



# NEWSLETTER SPRING TERM 2019

An overview of key issues for Governing Boards to consider and review.

**LCOGS**

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## Assessment Information

### Statistical First Releases

Mid December saw the DfE publish a revised SFR for Key Stage 2. This highlights that:

- In 2018, 64% of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined. Combined attainment is not directly comparable to previous years because of changes to writing teacher assessment (TA) frameworks. In 2017, 61% of pupils reached the expected standard compared to 53% in 2016.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others, measured using the disadvantage gap index, has decreased in each of the last seven years, narrowing by 3% in the latest year and 13.2% since 2011.
- Of the pupils who met the expected standard in phonics in year 1 in 2013, 88% went on to meet the expected standard in the KS2 reading test in 2018. Of the pupils who met the expected standard in phonics by the end of year 2 (but not in year 1), 62% went on to meet the expected reading standard at the end of KS2. Of those pupils who did not reach the expected standard by the end of year 2, only 30% met the expected KS2 reading standard.
- The updated SFR also looks at performance measures for MATs: a MAT must have at least three schools that have been with the MAT for at least three years and have results in 2018 to be included in the SFR. The MAT performance measures at KS2 are progress in reading, writing and maths. There is no combined reading, writing and maths attainment measure for MATs. Progress scores for schools within a MAT are weighted according to the length of time they have been in the MAT and their total cohort size, in order to produce MAT level figures.
- The number of eligible MATs included in the KS2 measures has increased from 155 in 2017 to 240 in 2018. This is an increase from 893 to 1,408 schools, and from 35,442 to 56,367 pupils. This represents 9.3% of the state-funded mainstream KS2 pupil cohort.
- In 2018, 25% of MATs had progress scores above or well above the national average in reading, compared with 32% in writing and 30% in maths. There were 25% of MATs with progress scores below or well below average in reading, compared with 18% in writing and 24% in maths.
- Pupils in MATs make most progress in writing and least progress in reading. This was also the case in 2017. Compared to the national average for all state-funded mainstream schools, pupils in MATs make more progress in writing and maths but less in reading.

The revised Key Stage 2 SFR can be accessed [here](#).

### Performance Tables

Key Stage 2 performance tables for schools were available from mid-December onwards and can be accessed [here](#)

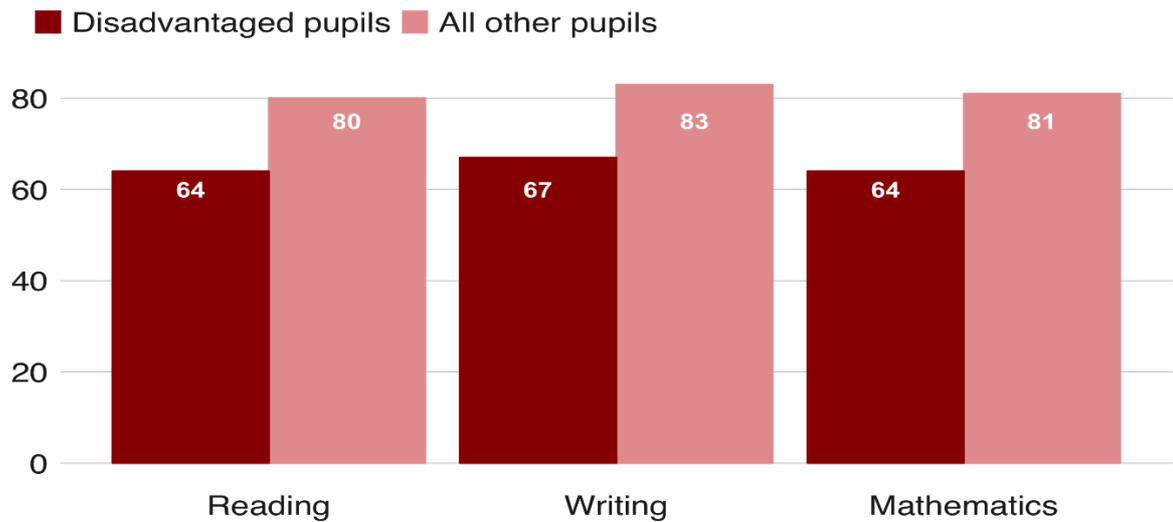
### Closing the Disadvantaged Gap

Following the release of both the KS2 performance tables and the revised KS2 Statistical First Release, BBC analysis suggests it will take 50 years to close the achievement gap between England's rich and poor pupils. If the pace of change remains the same as it has done since 2011, the analysis contends that poor pupils will not catch up with their more affluent counterparts until 2070.

This year, 51% of the poorest pupils reached the expected level in their national end-of-primary school tests. This compares with 70% of their better-off peers, leaving a gap of 19 percentage points.

# Fewer disadvantaged children make the grades

Percentage of children reaching the expected standard



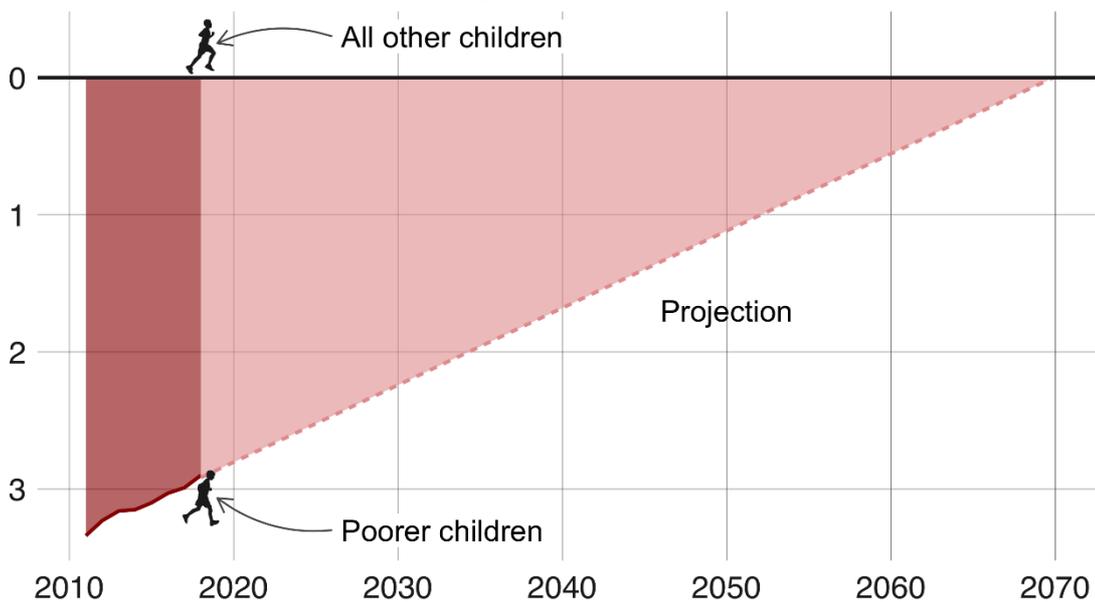
Source: DfE, disadvantaged defined as eligible for the pupil premium



The BBC study acknowledges that whilst the achievement gap has shrunk every year since 2011, it has done so at a slow pace.

# Poorer pupils won't catch up for 50 years

Under the current rate of improvement



Source: DfE data, BBC calculation



## **Changes to assessment for pupils with complex needs**

The DfE has announced a new approach that will enable primary schools to better assess pupils with the most complex needs. From 2020, the current statutory assessment system of P scales 1 to 4 will be replaced with an assessment system that will be based on the '7 aspects of engagement'. The 7 Aspects of Engagement approach was originally developed through a DfE funded project led by Professor Barry Carpenter in 2011.

The new assessment approach will, it is argued, for the first time, enable every kind of progress made by this group of pupils to be identified, such as awareness, curiosity and anticipation. This will address a key issue with P scales, which focused on linear progress, which is not always how children with the most complex needs progress. It is argued that the new assessment approach will help teachers to best tailor their teaching and provision to meet their pupils' specific needs and to allow them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Around 7,000 pupils in primary schools have such complex needs that it would be inappropriate to measure their attainment in school according to the national curriculum tests. An in-depth review, led by Diane Rochford, concluded that P scales did not best serve these pupils and recommended an assessment approach that instead focuses on engagement. This was reiterated by the findings of a DfE pilot that was run earlier in 2018.

An expert group, led by Diane Rochford, will now refine the assessment approach based on the pilot's findings, ready for it to be introduced in all state-funded schools which have pupils not in subject-specific study from 2020. The expert group will develop a detailed guidance and training package for key stakeholders, including schools, local authorities, Ofsted and parents. It is hoped this will equip them with the skills and confidence to conduct and understand the assessment in a way that will minimise additional workload burdens, building upon the best practice of schools who are doing it well.

## **The Effects of Age, Gender and School Type on primary maths and reading attainment**

November 2018 saw *School Dash* and *RS Assessment* producing a report which explores the association between pupil characteristics and outcomes in primary reading and maths. The paper analyses results from Progress in Understanding Mathematics Assessment (PUMA) and Progress in Reading Assessment (PiRA) tests created by RS Assessment from Hodder Education. These tests were used by over 6,000 primary schools across England. The key findings include:

- Summer-born pupils show considerably lower average performance in maths and reading than classmates born at other times of the year. Whilst this gap narrows during the course of primary school, it persists until at least age eleven.
- At the very start of primary school, girls show slightly higher average performance in maths, but by years 2-3 boys overtake them and stay ahead until the end of primary school. Overall, there is greater consistency in maths outcomes for girls than boys, with boys showing somewhat higher variability in their maths attainment compared to girls.
- The gender differences in maths vary by topic, with boys doing particularly well in number and measures while girls do relatively well in operations and geometry.
- In reading girls are, on average, stronger than boys at the start of primary school and maintain this advantage all the way to age eleven. These gender differences apply roughly equally across different reading topics.
- There are also clear average differences between types of school. Those with higher proportions of disadvantaged pupils show lower average performance in both maths and reading during the early years of primary education, and this gap tends to grow over time. Similarly, schools with higher Ofsted ratings tend to do better than those with lower ratings.

The report can be accessed in full [here](#).

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## Resources

### **ESFA announce consultant partners for cost saving**

The DfE has recently announced that it is boosting its Schools Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) scheme, where consultants are sent into schools to help identify savings, with £2.4M of funding. Nine firms, including one Academy Trust based in Gloucestershire, have been awarded the contracts to recruit and manage at least 160 advisors, although it is thought that this could potentially grow to up to 250, over the next two to three years.

According to the ESFA, the advisors will be 'sector experts' and have 'demonstrable experience' of aiding schools and trusts in getting the most out of their revenue and capital resources. This includes the "techniques" of integrated curriculum and financial planning.

