



HALF TERM UPDATE - SUMMER 2019

Ofsted Updates

New Education Inspection Framework

Following a three month consultation with over 15,000 responses, May 2019 saw Ofsted publish its finalised Education Inspection Framework which will be formally implemented from September 2019 onwards. Whilst the EIF and the detailed Inspection Handbooks can be accessed in full via [here](#), key points include:

- Ofsted will proceed with its headline proposal for a new 'Quality of Education' judgement, after it received strong support from three-quarters of respondents.
- More than three-quarters of respondents also supported plans to introduce two new key judgements, 'Behaviour and Attitudes' and 'Personal Development'. 'Leadership and Management' makes up the fourth area for inspection assessment.
- All inspection judgements will continue to be awarded under the current four-point grading scale: outstanding; good; requires improvement; and inadequate. Final inspection reports will be redesigned and shortened.
- The Quality of Education judgement will focus on the 3I's (intent, implementation and impact) which have been considered in detail in previous newsletter/update editions. The finalisation of the EIF highlights the three-tiered method that Inspectors will take when considering the curriculum and quality of education provision within settings:
 - **Top-level** view: inspectors and leaders start with a top-level view of the school's curriculum, exploring what is on offer, to whom and when, leaders' understanding of curriculum intent and sequencing, and why these choices were made.
 - **Deep dive**: then, a 'deep dive', which involves gathering evidence on the curriculum intent, implementation and impact over a sample of subjects, topics or aspects. This is done in collaboration with leaders, teachers and pupils. The intent of the deep dive is to seek to interrogate and establish a coherent evidence base on the quality of education provided.
 - **Bringing it together**: inspectors will bring the evidence together to widen coverage and to test whether any issues identified during the deep dives are systemic. This will usually lead to school leaders bringing forward further evidence and inspectors gathering additional evidence. Further evidence-gathering will test the emerging conclusions from this work. This is likely to include follow-up conversations with leaders, members of staff, those responsible for governance and pupils. It will usually also involve sampling of other areas of education within the school to probe questions that have emerged as a result of the deep-dive work.
- A key feature of the process will be the 'deep dive' stage which will include the following elements:
 - evaluation of senior leaders' intent for the curriculum in this subject or area, and their understanding of its implementation and impact;

- evaluation of curriculum leaders' long- and medium-term thinking and planning, including the rationale for content choices and curriculum sequencing;
- visits to a deliberately and explicitly connected sample of lessons;
- work scrutiny of books or other kinds of work produced by pupils who are part of classes that have also been (or will also be) observed by inspectors;
- discussion with teachers to understand how the curriculum informs their choices about content and sequencing to support effective learning; and
- discussions with a group of pupils from the lessons observed.
- Ofsted have confirmed that there will be a 'grace period' until September 2020 as schools grapple with the shift in focus from outcomes to a "broad and rich learning experience". During this time, schools which have a plan in place to review their curriculum and can demonstrate genuine action to do so will not be downgraded.
- The nine governance specific criteria within the Leadership and Management judgement under the current Inspection Framework have been removed under the new EIF and replaced with the following references to governance:
 - those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. They ensure that the provider has a clear vision and strategy and that resources are managed well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education or training (simply mirroring the three core governance functions highlighted in the Governance Handbook); and
 - those with responsibility for governance ensure that the provider fulfils its statutory duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010, and other duties, for example in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy and safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of learners.
- Schools where negative practices, such as 'off-rolling' (discussed further in update), are identified are likely to find their 'Leadership and Management' judged inadequate under the new framework.

Inspection of Outstanding Schools

Ofsted's annual parents' survey highlighted that almost three quarters of those parents who responded (72%) believed that schools judged as outstanding should be inspected as regularly as those schools judged as good. Additionally, it was revealed that a significant eight in ten parents were unaware that schools judged as outstanding were exempt from future inspections.

