. https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2026/11/why-did-the-gender-gap-in-gcse-grading-fall-this-year/
- Among the secondary legislation following the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act is exemptions to qualifications which will include no requirement for QTS to be a teacher on vocational courses, viewed as a means to help to expand technical education routes in schools. https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/qts-exemption-vocational-teachers-sparks-2-tier-system-fears
- Analysis of LA SEND inspections show the majority of inspections published in 2026 report pupils with SEND face inconsistent experiences, whilst 4 of the 29 LAs whose reports have been published were found to have widespread or systemic failings. A recurring issue in reports was gaps in local area oversight of placements, such as in non-school AP, and of pupils having to leave the school site for therapeutic or health appointments. https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/revealed-send-area-inspections-positive-outcome
- DfE is preparing to test integrating NHS numbers into school management information systems and is seeking a data provider to work with them and is piloting with more LAs. This forms part of work to rollout a single unique identifier for all children. https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfe-to-test-integrating-nhs-numbers-into-school-systems/
- Discussion about approaches to inclusion from Australia, with an emphasis on prevention through inclusive pedagogy, such as instructional support and for this to be accompanied by integrated multi-tiered systems of support for vulnerable learners. The team in Australia demonstrated that what works for pupils with language and attention difficulties also works for all pupils in terms of assessment and then this can be built on for pedagogy. https://www.tes.com/magazine/teaching-learning/general/is-send-crisis-really-teaching-learning-crisis
- Discussion about the nature of autism and its identification with academics who have been most influential in shaping thinking and diagnosis. There is criticism of the way autism is framed and identified, but also that it is a term where too many are "lumped" together rather than need supported. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/nov/01/the-term-is-becoming-unrecognisable-have-the-experts-who-believed-in-a-single-autism-spectrum-changed-their-minds
- A report commissioned by the professional bodies for counselling and for psychotherapy calls for the current voluntary registration of practitioners to be replaced by compulsory registration and regulation. Recognising that practitioners are working with vulnerable people, the report identifies that there are no requirements for qualifications to call yourself a counsellor or psychotherapist and that those guilty of breaches of trust can still practice, since most operate independently.

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/nov/02/counsellors-psychotherapists-statutory-regulation-uk-professional-bodies

- Article drawing on analysis of spending in LAs led by Reform UK compared to other similar LAs led by other political parties. Overall there is little difference in the level of savings between the two groups of councils, despite election promises made by Reform UK. The piece reflects on their inexperience and limited understanding of local government finances and how focused LAs have to be on statutory services. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/nov/18/reform-doge-style-crackdown-fell-flat
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