This follows academies minister, Lord Agnew, stating that following a pilot of the SRMA scheme, advisers had identified potential savings of "more than £35 million" from 72 completed school and trust visits, an average of nearly £500,000 savings per visit (advisers are paid £400 a day). His comments were further reiterated by the ESFA's Chief Executive who stated that the advisers had been "pivotal in helping schools reduce cost pressures" by reviewing staff deployment and making savings on agency supply staff and procurement.

Lord Agnew has also expressed concerns that schools were not effectively utilising the Government's cost-saving "national deals" tool. These deals, which can be accessed via the link, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/deals-for-schools/deals-for-schools> are regularly updated, with three new energy and utility deals added at the end of November 2018. The nationally agreed deals available range from books and materials to facilities management and estates to printers, copiers and multi-functional devices.

### **GDPR reporting in schools**

The number of data security incidents reported by the education sector increased by more than 43% after the introduction of GDPR at the end of May 2018. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has reported a rise in reports of disclosure issues, where sensitive information is inadvertently shared, and cyber-attacks between July and September 2018.

Overall, the number of data security incidents reported in education rose from 355 in the second quarter of 2017/18 to 511 in the same period this year, with the increase demonstrating that schools are now more aware of what data breaches are and are reporting these to demonstrate compliance with the law. GDPR regulations require schools to be clearer about the data they hold about their pupils and respond more quickly to requests for copies of personal data. They must also have a data protection officer in place.

The number of incidents involving the disclosure of data reported to the ICO rose to 353 in quarter two of this year, up from 239 during the same period last year and just 26 the year before. Common disclosure issues include the loss or theft of paperwork or data, information accidentally sent by email to the wrong recipient and inadvertent verbal disclosure.

However, consultants have expressed concern about the rise in cyber-attacks on schools. Reports of these attacks, which can include malware, phishing and ransomware, have risen by 69% in the past year alone. Between July and September 2017, there were 26 such reports. In the same period this year, there were 44. Consultants have warned that schools "don't have the internal expertise" on cyber security and that institutions "haven't got the skills to understand the risks or what to do when it happens". Schools, furthermore, are seen as an "easy target". Earlier in 2018, it was revealed that fraudsters impersonating headteachers managed to con schools across the country out of tens of thousands of pounds after their phone systems were hacked and calls diverted to pricey premium-rate numbers. 48 schools reported this scam, with 12 losing £145K between them, with one losing £19K alone.

## **Government Consultation on School Security**

The end of November 2018 saw the DfE publish draft non-statutory guidance on School Security, which includes advice on cyber-attacks. The guidance aims to provide schools, both maintained and academies, with information and tools to help them handle the range of security matters that they are most likely to face. The updated guidance recognises that the current guidance does not provide schools with the information they need to draw up effective school security policies and plans.

The draft guidance sets out the importance of having a policy and plan in place so schools can manage and respond to security related incidents. Each school should establish and maintain relationships with local security networks and work with the police, local authority and others in the wider community to gather and share security related information. This intelligence can then be used to inform the development of a school security policy and plan that is proportionate, measured and reflects local and national security issues or threats.

Staff and, where appropriate, pupils should take personal responsibility for both their own security and that of those they work and learn alongside. This, along with the effective management and handling of security related matters in schools, should help to ensure that staff and pupils are able to work and be taught in a safe and secure environment.

All school staff should receive appropriate security training and staff and pupils should be familiar with what is required by the school's security policy and plan. School staff should have an awareness of relevant security networks and be able to evaluate and assess the impact of any the new initiatives on the school security policy and its day to day operation. School staff should know what to do to protect themselves and pupils from harm, safeguard the school estate and be able to determine when it is appropriate to contact the police/emergency services.

The expectation is that school security should not be seen as an additional undertaking, rather it should be considered alongside responsibilities under the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, with the appropriate training given to the person(s) with responsibility for health and safety and school security in the school.

The Government is consulting on the draft non-statutory guidance which closes on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The consultation has been broken into a number of sections:

Section 1: Seeks feedback on whether or not the framework presented will enable schools to **develop their own security policies and plans**.

Section 2 looks at the **identification of internal and external risks**. In this section schools are directed to the health and safety risk assessment procedures used by many schools, which can be adapted and used to undertake a security risk assessment. To help schools develop security assessments, the DfE have included a series of prompts that explain some potential risk areas that some schools may want to use to inform their thinking, and which others may find useful to review an existing risk assessment.

Section 3 looks at **managing risks** and how schools can determine what to do once potential security risks have been identified. The guidance advises schools to take steps to determine the likelihood of an incident occurring, and to assess its impact, before putting in place plans to manage and keep the identified risks under review.

Section 4 considers **prevention and a whole school approach** and how local and national security concerns might impact on a school's day to day business as well as how effective preventative measures can reduce the chances of a serious incident happening.

Schools are signposted to specific sites where they can readily access available tools and resources, for example, dealing with pupils carrying prohibited items, restricting access to and the barring of abusive or threatening individuals from school premises and how to respond if caught up in a terrorist attack inside or outside of school.

Section 5 looks at **recovery** and the restoration of 'business as usual' in the aftermath of a serious incident. The guidance signposts schools to sources of information which will help them to draw up effective recovery plans. The guidance also stresses the need for schools to evaluate how plans stood up when dealing with a real security incident. It encourages schools to consider the outcomes of their evaluation and use their findings to refresh and update existing plans.

Both the draft non-statutory guidance and the online consultation can be accessed via [here](#).

### **Controlling Access to School Premises**

The end of 2018 saw the DfE release new guidance to clarify what schools can do to bar or remove individuals from school premises. The guidance outlines schools' rights and responsibilities regarding access to the site and how schools should handle unwanted individuals on the premises.

#### *Who can go onto school premises?*

People do not have an automatic right to enter schools as they are private property. Parents have an 'implied licence' to come on to school premises at certain times, for instance, for appointments, to attend a school event and to drop off or pick up younger children.

Schools should set out their rules for this and ensure parents are aware of these entry rules. Anyone who breaks those rules would be deemed to be trespassing.

#### *Barring individuals from school premises*

Trespassing is a civil offence which means schools can ask someone to leave and take civil action through the courts if someone trespasses regularly. The school may want to write to regular trespassers to tell them that they are potentially committing an offence.

Schools can bar someone from the premises if they feel that their aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour or language is a risk to staff or pupils. It's enough for a member of staff or a pupil to *feel* threatened. The school should tell an individual, in writing, that they've been barred or they intend to bar them. Letters should usually be signed by the headteacher, though in some cases the Local Authority, academy trust or proprietor may wish to write them instead. The individual must be allowed to present their side. A school can either:

- bar them temporarily, until the individual has had the opportunity to formally present their side; or
- tell them they intend to bar them and invite them to present their side by a set deadline.

After the individual's side has been heard, the school can decide whether to continue with barring them. The decision should be reviewed within a reasonable time, decided by the school. The DfE does not get involved in individual cases.

#### *Removing individuals from school premises*

Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a person who is on school premises without legal permission to cause or permit a nuisance or disturbance. Trespassing itself does not constitute a criminal

offence. To have committed a criminal offence, an abusive individual must have been barred from the premises or have exceeded their 'implied licence', then also have caused a nuisance or disturbance.

### **Health and Safety Guidance for Schools**

The end of November 2018 saw the DfE update its guidance, "*Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools*". The guidance, which can be accessed in full [here](#), has been split into twelve sections. Key points from the guidance include:

#### *Responsibilities*

The employer or, in the case of independent schools, the proprietor, is accountable for the health and safety of school staff and pupils. In most cases, the headteacher and the school management team are responsible for ensuring that risks are managed effectively. This includes health and safety matters.

Pupils should be safe in school and when undertaking out of school activities. The risk management to keep them safe should be proportionate to the nature of the activities.

Teachers should be able to take pupils on exciting school trips that broaden their horizons. Pupils should be able to play freely in the playground and be able to take part in sports.

Schools must appoint a competent person to ensure they meet their health and safety duties. A competent person is someone with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to give sensible guidance about managing the health and safety risks at the school. This can be someone appointed directly by the school, one or more of its staff, or the employer can arrange support from outside the school. In most schools, the senior leadership team can manage risks.

#### *Leadership*

Schools must have a health and safety policy in place. This should be an integral part of the school's culture, values and performance standards. The key elements of the policy should set out the:

- roles and responsibilities within the various risk management processes;
- mechanisms to control risk; and
- specific control measures that need to be implemented.

In most schools, the headteacher is responsible for implementing this. Based on a thorough risk assessment, they should update it to reduce and reflect new risks. The risk assessment must cover the risks to the health and safety of employees and of persons (including pupils) who are not employees of the school. Schools are obliged to record significant findings of the risk assessment. They must identify any group of employees identified by it as being especially at risk.

If senior leaders or teachers feel the process is inappropriate, they should discuss this with their employer. Examples may include processes which are too bureaucratic, or which do not mitigate risk sufficiently. All staff can request that procedures be reviewed.

#### *Elements of a health and safety policy*

Every health and safety policy should be separated into four key elements:

- Plan – leaders should set the direction for effective health and safety management;
- Do – introduce management systems and practices that ensure risks are dealt with sensibly, responsibly and proportionately;
- Check – monitoring and reporting; and
- Act – a formal management review of health and safety performance.

The policy should include:

- a general statement of the policy;
- who is responsible for what (delegation of tasks);
- arrangements for risk assessments and the practical control measures to reduce risk; and
- how the school will establish, monitor and review its measures to meet satisfactory health and safety standards.

The policy should be proportionate and relevant to the school. The elected competent person in the school should work with the employer and its health and safety advisers to create the policy.

### *Assessing and managing risks*

Risk assessments identify measures to control risks during school activities. Health and safety law requires the school to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. The law also requires it to record details of risk assessments, the measures taken to reduce these risks and expected outcomes.

Schools need to record significant findings of the assessment by identifying:

- the hazards;
- how people might be harmed by them; and
- what they have in place to control risk.

Records of the assessment should be simple and focused on controls. Outcomes should explain to others what they are required to do and help staff with planning and monitoring.

Schools will need to think about the risks that may arise in the course of the school day. This could include anything related to the school premises or delivery of its curriculum, whether on or off site.

### *Staff training*

Schools must ensure that staff receive information and training about health and safety. This includes:

- how to assess risks specific for their job; and
- how to meet their roles and responsibilities identified within the health and safety policy.

They can do this in different ways depending on individual or specific need. For example, providing staff with written guidance may be appropriate in some cases, while attending a training course may be more appropriate for others.

### *Review and evaluation*

All schools should regularly monitor and review their health and safety policies to ensure they are reducing risks. As part of this monitoring, schools should investigate incidents to ensure that:

- they are taking appropriate corrective action;
- they are sharing learning; and
- necessary improvements are put in place.