Perhaps in response to these results, an Ofsted HMI, has written a blog on the inspection of outstanding schools which can be accessed [here](#). This blog highlights that:

- Ofsted believes that the exemption for outstanding schools has "had its day" and that the DfE should review its current policy. The DfE's current stance is that at least 10% of outstanding schools should be inspected rather than dropping the exemption entirely.
- Ofsted's concern is that in some outstanding schools, standards have stayed the same, or even declined. This potentially means that other schools, with a lower grading, have improved at a faster rate and are offering a better standard of education for their pupils.
- Ofsted currently has no legal basis to include outstanding schools in its cycle of routine inspections. However, to make sure these schools are doing well for their pupils, Ofsted will regularly risk assess them. Ofsted will take into account the length of time it has been since a school was last inspected as part of its risk assessment.
- Using this information, either the Chief Inspector or the Education Secretary can ask Ofsted to inspect a school, but only if they have concerns about their performance.

Will Ofsted succeed in its continuing debate with the DfE for overturning the inspection exemption for outstanding schools? Watch this space!

School Exclusions

The Timpson Review

May 2019 saw the release of Edward Timpson's review on school exclusions; he was commissioned in March 2018 by the Education Secretary to review the practice of school exclusions, to explore how head teachers use exclusion in practice, and why some groups of pupils are more likely to be excluded. The full report, which has made 30 recommendations, can be accessed [here](#).

The Timpson Review, found that:

- 78% of pupils who are permanently excluded have SEND, are classified as in need, or are eligible to receive free school meals; 11% of permanently excluded pupils meet all of these characteristics.
- Boys with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH) but no statement were around 3.8 times more likely to be permanently excluded than a non-SEN child, while girls were around 3.0 times more likely after controlling for other factors.
- Disadvantage is strongly associated with exclusion, after controlling for other pupil characteristics. Children in receipt of Free School Meals were around 45% more likely to be excluded than other pupils.
- After accounting for other factors, Black Caribbean were around 1.7 times more likely, and Mixed White and Black Caribbean children were around 1.6 times more likely to be permanently excluded compared to White British children. Indian and Bangladeshi pupils are around half as likely to be permanently excluded.
- Controlling for other factors, children on a Children in Need Plan are around 4 times more likely to be permanently excluded compared to those with no social care classification.
- Children who have a Child Protection Plan are around 3.5 times more likely to be permanently excluded, and children who are looked after are around 2.3 times as likely to be permanently excluded than children who have never been supported by social care.

The Timpson Review also identified four fundamental drivers of policies and practices around exclusions in schools, including:

- differences in leadership, standards of behaviour and culture in schools;
- lack of consistency around the management of poor behaviour;
- few incentives for schools to take responsibility for pupils at risk of being excluded; and
- a lack of safeguards to "protect children against informal exclusion and ... off-rolling".

The Government has accepted, in principle, all 30 recommendations made in the Timpson Review and identified six specific actions that it will be taking:

- a. To make schools accountable for the outcomes of children who have been permanently excluded – another consultation to look at how this can be delivered in practice will be launched in Autumn 2019.
- b. Embed effective partnership working between LAs, schools, alternative provision settings and other providers so that schools are better equipped to intervene as early as possible with support for children at risk of permanent exclusion.
- c. The Government will work with sector experts to rewrite statutory guidance by Summer 2020, including guidance on exclusions, behaviour and discipline.
- d. The DfE will work with Ofsted to define and tackle the practice of off-rolling (children removed from school rolls without formal exclusion).

- e. Extend support for alternative provision – in Autumn 2019, the DfE will set out its plans to improve outcomes for children who leave mainstream education and attend Alternative Provision settings, recognising good practice in AP. Including support for APs to recruit and develop high-quality teachers.
- f. Calling on Directors of Children’s Services, Governing Boards and Academy Trusts to review and share information on the characteristics of children excluded from school, to look at how their school’s statistics compare to local trends and investigate variances. This will help improve practice and reduce disparities with particular reference to certain ethnic groups, those with SEND or those who have a social worker.

Off-Rolling

With off-rolling coming increasingly under the spotlight, with specific inclusion in the new Education Inspection Framework, a recent Ofsted blog considered how inspectors evaluate off-rolling during school inspections.

Acknowledging that different people have different definitions of what off-rolling is and that there is no legal definition of off-rolling, Ofsted’s definition is very simple: off-rolling is the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without using a permanent exclusion, when the removal is primarily in the best interests of the school, rather than the best interests of the pupil. This includes pressuring a parent to remove their child from the school roll.

While it may not always be unlawful, Ofsted believes off-rolling is never acceptable.

What doesn’t constitute off-rolling

There are many reasons pupils leave school: move house, leave the country, or move to another, closer school when a place becomes available. None can be considered off-rolling. Other pupils may leave school to be home educated. Where this is a parent’s clear choice, without pressure from the school, it is not off-rolling.

Dual-registering a pupil with another school, such as an alternative provider, is also not off-rolling; the pupil has not left the roll of their original school. The statutory guidance on alternative provision makes it clear that pupils should be dual-registered if they are attending alternative provision. If ‘managed moves’ from one school to another as an alternative to exclusion, are used in pupils’ best interests, with the agreement of everyone involved within the statutory guidance framework, then this too is not off-rolling.

What are examples of off-rolling and how do Ofsted spot these?

Before an inspection, Ofsted’s analysts will give the Lead Inspector information about whether or not a school has exceptional levels of pupils leaving the school in years 10 and 11. Whilst this doesn’t always mean that off-rolling is happening, it will ensure that inspectors explore this possibility during the inspection.

Research highlights that disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND and pupils with low prior attainment are disproportionately removed from the school roll. Inspectors will ask leaders about who has left and why.

- Are there any patterns in the groups who leave?

- How does the school support pupils from these groups who are still in the school? If most of the pupils who left have SEND, how does the school cater for this group? Have they reviewed their provision and improved it if necessary?

If a school uses managed moves, inspectors may ask to see evidence of how these meet the statutory guidance. Again, if these moves are happening during years 10 and 11, inspectors will look closely at whether this decision is in the best interests of the pupils in question.

How does Ofsted play a part in tackling off-rolling?

Whenever Ofsted uncover off-rolling, this will be set this out in the published inspection report. Under the new Inspection Framework, due for implementation in September 2019, any schools that are off-rolling are likely to be judged inadequate for leadership and management.

YouGov Research

As part of their ongoing work into this area, Ofsted recently published research on off-rolling and the perspective of school teachers. Ofsted researchers surveyed more than 1,000 primary and secondary teachers across England and interviewed teachers and senior leaders who had direct experience of off-rolling, either through teaching pupils who have been taken off the schools' roll, or by being involved in decisions around off-rolling.

Whilst the research in full can be accessed [here](#), key points identified by the research include:

- There is a mixed understanding amongst teachers of what off-rolling is.
- That said, a quarter of teachers surveyed have seen off-rolling happen in their schools with two-thirds of these teachers believing the practice is on the rise.
- Teachers believe that parents with less understanding of the education system and their rights are most likely to be pressured into taking their child out of school. Some spoke of "fear-mongering", with school management giving parents a "worst case scenario" for their child's future if they remained in the school. Teachers said that they want to see better support for parents, so they understand their rights and options.
- Teachers agreed that off-rolling usually happens before GCSEs, either during years 10 to 11 before results are collected, or in year 9 before exam teaching begins.
- Teachers believe that academic achievement is central to schools' decision-making when pupils are off-rolled. Half of those that responded to the survey said the main reason for schools to off-roll a pupil is to manipulate league tables.
- Vulnerable students with SEND or other needs are more likely to be affected by the practice.
- Many teachers think there is an overlap between off-rolling and other, sometimes legitimate, practices. For example, some teachers felt that it was easier to justify off-rolling when there are behavioural concerns, and that behavioural issues are "dressed up" to support the pupils' removal.
- Only a third of teachers that had experienced off-rolling believed that off-rolled pupils went on to other mainstream schools, while just a fifth of those with experience of off-rolling said that follow-up checks to see what had happened to the pupils took place.

EPI Report on unexplained pupil exits

Building on the growing body of work looking at off-rolling, the Education Policy Institute (EPI) has recently published a working paper "*Unexplained pupil exits from schools: a growing problem?*". The paper's authors are currently seeking feedback on both the approach taken and the analysis presented, before publishing a final report later in the summer. The final report is expected to show, amongst

others, where the prevalence of unexplained moves is highest across the country and in different types of schools and school groups.