Schools should regularly (at least annually) consider how they measure their performance. They should set up an effective monitoring system, backed up with sensible performance measures. Where there is a health and safety incident at the school, the competent person and others with health and safety responsibilities, should assess the effectiveness of the school's procedures and its response. They should make necessary changes to policies and procedures.

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## Ofsted Updates

### **The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2017/18**

December 2018 saw Amanda Spielman publish her second annual report in her role as Ofsted's Chief Inspector. Whilst the full report can be accessed [here](#) the following key points can be highlighted:

#### *Curriculum*

- Whilst the substance of education is the curriculum, in recent years that substance has lost out to performance tables and data in the priorities of many in the sector.
- In early years, focusing on the substance means recognising the huge importance of early literacy, language and numeracy. In primary schools, it is about building a crucial foundation in English and maths, alongside a broad and balanced curriculum that imparts powerful knowledge across a range of subjects. In secondary schools, it is about ensuring that pupils are able to study the full breadth of the national curriculum in Key Stage 3, with the EBacc subjects as the foundation of KS4, allowing pupils to make informed choices for future work and study.
- From September 2019, Ofsted will implement the new Education Inspection Framework (EIF) to rebalance the inspection process to take more account of what is being taught. The framework will "reward" nurseries, schools and colleges that are doing the right thing by their children and learners, particularly the disadvantaged, and providing a rigorous education to all. It will move the focus of leadership away from progress data, arbitrary tracking of pupils' scores and all the workload that those create for staff, and instead will allow teachers to get on with their core role: designing the curriculum, sequencing knowledge, ensuring mastery and improving learning.

#### *Early Reading*

- Children with poor literacy do worse at school. Young adults with poor literacy will struggle to get the best jobs. Nearly half of the people who end up in prison have literacy skills no better than an average 11-year-old. Parents with poor literacy are less well equipped to help their own children, creating an unfortunate cycle in which disadvantage and lack of opportunity in one generation are replicated in the next.
- Not all children start school from the same place. Just over a quarter (28%) of children leave Reception without at least the expected levels of communication, language and literacy. Some have little or no English; some have never been read to; some will find it harder than others to learn to read, for a whole variety of reasons. Learning to read is the single most important purpose of the first year at school, most of all for the most disadvantaged children.
- Schools that excel in the Reception Year understand these dynamics and that the more gaps that open up between the achievement of the fastest and the slowest, the less likely it is that the slowest will ever catch up. These schools understand that reading to young children in school, building their vocabulary and their knowledge of language, is a proven contributor to achieving good literacy for all children. They read to children, they teach phonics well and they give children time to practise and consolidate their growing knowledge. They understand the importance of play as part of the curriculum. At the same time, they understand which parts of the Reception Year curriculum should be taught directly and which can be developed through play. These approaches give children who start further behind the chance to catch up.
- The phonics screening check has had a strong impact on children's reading progress. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard has risen from 58% to 82% over the last six years. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the expectations in the phonics check varies considerably, particularly for children who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). The data shows that in some economically deprived areas, such as Newham and Newcastle upon Tyne, children eligible for FSM perform much better than in more affluent areas such as West Berkshire. These differences are particularly stark for boys who are eligible for FSM. In Newham, 80% of boys who are eligible for FSM achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check compared with West Berkshire, where only 51% of the boys eligible for FSM reach it.

- Ofsted intends to strengthen its focus on the inspection of reading. The results from some recent inspections have uncovered schools that are not teaching phonics and reading successfully, where many pupils read below age-related expectations, and where pupils do not become confident, fluent readers before they leave primary school. Ofsted will continue to evaluate the results from inspections over the next few months and, if they continue to show a similar picture, will place a strong focus on the teaching of reading to the lowest 20% pupils in the 2019 EIF.

#### *School Leadership and Workforce*

- This year Ofsted have looked in more detail at the characteristics of a wider group of around 490 schools that have been judged as requires improvement, satisfactory or inadequate at every inspection since 2005. The results demonstrate that the cycle of poor performance continues and there are some children who may have been in a failing school for their whole time at secondary school.
- The DfE's policy is to turn inadequate maintained schools into academies and to broker inadequate academies into a strong MAT that is capable of improving the school quickly. This is asking a lot of the best MATs and school leaders and leadership capacity in the school sector is worryingly thin. Furthermore, Ofsted are not seeing this matching of schools to MATs happen anywhere near as quickly as hoped for. In some cases, this has left local authority schools judged inadequate in limbo for over 18 months before they become an academy in a MAT.
- Whilst the number of system leaders continues to grow and programmes to build MAT capacity exist, many more outstanding schools and school leaders are needed to step up to the challenge of providing system leadership. Partly, they are needed to take on and improve on the previous role of LAs in school improvement, some of which were failing the weakest schools and for all of which school improvement funding has been cut. The current halfway house whereby all inadequate schools become academies and require a sponsor, but where there is a severe lack of capacity to sponsor them, has led to a mismatch in available support. Simply put, without more good sponsors, the DfE's ambition to support failing schools will not be realised.
- The DfE also needs to do more to grow system leadership capacity. It has funding available for school improvement and system leadership. It needs to set out clearly how it will fund school improvement services and incentivise the school-led system to take them up, particularly in areas currently with the weakest capacity.
- As well as leadership capacity, perhaps the biggest challenge facing the schools sector is around recruiting and retaining teachers. A combination of an improving economy and a workload-exacerbated retention crisis has led to a shortage. The areas that struggle to recruit and retain teachers can often be the areas where there are the biggest educational challenges, creating a vicious cycle where the areas in most need have the most limited flow of talent and experience.

#### *Multi-Academy Trusts*

- One area where Ofsted's inspection powers have not kept pace with changes in education is for MATs. MATs now generally take responsibility for making many significant decisions, not just about the financial management of schools but also what is taught in them and how it is taught and assessed. The fact that Ofsted is unable to inspect MATs directly means that parents and Government are missing out on information about an important part of the evolving educational landscape.

#### *Early Years*

- Inspection outcomes for providers on the Early Years Register remain strong. More than nine out of 10 were good or outstanding at their most recent inspection.
- Nurseries and pre-schools operating as part of a group under a single registration are more likely to be judged outstanding than those operating alone. The quality of provision is also linked to other factors, such as levels of local area deprivation.

### *Inspection Updates*

- In June 2018, Ofsted changed the way in which inspection outcomes were reported in its statistical datasets. The main change was to include the grades of schools that had subsequently become academies; these are called 'predecessor schools'.
- By including the inspection outcomes of around 700 more schools, Ofsted now regards its data to be more comprehensive and transparent; the changes have also been back-dated for previous years.
- In January 2018, Ofsted reduced the proportion of short inspections which convert immediately; if a school was previously good, an inspection will now only convert if the lead inspector has serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education to the extent that the school may be judged inadequate at a full inspection.
- In 76% of cases, the short inspection confirms that the school remains good and a further section 8 (one day) inspection will be scheduled for approximately four years' time. Where inspectors believe the school may have improved to outstanding or declined from good if it had been a full inspection, a full inspection will be scheduled within two years. Before January 2018, these short inspections would have converted immediately.
- These changes in policy have led to a substantial decrease in the proportion of short inspections that convert to a full inspection. Since January 2018, less than 1% of short inspections of good schools have converted to a full inspection. This is down from 22% between September and December 2017 and 29% in 2016/17.
- Overall, across all types of schools, Ofsted inspected over 4,800 previously good schools this year, through either a full or short inspection. 83% maintained their good grade, 2% improved to outstanding and 15% declined to RI or inadequate. The changes to the inspection methodology prevent an accurate comparison of outcomes this year with those from previous years.
- There are currently 4,500 schools judged outstanding at their most recent inspection, including 3,800 primary and secondary schools. As part of the 2011 Education Act, the Government made outstanding primary and secondary schools exempt from routine inspections. As a result, 17% of outstanding schools have not had a full inspection in the last 10 academic years.
- Ofsted are still able to inspect exempt outstanding schools if their performance gives cause for concern; Ofsted have inspected 48% of these schools within the last six academic years with 149 of these schools inspected this year. Of those schools that had their inspection converted to a full inspection, only seven kept their outstanding grade, 55 declined to good, 35 declined to RI and 10 declined to inadequate. The remaining 42 schools continued to be graded as outstanding.
- 67% of the exempt schools visited this year declined from their previously outstanding grade, although this is not surprising as most of the exempt schools inspected were those whose performance appeared to be declining.

### *Schools*

- 36% of schools are now academies (including free schools), compared with 32% last year. While seven out of 10 secondary schools are now academies, a similar proportion of primary schools are still under LA control. There are over 1,100 MATs, many of which are getting bigger because most new academies now join a trust from the outset.
- 86% of schools were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. This is a substantial improvement since 2010. There was little change from the position at the end of August 2017 (87%). Outcomes continue to be higher for primary schools (87% good or outstanding) than for secondary schools (75%). However, a small group of schools have been stuck in a cycle of poor performance since 2005.
- Of the 2,470 full inspections this year, 7% of schools were judged to be outstanding, 47% were judged to be good, 37% were judged to Require Improvement and 9% were judged to be inadequate.
- When a short inspection did not convert to a full inspection, the school maintained its previous grade of good or outstanding. When these outcomes are included alongside the outcomes for full inspections, the overall mix of grades seen this year is much more positive. 6% of schools were found to be outstanding, 76% were good, 15% were judged as RI and 4% were judged to be inadequate.

- It is the Government's ambition that 75% of pupils in state-funded secondary schools should be starting to study EBacc GCSE courses by 2022. In 2018, 38.4% of pupils entered the EBacc, an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 2017.
- Since September 2018, as part of inspectors' discussions with leaders about their vision for the curriculum and ambition for their pupils, inspectors ask school leaders whether they are aware of the Government's ambition and what they are doing to reflect this in their curriculum. Inspectors explore whether leaders have considered changes to the curriculum for 2018/19 and beyond. There is no benchmark or single route to the successful implementation of a curriculum with the EBacc at its core, although inspectors will evaluate how a school's curriculum plans contribute to the Government's ambition.

#### *Provision for children with SEND*

- In January 2018 there were 1.3M pupils with SEND, representing 15% of all pupils. Of these, 250,000 pupils had a SEN statement or an EHC plan, with c.1M pupils on SEN support. Both groups have increased in number since January 2017.
- 93% of pupils with SEN support are educated at state-funded mainstream schools, whereas 46% of pupils with a statement or an EHC plan attend a special school.
- Outcomes for young people with SEND are often poor by age 16. In 2016/17, the Progress 8 score for pupils with SEN support was -0.43 and for those with a statement/EHCP it was -1.04. In June 2017, 87% of 16- to 17-year-olds with SEND were in education or training compared with 92% without SEND.
- Special schools can play a vital role in preparing young people with SEND for adulthood. An analysis of inspection reports of state-funded special schools inspected and judged outstanding in 2017/18 showed that this was a strength in the vast majority of these schools. The inspection reports highlighted the following:
  - Senior leaders are ambitious for pupils and expect them to be as well prepared as they can be for the next stage of their lives;
  - Learning programmes are tailored to the individual needs, interests and aspirations of pupils;
  - Pupils work towards academic and vocational qualifications which are relevant to their further education and career aspirations;
  - There is a continued emphasis on developing pupils' English, mathematics and communication skills;
  - Pupils and their parents receive clear and helpful information and guidance, helping them to make informed decisions;
  - The curriculum includes carefully planned opportunities for pupils to develop work-related knowledge and skills, such as high-quality work placements, internships and apprenticeships; and
  - Transitions to further education, training or employment are carefully structured and supported.
- The level of demand for Local Authorities to undertake EHC needs assessments has increased by over 50% since 2015. In 2017, 45,200 children and young people were assessed for an EHCP. However, the number of requests for EHCPs that are either refused or delayed is also increasing. LAs can refuse to carry out an EHC needs assessment if they believe it has not met the required threshold of needs. In 2017, there were c.14,600 refusals to carry out an assessment. This is a third more than in 2015.
- Once a child has been assessed, they may still struggle to access the services they need. In 2018, 2,060 children with a statement/EHCP were awaiting provision, which is almost three times more than in 2010.
- Pupils with SEND who are in mainstream secondary schools can also struggle to access good-quality education. They are more likely to have a fixed-term exclusion, a permanent exclusion or to be off-rolled.
- Ofsted highlighted its concerns that in secondary schools:
  - Pupils with SEN support are five times more likely to have a permanent exclusion than pupils with no SEND;
  - 27% (93,800) of pupils with SEN support had a fixed-term exclusion last year; and
  - nearly 5,800 pupils with SEND left their school between Years 10 and 11 and some of them may have been 'off-rolled' - pupils with SEND account for 13% of all pupils but 30% of those who leave their school. Furthermore, it is not clear where these Year 10 pupils move on to - half do not reappear in

another state-funded school, more than a quarter go to state-funded alternative provision/pupil referral units, but only a small proportion move to a state-funded special school.

### *Areas of Concern*

The Chief Inspector's report highlights a number of areas most of concern to Ofsted.

- **Literacy** is the key to success in a rounded, academic and vocational education. Schools that understand this, both read to children and teach phonics really well. They help the children whose parents have poor literacy, the children who start school with poor vocabulary, the children who find learning to read that bit harder than their peers.
- In the second year of Ofsted's **local area SEND inspections**, Ofsted have seen a continuing lack of coordinated 0–25 strategies and poor post-19 provision. Ofsted have seen a continuing trend of rising exclusions among children and young people with SEND. Mental health needs are not being supported sufficiently. The quality of EHCPs is far too variable. The gap in performance and outcomes for children with SEND is widening between the best and the worst local areas.
- For the second year running, Ofsted are concerned about the small but persistent group of '**stuck**' schools, schools that have not improved enough over many years. This year, Ofsted have identified around 490 schools judged to require improvement or be inadequate in every inspection they have had since 2005. Ofsted states that more outstanding schools and school leaders are needed to help these stuck schools.
- In the FE sector, the new apprenticeship levy and the merger of several colleges is changing the sector considerably. With the increase in new apprenticeship providers, Ofsted are concerned both about the potential for a dilution in the quality of apprenticeships being offered and the access to apprenticeships for the third of students who leave school without a full level 2 qualification each year.
- Ofsted continue to have serious concerns for the pupils who are being educated in unregulated settings that circumnavigate legal loopholes in order to operate. Some children in these settings are at risk of radicalisation. Legislation needs to be strengthened so that these settings can be closed down and others deterred from operating.
- This year Ofsted have raised its concern about outstanding schools being exempt from inspection and the consequent gaps in its knowledge about the quality of education and safeguarding in these schools. For the outstanding grade to maintain its reputation, the exemption needs to be lifted and Ofsted needs the resource to inspect these schools.
- Ofsted have identified around 300 schools with 'exceptional levels' of pupils coming off-roll between Years 10 and 11. We know that the most vulnerable children are more likely to be excluded or off-rolled. The new EIF will allow Ofsted to identify and report on those schools that push young people who might achieve less well out of their schools through off-rolling.

### *The Year ahead for Ofsted*

- Ofsted's 2019 research programme will include projects looking at: practices that reduce workload and improve teacher well-being; practices that are being used in education to manage the most challenging behaviour and their consequences; what it can look like when schools with a declared faith successfully navigate potential conflicts between equality legislation and how they teach their beliefs and express them in their ethos and practices (in partnership with the faith inspectorates of religious education); physical development in the early years curriculum; the 16 to 19 curriculum; and SEND in mainstream schools.
- Ofsted will be working with the DfE to look at those schools that are 'stuck' at inadequate or RI and what they can do to improve.
- Ofsted will be exploring the issue of "off-rolling" in greater depth - its prevalence, the reasons for it and how it can be prevented.
- Ofsted will continue to train its inspectors on sexual violence in schools and colleges and more work will be undertaken to understand the scale of the problem.
- In January 2019, Ofsted will begin consulting on the new EIF which will consist of four judgements focused on: quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management.

## **The Inspection of Outstanding Schools**

Nick Gibb, Minister of State for School Standards, wrote to Ofsted's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, at the end of 2018, asking that Ofsted increase the level of inspection for outstanding schools to 10%, rather than the current 5 - 10%. This comes amid concerns that some schools previously rated outstanding have not been inspected for over ten years.

The letter highlights that when the Government introduced the exemption policy in 2012 it was a reflection of its commitment to ensure that inspection arrangements are proportionate and give the highest performing schools and colleges more autonomy so they can get on with what matters most, providing an excellent education. However, it has also always been the case that schools and colleges judged by Ofsted to be providing outstanding education are not exempt from accountability.

Furthermore, Ofsted has had the ability to determine, through its risk assessment process, which exempt schools and colleges have warranted re-inspection, and the power to inspect exempt providers for the purpose of survey/research visits.

The requested increase in the inspection threshold of outstanding settings to 10% recognises that the current arrangements are identifying too few schools and colleges to give parents the assurances they need. This is also in line with the expectation agreed in Parliament when the exemption was introduced. The 10% will include schools and colleges where Ofsted's risk assessment indicates there may be concerns. Ofsted can also choose to visit a selection of schools and colleges where best practice is likely to be found to support its survey and research programme.

The letter reiterates that as Chief Inspector, Ms Spielman and her inspectors will retain the power to inspect any school or college, exempt or otherwise, if Ofsted has concerns about the quality of provision or safety of pupils.

Currently Ofsted cannot inspect schools more frequently than legislated. However, in order to accommodate the increased inspection of outstanding schools, in their 2017-2022 strategy, Ofsted suggested that, in order to allow it to visit more outstanding provision while maintaining a focus on poor provision, Ofsted may, within legislative limits, lengthen the interval between inspection visits of good providers.

Watch this space for further updates!

## **National Director's Blogs**

Ofsted's National Director for Education, Sean Harford, is a regular blogger and one of his latest blogs outlines Ofsted's new approach to evaluating the work of Multi-Academy Trusts. Key points from the articles include:

- During the Summer Term 2018, Ofsted visited a small number of MATs to trial aspects of a new approach.
- Ofsted are confident that the new, resultant MAT summary evaluations, will improve the inspection experience for MAT leaders, their academies and for inspectors. Ultimately, Ofsted want to ensure that in individual inspections of MAT schools, the role of the MAT is properly considered.
- Ofsted's new approach will involve a number of inspections of individual academies from a MAT, taking place over a period of up to two terms. Once all the inspection reports are published, a small team of inspectors will visit the 'head office' to work with MAT senior leaders to evaluate the educational effectiveness of the MAT as a whole. This will draw on the inspections already carried out and discussions with MAT leaders.
- The new approach will enable Ofsted to:
  - Better understand the way MATs are organised and operate, the role they play in their own right and ensure that Ofsted inspections reflect this.

- Improve Ofsted's reporting on the impact that MATs are having, whether this is as part of a MAT summary evaluation or a standalone inspection of an academy/free school that is part of a MAT;
- Make evaluations of MATs more intelligent.
- MATs are integral to the running of their schools and are legally responsible for the quality of education that is being delivered through them. Therefore, in developing its new approach, Ofsted wanted to address misconceptions about the MAT's role as merely an instrument for school improvement.
- To ensure Ofsted are evaluating the impact of MATs effectively, the evaluations will be led by inspectors who have a deep knowledge and understanding of MATs and the way they work. Ofsted have brought on board Ofsted Inspectors, who are MAT leaders, to act as team inspectors for these evaluations, whenever possible.
- During Ofsted's summer term visits, and through wider discussions, MAT leaders highlighted that the current process did not easily allow for executive leaders to be available for the final feedback meetings at academy inspections.
- A "decent gap" in the schedule between academy inspections and the head office activities will provide MATs with the opportunity to reflect upon inspection outcomes and begin to take action to remedy any potential shortcomings, although Sean Harford does not specify what a "decent gap" would constitute.
- MAT summary evaluations may also include inspectors visiting a small number of schools during the week of the MAT head office visit, in agreement with the MAT, in order to see first-hand specific evidence of the impact of the MAT, in addition to that gathered during the routine inspections. Ofsted emphasises that these visits are **not** inspections and may include exempt schools. Ofsted believes that this will lead to a more balanced picture.
- To support its new approach, Ofsted have published its operational guidance which is designed to support its Inspectors in carrying out summary evaluations of MATs. The guidance sets out the process and range of evidence gathering activities that Inspectors carry out, from the time the MAT is informed of the summary evaluation, until the publication of the summary evaluation letter. The guidance is also published for greater transparency and so that MATs are aware of how Ofsted will carry out its summary evaluations.

The complete operational guidance can be accessed [here](#).

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## Academy Updates

### Academies Financial Handbook 2018

Whilst the new Academies Financial Handbook for 2018 was considered in detail in the Autumn Term 2018 Newsletter, a common question has been asked with regards to the number of Board meetings a Trust should be holding.

Whilst the current model Articles of Association state in Article 109 that the Trustees shall hold at least three meetings in each school year, it is clear from Section 2.1.2 in the AFH 2018 that the ESFA's expectation is more robust:

"The board and its committees must meet regularly enough to discharge their responsibilities and ensure robust governance and effective financial management arrangements ... If the board meets less than six times a year it must describe in its governance statement, accompanying its annual accounts, how it maintained effective oversight of funds with fewer meetings."