Whilst the working paper can be accessed in full [here](#), key points include:

- Unlike formal exclusions, currently there is no requirement to record the reason why a pupil has been removed from a school roll. It is therefore difficult to establish whether such removals are happening because of the decisions that schools have taken (which may relate to the desire to improve the school's exam results) or decisions that parents have taken (e.g. to move house, to send their child to a higher-performing school or to move their child to a special school).
- The working paper investigates exits from secondary schools using records on three different GCSE cohorts in 2011 (603,000 pupils), 2014 (617,000) and 2017 (604,000).
- Test findings show that in each cohort, a substantial minority of pupils moved to a different school or left the state school system entirely for unknown reasons. These 'unexplained' exits numbered 47,225 in the 2011 cohort of pupils (7.8% of pupils), 49,051 in the 2014 cohort (7.2%) and 55,309 (8.1%) in the 2017 cohort.
- Those most likely to experience an unexplained exit were: pupils with a high number of authorised absences (approximately two in five of whom in the 2017 cohort experienced at least one unexplained exit); pupils in contact with the social care system (one in three); pupils who have experienced an official permanent exclusion (one in three) or fixed period exclusion (one in five); those eligible for free school meals (one in seven); those from black ethnic backgrounds (one in eight); and those in the lowest prior attainment quartile (one in eight).
- A small proportion of schools account for a large number of unexplained pupil exits: in the 2017 cohort, 330 schools (6% of the total number of secondary and specialist schools) had at least 30 unexplained exits from their cohort during the five years of secondary schooling. These schools accounted for 23% of the national number of unexplained exits.
- Schools with the highest numbers of unexplained exits were those in the middle of the disadvantage distribution. In the 2017 cohort, the quintile (20%) of schools with the least disadvantaged intake accounted for the smallest proportion of total unexplained moves (5%), while schools with the most disadvantaged intake accounted for the second lowest proportion (14%). Fewer unexplained exits were accounted for by the most disadvantaged schools in recent cohorts compared with earlier cohorts.

Academy Updates

Letters to Academy Trust Auditors

Lord Agnew has recently written to auditors, highlighting the ways they can assist Trust Boards to ensure there is effective financial management and governance within their academy trusts. Key points made include:

- The DfE is increasingly using Trusts' Management Letters to help inform its assessment of the quality of governance and control frameworks within Trusts. Lord Agnew highlights that auditors' expertise in identifying management letter issues is vitally important for getting to grips with issues early. He also clarifies that if serious issues develop in a Trust that are linked to previous audits, but they were not flagged in management letters, then the DfE will take any appropriate action open to it.
- Of particular concern to the DfE are issues raised on the management letter in one year that remain unresolved in the following year.

- Lord Agnew highlights the benefits of mid-year audit reviews which gives management teams the time to resolve any issues before the accounts have to be signed, stating that the benefits of a mid-year review outweigh the costs involved.
- Good governance underpins the regular and proper use of money. The work auditors perform on regularity is particularly important as through it, the DfE gains assurance that Trusts have spent their money in accordance with the conditions that have been set as well as giving the DfE the basis to act if they have not.
- As a result, the DfE has made some changes in the 2018/19 Academies Accounts Direction to bring a sharper focus on governance, including:
 - extending the suggested regularity tests for auditors in the area of governance as these are deemed to provide the evidence needed, both by Trust Boards and by the DfE, to improve compliance. These tests can be found in Section 4.14 of Annex B of the Academies Account Direction and include tests such as the number of times the Board meets, whether there is a written scheme of delegation of the Board's financial powers that maintains robust internal controls, that there is Board oversight of capital expenditure and funding, ensuring it is used appropriately for capital purposes and the audit committee or equivalent has received reports on the effectiveness of internal control;
 - explaining that auditors' conclusions in the regularity report should reflect any findings about Trusts' compliance with the DfE's governance requirements; and
 - clarifying that the auditors' opinion on Trusts' financial statements, under ISAs 700 and 720, should state explicitly that the auditors have reviewed the Trust's governance statement and whether it is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained during the audit.