Some confusion has arisen as to whether it is the full Trust Board that must meet at least six times a year or whether it is the combined Full Trust Board and Trust Board Committee meetings (NOT including any Local Governing Body meetings, as accountability rests with the Trust Board and not the LGBs) that will be considered. If the Trust Board meetings are supported by Trust Board committees, Trusts will need to demonstrate effective reporting between the Full Board and the Committees, including effective alignment between Board and Committee meetings, and ensuring that all Trustees are appraised of all key issues.

It is clear from briefings by the Regional School Commissioner's Office that the number of meetings will be considered during the RSC's annual review meetings with Trust Chairs and CEOs.

The complete AFH 2018 can be accessed [here](#).

### **South East and South London MAT Conference**

The SESL MAT Conference took place mid-term and the Interim National Schools Commissioner, Dominic Herrington, provided an update on the work of the National Commissioner's Office and that of his eight Regional Schools commissioners:

#### *Facts and Figures*

- 85% of academies are now either good or outstanding;
- 82% of academies are now part of MATs with 76% of MATs consisting of between 1 and 5 academies;
- 74% of secondaries and 31% of primary schools have now converted to academy status (this equates to c.8,200 schools);
- There are currently 192 inadequate academies (2.7% of inspected academies) with a further 186 maintained schools awaiting conversion to academy status post an inadequate Ofsted inspection; and
- Within the SESL region itself, there are currently 1,144 academies and free schools, equating to 35% of all state-funded schools. The SESL region currently has 226 MATs although there is significant variation in MAT capacity across the region.

#### *Advice for those setting up or joining MATs*

- Strong leadership is key, including robust governance;
- Sensible geography needs to be considered;
- Robust financial management is needed;
- Intelligent accountability which isn't overly burdensome;
- Learn from and share what you do, improving practice and the decisions made;
- Measured growth, *if it all*; and
- Free up teacher time and invest in teacher CPD;

The Interim Commissioner also highlighted nine key characteristics of robust governance:

- The skills needed for Trust governance are explicitly identified;
- Trustees take their own professional development seriously;
- The Trust Chair plays a vital role in setting the direction of the Trust and its structures;
- The Board evaluates its own effectiveness, particularly when it is new and when it is at key points in its journey;
- Governance structures are designed for the current context of the Trust and the schools being governed, rather than a legacy of previous structures that are no longer fit for purpose;
- Executive leaders, including Trustees, being open and transparent with any school looking to join the Trust about the extent to which executive functions are delegated down;
- Board receiving management information, both financial and educational, in a standardised and easily accessible format;
- No duplication between the roles and responsibilities of the Trust Board and any LGBs; and
- Effective and meaningful arrangements in place to engage with parents and the wider community.

The SESL team highlighted its key priorities for 2018/19 as being:

- Supporting its MATs so that they are the best sources of strength and innovation in the school system;
- Build capacity, both through increasing sponsor capacity but also through greater collaboration, including encouraging the collaboration of smaller MATs;

- Dominic Herrington made an interesting reference to “school improvement contracts” for three to five years, which would enable MATs to go in and effectively run a school, align the school to the way in which the Trust operated, provide the Trust with time to conduct detailed due diligence on the school, particularly with regards to the finances. This could all be done without taking on all of the financial risks and concerns of a failing school, some of the issues which have prevented inadequate schools from finding appropriate academy sponsors.
- Offer targeted support and challenge, particularly where academies are educationally below par or financially less able;
- Grow MAT networks which will allow the sharing of good practice, focus on school improvement issues; and
- Informed and sustainable growth planning within the region.
  - It was interesting to note the changed stance when considering MAT growth. The RSC’s office emphasised that MATs would only be permitted to grow if they had:
    - The capability; AND
    - The capacity; AND
    - Financial accountability.

Said more bluntly, MATs would need to demonstrate a consistent track record of school improvement, sound governance and financial viability in order to expand.

### **Financial Notices to Improve**

The recent “Financial Management and Governance Review” for the Stratton Education Trust, published on the ESFA’s website in November 2018, highlighted some key issues, which have been recurring themes in a number of recent ESFA reviews. Key issues raised include:

- A lack of transparency in reporting governance arrangements and business interests on both the Trust’s website and GIAS;
  - Anomalies between stated Directors as per Companies House, GIAS and the Trust’s website, when all should be consistent.
  - Lack of up to date disclosure on the Trust’s website with regards to appointment dates for Trustees, business interests for a number of Trustees not being disclosed on the website, an out of date Register of Interests on the website and missing Declaration of Interest forms when ESFA auditors attempted to track back.
- The Trust’s audit committee not operating in line with the Academies Financial Handbook;
  - The minutes of the Audit Committee reflected no discussions around internal controls, external audit findings and agreeing the programme of work to address internal control risks.
  - Whilst there was evidence that the Trust’s risk profile was discussed, it wasn’t always clear why risks were removed/“greyed out” from the register.
  - The Trust Board minutes did not demonstrate that assurances to the Board had been adequately provided by the Audit and Risk Committee.
- Weak internal controls with regards to procurement;
  - Common practice for purchase orders to be raised after receipt of an invoice rather than before the goods had been received.
  - No evidence of any formal, or informal, procurement process being undertaken for the appointment of building contractors.
  - £282K was spent on a separate contractor, which was appointed by way of recommendation rather than through a formal tendering process.
- Non-disclosure of related party transactions in the audited financial statements;
  - The ESFA points to both the Charities SORP and the Financial Reporting Standards, both of which require all transactions with related parties to be disclosed in the financial statements so that any user

of these accounts can gain a full understanding of them, of the issues that might have influenced them and ensure that transparency is evident in financial reporting.

- Not being able to demonstrate value for money;
- Severance payments not being supported by either a legal assessment or a business case, justifying the payments.
  - It can also be argued that by making such severance payments without the supporting legal assessment or business case, the Trust again demonstrated not achieving value for money.

The ESFA's report makes an interesting reference to the fact that the Trust did not have a permanent Chief Financial Officer, with the post being covered by an agency employee on a temporary basis. The Treasury's Review of the Tax Arrangements of Public Sector Appointees (and the Academies Financial Handbook makes reference to the findings of this review) recommends that the most senior staff should be on the payroll unless there are exceptional temporary circumstances, temporary being no more than six months. The CFO post is most definitely a senior post within an Academy Trust and thus using an agency employee to fulfill this role for more than the six-month threshold may give rise to a fine by the Treasury Department.

In light of the findings from this governance review, and others before it, Trust Boards need to ensure:

- All details of current Trustees are accurately uploaded onto the Trust website and submitted to both the ESFA and Companies House on a timely basis and within the ESFA's set deadlines of fourteen days.
- Current Pecuniary and Business Interest forms are held for all Trustees and summarised accurately on the Trust's website and amended on a timely basis.
- All related party transactions are separately reported with a robust supporting evidence trail. Trustees need to fully understand the new Related Party Transaction regulations being implemented from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, reported in the Academies Financial Handbook 2018.
- Ensure a timely and comprehensive flow of information, highlighting key issues and risks, between the full Trust Board and Trust committees, to enable effective accountability.
- Ensure meeting minutes are an accurate record of all key issues discussed.

### **Academy Sector Annual report for 2016/17**

The DfE has published its annual Academy Sector Report for 2016/17 which can be accessed in full [here](#).

Key **financial issues** identified included:

- For the financial year ended 31.8.17, the academy sector received £22.5Bn income (2015/16: £20.5Bn) and spent £24.8Bn (2015/16: £20.0Bn).
- Total reserves and net assets held by the sector at 31.8.17 were £42.6Bn (2015/16: £43.4Bn).
- The primary driver of this reduction was the DfE's decision to de-recognise land and buildings from which academies operate where the DfE has judged the relevant academy not to have control of these assets. This derecognition has led to a net assets reduction on the sector's balance sheet of £8.3Bn. Excluding this decision, the sector's recognised net assets would have increased by £9Bn to c.£52Bn - reflecting the overall increase in the size of the sector. In all cases of de-recognisation, these premises continue to be occupied and used by Academy Trusts.
- The sector incurred a total deficit for the year of £6.1Bn although this figure includes the £8.3Bn asset de-recognisation charge (see above).
- The accounts highlight that 185 academy trusts were in cumulative deficit at the end of August 2017 (August 2016: 167). The total cumulative aggregate deficit for 2016/17 was £65M (£50M for 2015/16), compared to a total cumulative aggregate surplus of £2.4Bn (£2.2Bn for 2015/16).
- The total value of cash held by the sector has increased by £319M from £3.5Bn to £3.8Bn which represents a slightly lower rate than the increase in sector size. The average cash balance per academy was £509K in 2016/17 (£554K in 2015/16).

- The proportion of cash held to operational cash expenditure remains stable at 17.5% in 2016/17 (17.3% in 2015/16 i.e. approximately two month's cash expenditure). The sector is encouraged not to hold more cash than is required to maintain its financial stability.
- The total value of overdrafts held by the sector is stable at around £1M and in line with Academies Financial Handbook guidance, academy trusts are required to obtain advance permission from the ESFA before incurring borrowing, including bank overdrafts.

Related Party Transactions	16/17 No. of transactions	15/16 No. of transactions	% change	16/17 Transaction value £M	15/16 Transaction value £M	% change
Paid	2,399	3,099	22.6%	134	122	9.8%
Received	1,074	1,155	-7.0%	106	75	40.0%

- Whilst the number of both payments to, and receipts from, related parties has decreased, the value of both payments and receipts has increased. In order to manage governance risks around related parties, the DfE has announced that enhanced related party transaction approval procedures will be introduced from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 which requires trusts to declare all RPTs and to seek the ESFA's approval for all transactions over £20K, cumulative or individual in nature.
- The number of trusts paying an individual member of staff an emolument in excess of £150K has remained broadly stable at 125 trusts, compared to 121 trusts in 2015/16. 941 trusts paying individual members £100K or more has increased from 873 in 2015/16 to 941 in 2016/17. As highlighted by both the DfE and the ESFA there is need for robust evidence-based processes in setting pay, and to ensure that pay of leadership teams in the sector is transparent, proportionate and justifiable, including:
  - The publication of Trusts paying a member of staff or trustee £150K or more;
  - Seeking assurance from Trust Chairs that structured pay policies and procedures are in place where trusts pay any individual over £150K or two or more over £100K each; and
  - Challenging Trusts to justify their decision-making where a member of staff is paid over £150K or two or more salaries are over £100K each.

Key **educational issues** identified include:

- The DfE starts this section of the report by stating that comparisons between sponsored academies and LA schools are complex. Whilst many of the poorest performing schools have now become sponsored academies, which raises the average quality of the remaining LA-maintained schools, conversely, many high performing LA-maintained schools have become converter academies, and this can act to reduce the average quality of the remaining LA-maintained schools. In addition, the group of schools included in each category changes from one year to the next. This means that comparing the headline performance figures reflects not only the change in performance and the effect of reform but also the change in school composition.
- Average KS2 combined (maths, reading and writing) attainment in sponsored academies is below the average for LA-maintained mainstream schools and all state-funded schools. Converter academies have a higher percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in the three assessments than other academy types. This may be partly explained by the fact that sponsored academies tended to be low performing schools before they became academies, while schools that chose to convert to academy status were often high performing schools before conversion.
- At KS2, the progress made by pupils in LA-maintained schools and converter academies is marginally higher than the national average in all subjects. Pupils in sponsored academies made less progress in reading and in maths than pupils with similar prior attainment in other school types. However, they made more progress in writing than pupils in other types of schools.
- Trend analysis over time shows that sponsored academies open for two or more academic years showed an

increase in attainment of between 7 and 9 percentage points which is in line with the increase for all schools nationally (8 pp). Sponsored academies open for only a year showed the biggest improvement since 2016 (12 pp). It should be noted that for this group, figures for 2016 would include results for the predecessor schools prior to conversion to academy status. For both sponsored and converter academies the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard was greatest for academies open for six or more academic years.

- With regards to Key Stage 4 performance, on average, converter academies have higher attainment levels across the headline measures than the average for state-funded schools. This may be explained by the fact that these were already high-performing schools that chose to convert to academies. The converse may be true of sponsored academies, which perform below the average for state-funded schools, as these are schools that were already underperforming before their conversion to academy status.
- The percentage of pupils achieving grade 4/C or above in English and maths has increased in both sponsored academies and converter academies. In 2017, 53.9% of pupils in sponsored academies achieved this, compared with 53% in 2016. In converter academies, 70.6% of pupils achieved a grade 4 or above in English and maths, compared with 69.8% of pupils achieving grade A\*-C in English and maths in 2016. This means that performance in academies remains above the national average for all state-funded schools on this measure.
- Sponsored academies open for five academic years had the lowest percentage of pupils achieving a grade 4 or above in 2017 for English and maths (49.7%), and those open for seven years or more had the highest percentage (55.3%). Converter academies tend to have a higher percentage of pupils achieving a grade 4 or above in English and maths the longer they have been open. Those open for four years are an exception and have a lower percentage than those open for three years (65.9% compared to 66.5%).
- Mainstream converter academies have higher Progress 8 scores compared with LA-maintained mainstream schools. The converse is true of sponsored academies, which perform below the average for LA-maintained schools. This may partly be due to the fact that these are schools were generally underperforming before their conversion to sponsored academy status. Pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals made slightly more progress in sponsored academies compared to those with similar prior attainment in LA-maintained schools. However, sponsored academies still had lower Progress 8 scores than converter academies for pupils eligible for free school meals.
- As Progress 8 scores are not directly comparable between years, the report has not presented comparisons between 2016 and 2017.

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

### **Off Rolling of Pupils in Year 11**

A number of academy trusts and Local Authorities are facing criticism over pupils disappearing from classrooms in increasing numbers in the year before their GCSEs. Ofsted is among those groups voicing concern and has begun its own research although the inspectorate has yet to find a way to differentiate off-rolling from where schools have acted in the best interests of the children. Alongside this, a recent article in the Guardian published its own findings based on official pupil figures from the DfE.

Education Guardian looked at England's 50 largest academy trusts and 50 largest Local Authorities and compared the number of pupils in year 11 in 2017/18 to the number in year 10, a year earlier. The Guardian's findings reveal a consistent pattern in some academy trusts of year groups shrinking substantially. The same four trusts fill the top four places based on both 2017/18 and 2016/17 data.

These four Trusts were:

- Delta Academies Trust, based in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, where there were 124 fewer pupils in January 2018 in year 11 than in January 2017 (year 10). This equated to a net reduction in pupil numbers of 6.98%, or two children in every class of 30;

- Aldridge Education, based in central London, where there were 52 fewer pupils year-on-year, or 6.92% of the cohort;
- Norwich-based Inspiration Trust (which was founded by the current Education Minister, Lord Agnew) with 40 fewer pupils, a loss of 5.38%; and
- The Harris Federation where numbers of pupils fell by 5.14%.

Nationally, there has been a huge rise in recent years in the number of young people leaving their school in the run-up to GCSEs. The average year 10/11 shrinkage rate in England was 2% in 2018. Seven years ago, the rate was less than 0.1%. Many of these teenagers will attend pupil referral units or will be educated at home, both of which means that their GCSE grades will not be counted in their school's exam results and reflected in performance league tables. Disturbingly, the data analysed by the Education Guardian points to the trend of "disappearing pupils" appearing to occur at a higher rate in the academies sector.

### **Admissions Guidance**

The ESFA has updated its guidance on admissions into academies:

- Academies are their own admissions authority and must meet all the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code that came into force in December 2014, except where variations have been written into their funding agreement to support fair access.
- Admission Authorities must have determined their admissions arrangements for entry in September 2020 by the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019. These must be published on the academy's website, and a copy sent to the Local Authority by the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019.
- Any applicant refused a place at an academy has a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel established by the admission authority. Admission authorities must publish their appeals timetable on their website by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019.
- Since September 2013, academies and free schools have been able to accept in-year admission applications directly from parents. An academy should state on its website that it is receiving and deciding in-year applications, if it plans to do so. The academy can continue to use the Local Authority to co-ordinate in-year admissions if this suits local circumstances better.
- Academies must:
  - allocate places on the basis of the published over-subscription criteria;
  - inform local authorities of all applications and their outcome;
  - inform parents of their right of appeal against the refusal of a place;
  - comply with the School Admissions Code, paying particular attention to chapter 3; and
  - participate fully in locally agreed fair access protocols.

The guidance also includes a checklist which reflects common subjects of challenge and complaint in relation to admissions by all types of school (and not just academies). It covers issues such as:

- Admission authorities must consult when admission arrangements are changed or if they have not been consulted on within the last 7 years. Admission authorities must consult for a minimum period of 6 weeks and should take place between the 1<sup>st</sup> October and 31<sup>st</sup> January;
- Once admission authorities have determined their admission arrangements, they must notify the appropriate bodies and must publish a copy of the determined arrangements on their website displaying them for the whole offer year (the academic year in which offers for places are made);
- The admission authority for the school must set out in its arrangements the criteria against which places will be allocated at the school when there are more applications than places and the order in which the criteria will be applied. All children with an EHCP or SEN Statement which specifically names the school must be admitted;
- All schools must have over-subscription criteria for each relevant age group and the highest priority must be given, unless otherwise provided in the Code, to looked after children and previously looked after children;
- Admission arrangements must include an effective, clear and fair tie-breaker to decide between two applications that cannot otherwise be separated; and

- If admission authorities decide to use social and medical need as an over-subscription criterion, they must set out in their arrangements how they will define this need and give clear details about what supporting evidence will be required (for example a letter from a doctor or social worker) and then make consistent decisions based on the evidence provided.

The guidance can be accessed in full via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-admissions>.

## **Compliance Deadlines**

### *Academy Accounts Return*

Academy trusts preparing their financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 are also required to complete an Accounts Return. The online form, alongside guidance for completing the form, the excel workbook to help prepare the return, which includes a new section explaining the pension requirements, is now available on the ESFA's website. Trusts must complete the online form to submit their accounts return by the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019. The ESFA continues to emphasise that the names of those Trusts who are late in submitting two or more annual financial returns, including the Accounts Return, will be published on the ESFA website.

### *Audited Financial Statements*

The audited financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 must be uploaded onto the Trust's website, along with the Auditors' Management Letter, by the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

The audited financial statements must also be submitted to Companies House by the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019.

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## **Teacher Workload and Recruitment**

### **Teacher Workforce Dynamics in England – a NFER Report**

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) recently published a report on the teaching workforce in England, focusing particularly on teacher retention, identifying key factors causing teachers to leave the profession and making recommendations for policy makers and school leaders.

The report highlights that whilst the demand for teachers is growing, particularly in certain subjects and geographical areas, at the same time, a larger proportion of teachers are leaving the profession. Between 2010/11 and 2015/16, the rate of working-age teachers leaving the profession increased from 8.9% to 10.3% in primary schools and from 10.8% to 11.8% in secondary schools.

Schools are finding it harder to retain early career teachers, especially in maths, science and modern foreign languages (MFL). Pupil numbers are rising, particularly in secondary schools, and the recruitment of new teachers into the profession is not keeping up. With teachers leaving the profession in greater numbers and rising staff turnover between schools, school leaders have more vacancies to fill, more staffing uncertainty to deal with and higher recruitment costs. The Government's initial response to these challenges has been to focus on trying to increase teacher recruitment. However, NFER argues that greater attention needs to be given to retaining teachers in the profession, and the need to build a better understanding of the dynamics of the teacher workforce - why people move, why they leave the profession, and whether they return.

*Recommendation 1:* The Government should give greater attention to the impact of teachers moving around the profession and develop policies to support schools which are disproportionately affected.

The proportion of teachers in the workforce in their 50s has decreased markedly between 2010 and 2016, down from 23% in 2010 to 17% in 2016.

*Recommendation 2:* The Government should investigate why the rate of leaving among older teachers has been increasing and explore whether they could be incentivised to stay in the profession longer, particularly in subjects with specialist teacher shortages.

The proportion of teachers leaving the profession or moving school increased across all subjects between 2010/11 and 2015/16, although some subjects are more affected than others. Maths, science and MFL teachers have above-average rates of leaving the profession, whereas humanities teachers are the least likely to leave. Over the last five years, the number of new teachers being recruited into these subjects has been running below the Government's own targets. Low recruitment and retention rates among science and MFL teachers appears to have limited schools' ability to expand the teaching hours in these subjects, despite the Government's new accountability measures giving schools an incentive to do so.

Whilst science and MFL teacher trainees attract generous bursaries of at least £25,000, these do not appear to be incentivising recruitment or retention to the levels required. Bursaries may be operating ineffectively because the payments are not tied to teachers staying in teaching.

*Recommendation 3:* The Government should structure bursary payments or other financial incentives such as student loan repayments to explicitly incentivise retention in the teaching profession during the first few years after training.

Teachers work long hours during term time and are dissatisfied with their amount of leisure time. Research studies have shown that high workload, driven by policy changes and the demands of inspection, is the key reason teachers give for working long term-time hours. Teachers who are unable or unwilling to work long hours to keep up with the high workload find their workload becomes unmanageable and are more likely to leave the profession. Unmanageable workload is consistently the most cited reason teachers give for why they leave the profession.