Academy Chart of Accounts

Mid May 2019 saw the DfE launch a new academies chart of accounts, a first step towards automated financial reporting within the academy sector.

The new chart of accounts is the DfE's standard for recording financial data which underpins both the budget forecast returns and the academies accounts returns to be submitted to the ESFA.

Although adoption of these chart of accounts is currently voluntary, Trusts that choose to follow this standard will benefit from the potential automated data transfer from their finance systems directly to the ESFA for financial returns relating to the 2019/20 financial year. Furthermore, by providing a consistent way of recording financial data for all Academy Trusts, the DfE argues that it will be able to provide richer and more accurate financial benchmarking information, allowing academies to compare their finances with other similar academies with greater confidence on a more timely basis.

The Chart of Accounts can be reviewed [here](#)

Excessive Executive Pay

Executive pay within Academy Trusts continues to remain an area of focus of the ESFA Chief Executive. May 2019 saw Ms Milner write to the Chairs of 94 Academy Trusts, of which 30 had been previously written to on the same issue, asking for information on the process and rationale to support the salaries of their executive leaders – those who paid their executive leader a salary in excess of £150K or those that paid multiple salaries between £100K and £150K.

Resources and Funding Updates

SEND Funding – A Call for Evidence

In light of the Government's forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review, the Education Secretary has asked schools and colleges for their views on how to make funding arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities more effective.

Over a quarter of a million pupils with the most complex needs have personalised Education, Health and Care Plans. Of those students with EHCPs, almost 120,000 (just under half) are continuing their education in mainstream schools, while the number of pupils whose needs are being met in special schools has gone up from 94,000 in 2014 to over 112,000 in 2018.

Whilst the High Needs Budget has risen from £5Bn in 2013 to over £6Bn today, the Government wants to make sure that it understands what is driving the costs in the system and how funding can be more effectively targeted, hence the Education Secretary's call for evidence.

The consultation, which closes on the 31st July 2019, can be accessed [here](#).

New Sutton Trust findings: Schools still continuing to cut staff numbers

A survey of 1,678 teachers, conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) for the Sutton Trust as part of their Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey, highlights how budget cuts are affecting schools across the country. The key findings of the report include:

- 69% of secondary senior leaders have reported having to make cuts to teaching staff for financial reasons, along with 70% for teaching assistants and 72% for support staff.
- While a much smaller proportion (32%) of senior leaders in primary schools said they'd had to cut teachers, almost two-thirds of this group (72%) reported cutting teaching assistants.
- Growing numbers of secondary leaders report cutting IT equipment (61%), school outings (41%) and sport (28%). Almost half report cutting subject choices at GCSE (47%). Others report cutting back on classroom materials and CPD for teachers.
- One in four (27%) secondary school leaders report that their pupil premium funding is being used to plug gaps elsewhere in their budget. For those who do report using PPG to plug funding gaps, most said it was used to pay for teachers and teaching assistants instead or absorbed into the general school budget.
- Heads in the most deprived schools were twice as likely to report using their pupil premium money to plug budget gaps as those in the least deprived schools (34% v 17%).
- A majority (55%) of school leaders said that their PPG funding is helping to close attainment gaps in their school, with primary leaders more likely (58%) than secondary heads (50%) to say so.
- Of those who don't think the pupil premium is having an impact, many said the funding is either not enough to make an impact or is being spent in other areas.
- Heads who reported having to plug budget gaps were less likely to say that attainment gaps were closing (62% v 40%). Many also pointed out the difficulty in closing their attainment gaps given factors outside the school gates.

The NFER poll results can be accessed in full [here](#)

Sixth Form Funding

A recent study by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) has found that:

- Between 2010/11 and 2018/19, real term funding per student in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges, and further education (FE) colleges declined substantially, by 16%, from £5,900 to £4,960. This is twice the rate that the overall schools budget fell by between 2009/10 and 2017/18 (8%).