*Recommendation 4:* School leaders, the Government and Ofsted need to continue working together to review the impact their actions are having on the workload of all teachers, to identify practical actions that can be taken to reduce it.

*Recommendation 5:* Schools should consider having a governor or trustee responsible for staff welfare, or a member of the management team with specific time and responsibilities in this area.

Improving job satisfaction is a key motivation for teachers to leave for another job outside teaching.

*Recommendation 6:* School leaders should regularly monitor the job satisfaction and engagement of their staff directly, use line management effectively to identify workload issues, and intervene to increase support and reduce workload pressures where issues are identified.

Teachers are not primarily motivated to leave the profession by the prospect of increased pay.

*Recommendation 7:* Policy responses that aim to increase teacher retention must consider pay alongside other factors affecting the trade-offs that teachers make, such as their workload, working hours and job satisfaction.

*Recommendation 8:* The Government should target teacher pay increases at groups that are likely to be most responsive to pay changes, such as early-career teachers and/or maths and science teachers, as this is likely to be the most cost effective way of improving retention.

A lack of part-time working opportunities is leading some teachers to leave and discouraging potential returners. One in four teachers in the primary sector worked part-time compared to about one in six in the secondary sector in 2016. 20% of full-time secondary teachers who leave teaching for a new job take up part-time work. This suggests that primary schools are more willing, or better able, to accommodate part-time teachers. Part-time secondary teachers also have higher rates of leaving the profession than part-time primary teachers, suggesting that secondary teachers and/or secondary schools have more difficulty making part-time employment work. The secondary school teacher stock has a large cohort of teachers approaching their mid-thirties, which is when part-time employment peaks, meaning the next few years are a critical time for taking action.

*Recommendation 9:* The Government and stakeholders in the secondary sector need to look urgently at identifying ways to accommodate more effective part-time working in secondary schools.

*Recommendation 10:* Further research with secondary schools which successfully offer greater flexibility in working patterns should be undertaken and best practice shared.

There appears to be little evidence to date that MATs are better able to retain teachers in the profession by providing opportunities to move within their structure. After excluding internal moves within the same MAT, MATs have similar rates of teachers moving school when compared to other schools. That said, NFER's findings do suggest that MAT leaders are making use of the opportunities to redeploy teachers and senior leaders to where they are most needed in their academy trust.

*Recommendation 11:* To help improve retention, leaders of MATs should do more to promote the benefits of working in their organisation to their teachers; for example, by raising the profile of the MAT as the structure that teachers belong to, and through promoting career paths for teachers to develop and progress within the MAT.

Teachers in schools rated as Inadequate by Ofsted are more likely to leave the profession or move school.

*Recommendation 12:* School and system leaders need to review what more they can do to identify and support good teachers who are working hard to turn inadequate schools around, so that they do not drift away from the profession.

The teacher supply challenge in London is particularly acute when compared to other geographic areas. London has considerably more teachers leaving the profession compared to other areas, including other large cities such as Birmingham and Manchester. Furthermore, whilst London schools attract a small net gain of teachers in their twenties from other geographic areas, they lose 1% of teachers in their thirties and 0.6% of teachers in their forties each year.

*Recommendation 13:* Policy makers should look at how policy interventions, such as housing subsidies, could help to recruit and retain teachers in high-cost areas.

*Recommendation 14:* Further research exploring the geographical flows of trainees into the teacher workforce and during their careers would help to gain a better understanding and aid the development of policy solutions in areas where teacher supply issues are most acute.

The full research report can be accessed [here](#).

## Report of the Workload Advisory Group

November 2018 saw the publication of a report by the Teacher Workload Advisory Group which had been commissioned by the Education Secretary to consider how teacher workload could be reduced through more effective and more efficient data management.

The report looks at whether the time spent managing pupil attainment and pastoral data is proportionate to its educational benefits. Whilst the report acknowledges that it cannot tell schools how best to manage data in their own context, as schools are too diverse in the size and nature of communities they serve to employ a one rule for all philosophy, the TWAG sets out a number of guiding principles that it recommends school leaders, including Governing Boards, use when thinking about and evaluating their own setting:

- *The purpose and use of data is clear, is relevant to the intended audience and is in line with school values and aims.* Start with the intended action in mind and evaluate whether or not it is necessary. What are the greatest possible benefits of using the data and is there any other way to achieve the same ends? Who will see and use this data, is it relevant to their role and do they understand how the data relates to the possible intended actions?
- *The precision and limitations of data, and what can be inferred from it, are well understood.* For example, we can never know exactly what all students have learnt and are capable of at all times, even with the best designed assessments. Does the data you are collecting provide you with an accurate enough picture of what you are trying to find out? Is the cohort size too small to be able to make inferences from the data?
- *The amount of data collected and the frequency with which it is collected is proportionate.* Leaders should consider whether the data collection and analysis is realistic within normal working hours, given staffing and resources available, and judge whether the time spent is worth the outcome.
- *School and trust leaders review processes for both collecting data and for making use of the data once gathered.* School and trust leaders have a duty to evaluate the time costs for each stage of collecting and analysing data. Decide on whom the burden of collection and analysis should fall and ensure they have the capacity to complete this, be explicit about what time spent on data collection and investment is displacing and have a means of deciding when a data collection process is no longer necessary.

The TWAG report has made a number of over-arching recommendations:

- The DfE should find out how school and trust leaders currently evaluate their use of data. By Spring 2019 the DfE should test with school staff whether there is a need for further support for schools to do this (such as an audit tool or checklist). Following this testing the DfE should commission experts to develop the final product if needed.
- The DfE, Ofsted, unions and professional associations should reflect these principles in their guidance, in training for schools, officials and members, and through their networks.
- The DfE should evaluate to what extent schools are aligned to the principles set out in this report, including through existing quantitative surveys with a representative sample of schools. If this evaluation reveals significant levels of non-adoption, the DfE should work with stakeholders to ensure that more schools incorporate the outcomes of the report into their policy and practice.
- Ofsted should monitor the consistency of inspection practice relating to the principles of this report.
- Unions and professional associations should disseminate the principles of this report and collect and share case studies of where schools have made changes to their data practices.
- School and trust leaders, and governors should review their data processes according to these principles.

The full report from TWAG can be accessed [here](#). The Government's response to the report, which accepts all of the recommendations made by TWAG, can be read in full [here](#).

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## News in Brief

### **New funding to support children with SEND**

The end of December 2018 saw the Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, announce an additional £350M of funding to support children with complex needs and disabilities.

Local Authorities will receive an additional £250M over the next two years, in addition to the £6Bn provided for the high needs budget this year, to provide support for children and young people with complex SEND. Families will also benefit from more choice for their child's education through an extra £100M investment to create more specialist places in mainstream schools, colleges and special schools, giving more children and young people access to a good school or college place that meets their individual needs. This could include more state-of-the-art facilities, such as sensory rooms and specialist equipment.

More special free schools will also be given the green light to open as the Education Secretary confirmed he would approve all high quality bids in the current round of special and alternative provision free schools applications, creating even more choice for parents.

The Government has also confirmed an expansion of the funding to train more educational psychologists, who are responsible for assessing children's needs and providing tailored support as part of the Education, Health and Care needs assessment process. From September 2020, there will be a further three training rounds and an increase in the number of trainees from 160 to at least 206, to help keep up with demand for this specialist advice.

The news of the additional £350M investment was welcomed by Ofsted with the Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, stating that Ofsted's inspections show that there is still a long way to go before children and young people with SEND are getting all the support they deserve. She referenced there being too many local areas where the implementation of the 2014 SEND reforms have not lived up to expectations.

Classroom teachers and those in training will also have a greater focus on supporting children with SEND as the upcoming Teaching Recruitment and Retention Strategy will make sure all teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of all pupils.

Local authority education services will be encouraged to work more closely with health and social care to commission local services that meet the needs of the families and children in their area, as a new advisory SEND System Leadership Board is to be set up. This new expert board will include representatives of local health, social care, and education services, and will work closely with charities, school and families.

To better understand the financial incentives that influence how schools, colleges and councils support children and young people with special educational needs, the DfE will be gathering more evidence in the New Year. This will include looking at the first £6,000 schools pay for SEND support costs before accessing additional funding from local high needs budgets.

### **Health Education in Schools**

The Government has already announced that health education and relationship education for primary schools and relationship and sex education for secondary schools will become compulsory from September 2020 onwards (although schools will be encouraged to implement this, tailored to meet their pupils' needs, from September 2019). The start of the New Year saw the Education Secretary announce that all children will be taught basic first aid in schools, so that by the end of secondary school, pupils will be taught how to administer CPR, the purpose of defibrillators, basic treatments for common injuries and how to get help in a medical emergency.

In countries that already teach CPR in schools, cardiac arrest survival rates are more than double those of the UK.

### **Parentkind's Annual Survey 2018**

Parentkind's Parent Insight Survey looks at parents' attitudes and opinions on a number of topics related to their children's education. As well as continuing to track parental attitudes year on year, the survey also asks parents their views on a number of new topics including perceptions of the effectiveness of schools' communications with parents, the importance of parental influence on children's education, children's mental health and wellbeing at school, attributes that children should have when they leave school, and attributes of a successful school and parents' satisfaction.

#### *1. Parents call on schools to address the accountability gap*

Parentkind's research found that 66% of parents want schools to be more accountable to them with 77% wishing to have a say on their child's education at school level. When it comes to how much of a say parents perceive they have, 53% believe their school listens whilst 55% believe their school takes action based on their views.

The top four areas of school life on which parents would like to be consulted are: Curriculum (56%); Pupil behaviour (51%); Homework (44%); and Budgets/school costs (30%).

Parents also wish to have a say beyond school level, with 60% saying so at Local Authority / MAT levels. Despite that, only 35% and 30% respectively believe that these organisations listen to their views. This shows that the further parents are removed from decision-making, the larger the accountability gap becomes and the harder it is for parent voice to be heard.

#### *2. School funding continues to impact parents*

The survey results reveal that more parents are donating to their school fund year-on-year, and the average monthly contribution they make is increasing, too. At the same time, parents are increasingly being asked to pay for things that used to be free, such as school clubs, concerts and sports days. The research shows:

- 43% of parents polled had been asked to donate to a school fund (up from 42% in 2017 and 37% in 2016);
- The proportion of parents who donate to the school fund has increased to 36% (34% 2017, 29% 2016);
- An average of £11.35 is donated each month, an increase of £2.45 (28%) on the 2017 figure;
- 51% know how the donated money was spent, up from 38% in 2017 and 37% in 2016;
- 49% of all respondents in 2018 believe the pressures on school budgets have negatively impacted their child's education;
- More parents are asked to pay for school clubs that used to be free (26%) as well as to attend events such as sports days and concerts (28%);
- 21% have been asked to supply teaching equipment (stationery, books, glue pens etc.), up from 15% in 2017; and
- 12% have been asked to supply essentials such as toilet paper, which is up from 7% last year.