- Funding in school sixth forms declined by 26% per full time student from 2010/11 to 2018/19. In the further education sector (sixth form colleges and FE colleges), funding declined by 18% per full time student. Within this, funding for sixth form colleges fell faster than in FE colleges.
- Despite funding being shifted towards disadvantaged students over this period, students in all institutions have experienced real terms funding cuts.
- 16-19 education has been the biggest real terms loser of any phase of education since 2010/11, but it has also suffered from a long run squeeze in funding: 30 years ago, 16-19 funding was far higher (almost 1.5 times) than secondary school funding but is now lower.
- The financial health of 16-19 providers has significantly deteriorated since 2010/11: the proportion of those with in-year deficits has increased across all institutions, with a particularly large rise seen in sixth form colleges: a five-fold increase of 7% to 36% from 2010/2011 to 2016/17.
- An increasing number of local authority schools with sixth forms are in financial difficulty – the proportion with cumulative deficits has risen significantly from 12% of schools in 2010/11 to 22% in 2017/18. In stark contrast, schools without sixth forms have only seen rises of between 6 to 9%.
- Teacher pay has fallen across 16-19 institutions but it has declined particularly in further education colleges – by 8% from 2010/11 to 2016/17 (from £33,600 to £31,000).
- As a result, teachers' wages in FE colleges are now around 17% lower than for teachers in secondary schools. This may have implications for the quality of provision, and may adversely affect the most disadvantaged young people, given FE colleges admit a disproportionate number of students from such backgrounds.

The EPI report goes on to make three policy recommendations:

- **The government should urgently review the adequacy of 16-19 funding**, to understand whether current funding rates are jeopardising the sector's financial sustainability.
- **The government should assess the impact of 16-19 funding changes on curriculum breadth**, ensuring that young people have a good choice of high quality post-16 academic and vocational qualifications.
- **The government should review the impact of funding changes on disadvantaged students** and consider whether funding is supporting the government's aim of narrowing the attainment gap.

The findings of the EPI report come at the same time as a report by the online educational publication, Tes, which found, based on a Freedom of Information request to 88 Local Authorities, that more than 70 school sixth forms have closed over the past three years (47 schools) or are set to be closed (25 schools are currently in consultation over closure) amid major funding pressures.

PE and Sports Premium Funding

The DfE recently confirmed that the £320M PE and Sports Premium funding grant will continue in 2019/20, although precise allocations have yet to be published. In 2018/19, schools with 16 or less pupils received £1,000 per pupil, whereas schools with 17 or more pupils received a lump sum of £16,000 with an additional £10 per pupil.

Investment in Careers Hubs

The Secretary of State has recently announced a further £2.5M investment in Careers Hubs. 2018 saw the Careers and Enterprise Company launch 20 Careers Hubs across England, with each hub bringing

together a group of up to 40 schools and colleges to improve careers support for young people in their area. Research highlights that schools and colleges in the first wave of Careers Hubs are already outperforming the national average across all aspects of careers education. After two terms, schools and colleges within the first wave are:

- outperforming the national average on each of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks of good careers guidance;
- 58% are providing every student with regular encounters with employers; and
- 52% are providing every student with workplace experiences such as work experience, shadowing or workplace visits.

The research also highlights that the improvements are the strongest in disadvantaged areas, including in Careers Hubs located in Tees Valley, Lancashire and the Black Country.

As a result of this, a second wave of 18 new and two expanded Careers Hubs will be backed by a further £2.5M investment. Just over 1,300 secondary schools and colleges (c.25% of those in England) will now benefit from being part of a Careers Hub.

Summer holiday clubs for disadvantaged children

Building on the success of last year's initiative, the DfE has committed £9.1M towards summer holiday clubs which will provide free meals and activities (such as sports, play sessions and cooking classes) for around 50,000 of the most disadvantaged children (and in some cases, their parents). The £9.1M funding will be spread between 11 co-ordinators across England, including local authorities and national charities. The DfE hopes that this initiative will continue to improve the Government's knowledge of how children eligible for free school meals can be best supported during the school holidays.

News in Brief

Simplifying Accountability in Schools

The 2018 National Association of Headteachers' conference saw the Education Secretary state that he would simplify the accountability system, primarily to reduce undue pressure on school leaders. Between January and March 2019 the DfE consulted on proposals which set out plans to create a new single method for identifying schools eligible for improvement support. Responses to the DfE consultation found that:

- 82% of respondents supported the proposal to use Ofsted's Requires Improvement judgement to identify schools eligible for DfE offers of support; and
- 82% of respondents agreed that the DfE should remove its floor and coasting data standards.

Thus, from September 2019, the DfE will only use Ofsted's Requires Improvement judgement as the sole trigger to identify schools for a proactive, optional offer of support.

The consultation outcome can be read in full [here](#)

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

Over 9,600 primary schools (over half of eligible primaries) have registered to take part in the pilot of the RBA which will take place in September 2019. The pilot will enable schools to familiarise themselves with the assessment before providing feedback to the DfE ahead of the national roll out in 2020.

The assessment of pupils' development when they start school will enable the removal of Key Stage 1 tests that currently take place at the end of year 2 and enable schools to be recognised for the work they do throughout the whole of primary school rather just between years 2 and 6, as is currently the case.

The assessment has been designed to reflect the work that most schools already carry out in reception and does not have a pass mark. Schools will not receive individual scores for the assessment, instead getting a series of short, narrative statements that will say how each child performed. Progress data will be shared with schools following children's completion of Key Stage 2 tests at the end of primary school, thereby preventing the "labelling" or "grouping" of pupils.

Further information can be found [here](#)

Tackling bad behaviour in schools

More than 500 schools will be part of a scheme to tackle bad behaviour in schools, supported by £10M of funding by the DfE. Behaviour expert and former teacher Tom Bennett, who led a national review to identify the best ways of dealing with disruptive behaviour in schools, will lead the programme, where a network of expert schools will be identified to help teachers and school leaders in need of support. The programme is scheduled to be launched in September 2020 and initially run for three years.

According to research, more than 82% of parents consider good discipline in class a key factor when choosing a school for their child. However, over a third of schools are not currently judged as having good enough behaviour by Ofsted. Low level disruption is thought to cost individual pupils up to 38 days a year of learning and dealing with poor behaviour is cited as one of the key reasons for teachers leaving the profession.

The network of expert schools will be made up of schools that have exemplary behaviour management practices and effective whole-school cultures. They will work with other schools offering advice on ways to better manage behaviour using measures that have been proven to have an impact, including:

- intensive staff training on tackling classroom disruption;
- introducing centralised detention systems;
- new sanctions and rewards systems for pupils; and
- focusing on pupil attendance and punctuality.

A team of advisers will be appointed to work alongside Mr Bennett to help develop and deliver the programme of support. The advisers will be education professionals with a track-record and understanding of improving behaviour in schools and will play a crucial role in:

- helping select the lead behaviour schools which will deliver additional support to others;
- working with supported schools to develop an understanding of the causes of the behaviour issues and how these could be addressed;
- developing comprehensive, bespoke action plans for the supported schools;
- carrying out a series of follow-up visits; and
- participating in behaviour conferences to share best practice and ideas.

By the end of the programme, teachers in schools are expected to report fewer incidents of disruptive behaviour and pupils should report they feel safer at school, while able to learn more effectively.

Vocational Qualifications

The Education Secretary, Damien Hinds, has warned that action will be taken against schools that do not cooperate with colleges and employers promoting alternatives to A-levels and the university pathway.

The so-called "Baker clause", an amendment to the Technical and Further Education Act 2017, made it a legal requirement from January 2018 to allow training providers to speak to students about technical qualifications and apprenticeships. It is reported that currently, almost two in three schools are ignoring the Baker-clause, the primary reason for this non-compliance being that schools wish to retain students for their own 16-19 programmes.

Teacher Recruitment Website

The DfE has recently launched a free online service to advertise teaching vacancies and is encouraging schools to sign up to the service which it is hoped will cut down on the £75M spent by schools on advertising jobs. It is argued that with some agencies it can cost, on average, more than £1,000 per teaching job advert. The website will advertise full, part-time and job-share roles.

Scrapping of SATs?

The Labour Party has announced that if it was elected to power, it would move to scrap SATs altogether. Watch this space!