#### *3. Concerns over child mental health in schools*

Research found that three in five parents are worried about their child's emotional well-being and mental health at school, with two in five children having experienced stress relating to homework (42%) and exams (41%), while over a third have suffered from anxiety (38%) and bullying (33%). Other research findings include:

- 53% of respondents were concerned that the school's high expectations were putting pressure on their child;
- Around a fifth of parents said their child had suffered from depression, rising to 23% of parents with children aged 16 or older. Just over a quarter (27%) of these respondents said they were not satisfied with the way their child was helped by the school in this regard;
- A third (34%) of parents were not satisfied with how the school offered support for bullying;
- Nearly a quarter (23%) of parents said their child had felt the pressure to constantly engage with social media as a result of something that happened at school; and

- Parents think self-confidence is one of the key attributes' children should leave primary (64%) and secondary (57%) school with.

### **Careers Guidance in Schools – An Update**

The Careers and Enterprise Company released a report, "The State of the Nation 2018: Careers and Enterprise Provision in England's Schools" which used over 3,000 schools' self-assessments of their performance against the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, designed to measure the quality of careers advice and guidance in schools. Key findings from the report found that:

*In total 3,000 schools and colleges have now completed the Compass self-assessment tool, which CAEC believes provides the most comprehensive assessment yet of careers provision in England*

- CAEC believe that this is evidence that engaging with the Gatsby Benchmarks is becoming the norm for schools and colleges.

*On average, 1,000 schools and colleges have now completed Compass twice*

- These schools and colleges are now achieving 2.7 out of the 8 benchmarks;
- There has been progress on every benchmark; and
- Progress has been particularly strong on 'Encounters with employers and employees' (50% of schools and colleges are now achieving this benchmark) and 'Linking curriculum learning to careers'.

*Schools and colleges serving disadvantaged communities perform particularly well*

- Schools and colleges serving communities with higher unemployment and fewer professionals tend to score better against the benchmarks;
- Schools and colleges in coastal areas also tend to do better. This may be because efforts to target resources are working, and that schools and colleges are prioritising careers support as a solution to the social mobility challenge.

*The progress is positive, but we have a long way to go*

- Across the total 3,000 schools and colleges, the average number of benchmarks achieved by schools and colleges is still only 2.1.
- The proportion of schools and colleges not achieving any benchmarks has fallen to 18%, the proportion achieving half has increased to 20%, and 11% of all schools are now achieving the majority of the benchmarks. 21 schools and colleges have achieved all eight benchmarks.

As a reminder, the eight Gatsby Benchmarks can be summarised as:

- having a stable careers programme - fully achieved by 6% of the 3,000 schools and colleges
- learning from career and labour market information - achieved by 32%
- addressing the needs of each pupil - achieved by 13%
- linking curriculum learning to careers - achieved by 26%
- encounters with employers and employees - achieved by 38%
- experiences of workplaces - fully achieved by 37%
- encounters with further and higher education - fully achieved by 13%
- personal guidance - fully achieved by 49%

The full report by CAEC can be accessed [here](#).

### **Bullying in Schools**

The DfE has released its analysis of bullying in England based on data from the latest Crime Survey for England and Wales. The analysis looks at data over the period April 2013 to March 2018 covering 10 to 15 year olds. Key findings from analysis includes:

*One in six young people reported being bullied in the previous 12 months*

- It is estimated that in the year from April 2017 to March 2018, 17% of young people aged 10 to 15 in England were bullied in the previous 12 months in a way that made them frightened or upset. This is similar to the figure for previous years.
- The majority of bullying instances took place in school.

*Some groups were more likely to report being bullied*

These were:

- younger children (those aged 10 to 12 years) - 8% of 15 year old children reported bullying compared to 22% of 10 year olds in 2017/18;
- children of a white ethnic origin were significantly more likely to report bullying compared to ethnic minority children;
- children with a long-term illness or disability;
- children who received extra help at school were 7% more likely to report bullying than those who didn't receive extra help;
- children living in the most deprived areas;
- children who had truanted from school in the previous 12 months;
- children who had been suspended or excluded from school in the previous 12 months;
- children living in one-adult households; and
- children living in rented accommodation.

*Verbal bullying was the most common type of bullying*

60% of those children who said they had been bullied had experienced some kind of physical bullying, 89% said they had suffered some kind of verbal bullying and 18% said they had suffered theft or damage to their property. Boys and younger children (those aged 10 to 12 years old) were more likely to experience physical bullying than other groups.

*There was also a strong gender difference when it comes to certain types of bullying*

Girls were more likely to report being bullied than boys (in 2017 21% of females reported being bullied compared to 14% of males). Girls were also nearly twice as likely to state that they had experienced cyber bullying in the past year than boys: 9% compared to 5%.

There was no significant change in the reporting of cyber-bullying. It is estimated that 7% of young people aged 10 to 15 in England in the year ending March 2018 had experienced cyber bullying.

Most respondents felt that their school dealt with bullying well although this percentage has fallen from 78% in the year ending March 2014 to 72% in 2018. Those who had been bullied were considerably more likely to report that their school dealt with bullying not very well or badly (35% compared to 12%).

The full analysis can be accessed [here](#).

### **Updated Mental Health and Behaviour guidance**

The DfE has updated its non-statutory guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools which aims to help schools to support pupils whose mental health problems manifest themselves in behaviour. Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children by developing whole school approaches tailored to their particular needs, as well as considering the needs of individual pupils. The updated advice:

- Sets out schools' roles and responsibilities in relation to mental health and behaviour, within their existing duties;
- Outlines how schools can identify whether a child or young person's behaviour – disruptive, withdrawn, anxious, depressed or otherwise – may be related to a mental health problem, and how to support them in these circumstances;

- Provides advice and guidance on working with other professionals and external agencies where appropriate; and
- Provides links to additional support available to schools, including frameworks, audit tools, evidence and resources.

The key points and principles underpinning this guidance include:

- Schools have a central role to play in enabling their pupils to be resilient and to support good mental health and wellbeing. Education about relationships, sex and health can be important vehicles through which schools can teach pupils about mental health and wellbeing.
- A school's approach to mental health and behaviour should be part of a consistent whole school approach. This should involve providing a structured school environment with clear expectations of behaviour, well communicated social norms and routines, which are reinforced with highly consistent consequence systems. This should be paired with an individualised graduated response when the behavioural issues might be a result of educational, mental health, other needs or vulnerabilities.
- Schools should consider how best to use their SEN and pupil premium resources to provide support for children with mental health difficulties where appropriate.
- School staff cannot act as mental health experts and should not try to diagnose conditions. However, they should ensure they have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.
- As set out in Chapter 6 of the statutory SEND 0-25 years Code of Practice 2015, schools need to be alert to how mental health problems can underpin behaviour issues in order to support pupils effectively, working with external support where needed. They also need to be aware of their duties under the Equality Act 2010, recognising that some mental health issues will meet the definition of disability.
- When schools suspect a pupil has a mental health problem, they should use the graduated response process (assess – plan – do – review) to put support in place. There are a number of identification and measurement tools, such as the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and Boxall Profile, which can support this process.
- Schools should ensure they have clear systems and processes in place for early intervention and identification, referral to experienced skilled professionals, and clear accountability systems.
- It is important that schools have an understanding of the local services available, including school nurses, and how and when to draw on or commission them. Where required, schools should expect parents and pupils to seek and receive support elsewhere, including from their GP, NHS services, trained professionals working in specialist voluntary organisations and other sources.

The full guidance can be accessed [here](#).

### **New figures show rise in mental health problems in young people**

Official statistics on the prevalence of mental health conditions in children and young people have been published by NHS Digital. The first update in 13 years, the latest figures are based on a survey of 9,117 children and young people. The survey results show an increase in the proportion of children with mental health condition and find that:

- Overall, one in eight (12.8%) people aged under 19 in England have a mental health disorder;
- The comparable data (for those aged five to 15) shows that the prevalence of mental health problems has risen from 9.7% in 1999 to 11.2% in 2017;
- Prevalence increases as age increases: one in eighteen (5.5%) two to four year-old preschool children were identified as having at least one mental disorder, rising to one in six (16.9%) young people aged 17 to 19;
- There has been a rise in the number of young people with anxiety or depression, increasing from 3.9% in 2004 to 5.8% in 2017. The prevalence of other conditions has remained the same;
- A third (34.9%) of 14 to 19 year olds who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual had a mental disorder, compared to 13.2% of those who identified as heterosexual; and

- A quarter of 11 to 16 year olds with a mental disorder had self-harmed or attempted suicide at some point, compared to 3% of those who were not diagnosed.

### **Measures to support early years education**

The DfE has launched a number of projects, backed by nearly £18M in funding, which aim to provide extra support for early years child development, specifically for children from disadvantaged families. According to the National Literacy Trust, one in eight children in receipt of free school meals say they do not own a single book at home.

Funding will be used for:

- Additional training for health visitors who work with families of young children to identify speech, language and communication needs early on, helping to address and support concerns when they can have the most impact.
- Funding educational games, apps and text message 'tips' for parents and carers from disadvantaged backgrounds, helping them to interact with their children when at home or out and about.

Organisations including the National Literacy Trust, the National Children's Bureau and the Scouts will get a share of the funding to boost parents' confidence with learning at home, drawing on data that shows a lack of skill or fear of embarrassment can discourage them from interacting in this way. Grants will also go towards improving the training available for professionals working with young children with SEND.

The DfE has announced that it will also be allocating £20M towards training programmes for early years staff in disadvantaged areas in order to enable them to support children's early language, literacy, and numeracy skills, which is expected to benefit up to 60,000 pre-school age children.

### **Multiplication Tests**

From the 2019/20 academic year onwards, schools in England will be required to administer an online multiplication tables check (MTC) to its year 4 pupils. The purpose of the MTC is to determine whether pupils can recall their times tables fluently, which the DfE regards as essential for future success in maths. It will help schools to identify pupils who have not yet mastered their times tables, so that additional support can be provided. The National Curriculum specifies that pupils should be taught to recall multiplication tables up to and including 12\*12 by the end of year 4.

A national voluntary pilot will take place between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019 which schools can use to familiarise themselves with the check before it becomes statutory in June 2020. Schools will have a three week window to administer the MTC and teachers will be given the flexibility to administer the check to individual pupils, small groups or a whole class at the same time.

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