

SESLIP AD Education Network Update:

June 13th 2024

From SESLIP:

In Today's Update:

- DfE: Provisional GCSE & A-level entry data, trust handbook delayed until after the election, latest pupil census data: 1 in 4 now eligible for FSMs, school workforce data (record low number of NQTs), latest SEND (EHCP) data for England, data about primary and secondary place offers for 2024.
- National reports: Cost-of-living continues to put pressure on schools, the challenges of school funding.
- Research: Extent that school readiness measure can be a predictor of becoming NEET.
- News: Teachers: how to avoid being politically partisan, summary of education commitments in the main parties' manifestos, understanding those moving or leaving secondary school between year 7 and 11, DfE's response to STRB not to be published until after election, urging caution with school-based mental health interventions, poor but not eligible for free school meals, school leaders and growing trust locally.

1. DfE:

- Provisional entry data for GCSEs and A-levels have been published. Total entries for GCSEs have increased by 4.8% and statistics and engineering were the subjects with highest growth from 2023, whilst citizenship and performing arts entries reduced the most.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2024-exam-series/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2024-exam-series>
- ESFA letter to trusts warning that an updated version of the academy trust handbook cannot be published until after the election. Any changes will require ministerial approval.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/665722117b792ffff71a84c6/Academy_Trust_DAO_letter_draft_May_2024.pdf
- School pupils and their characters: data for England from the January school census. The numbers of pupils on roll at AP increased by 20% over 12 months and, at 15,866 is at levels last recorded before the pandemic. The proportion of pupils eligible for FSMs is now 25% of the school age population. Total primary-age children was down 0.7% in a year, while the total of secondary-age was up 1.1%; there were 5% more pupils attending special schools than in 2023. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>
- School workforce data showed that teacher vacancies increased by 20% between 2022 and 2023. The total teaching workforce grew by 300 (it was up 2,800 in 2022) with a record low number of NQTs joining and increasing numbers quitting teaching or retiring. Also, about a third of teachers left the profession within the first five years, up from 2010. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england#dataBlock-bdabef2d-54e9-446f-bdb4-9cc21f298250-tables>
- Latest SEND statistics for England based on the SEN2 return. The total number of children and young people with an EHCP increased by 11.4% and the number of new EHCPs issued in the year was up by 22%, although there was also an increase in the number of refusals to assess. about half of EHC needs assessments were completed within 20 weeks, while there has been a small increase in the proportion of pupils with an EHCP who are on roll at a mainstream school. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans/2024>
- Latest data about primary and secondary offers for September 2024. Parents being offered their first choice primary school was 93.1%, which is the highest recorded and likely reflects the fall in primary school rolls. Secondary first choices could be made for 82.9% of pupils, a small increase from 2023. There were also 1.7% fewer applications for secondary school, the first signs of falling secondary

numbers. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/secondary-and-primary-school-applications-and-offers> .

2. Reports:

- Analysis of the continuing impact on schools of austerity and the cost-of-living challenges faced by families. Drawing on a survey of a panel of school teachers and senior leaders carried out in March 2024. DfE's partial funding of pay awards is causing pressure on school budgets, whilst low income families continue to struggle which affects the children whilst others face major problems accessing mental health support.
https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/isqb0q4r/the_ongoing_impact_of_the_cost_of_living_crisis_on_schools.pdf
- Overview of education spending in England and the challenges that will face the incoming Government. Headlines include:
 - teachers pay is at about 2001 levels in real terms, whilst average pay is 18% above 2001 levels;
 - there are 60% more pupils with EHCPs now than in 2015;
 - spending on school buildings is 25% lower than in mid-2000s;
 - school population reductions provide an opportunity to reduce education spending but would this be wise? <https://ifs.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-06/School%20spending%20in%20England.pdf>

3. Research:

- Risk of being NEET in late adolescence is signalled by school readiness measures at age 4–5 years. A larger proportion of young people who were not school ready were later NEET (11%) compared to those who were school ready (4%). Most of this effect was attributable to academic attainment, but there was also a direct effect. Measures of deprivation and SEND were also strong predictors of being NEET. <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-024-18851-w>

4. News:

- Clarification on for teachers about their legal duty to not promote partisan political views. It clarifies issues such as expressing views on policies to pupils and campaigning for a local candidate. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/general/what-can-teachers-say-do-during-general-election-period>
- Summary information about the main English political parties' educational commitments in their manifestos. First the Lib Dems: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/lib-dems-election-manifesto-2024-all-the-schools-policies/> ; Green Party: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/green-party-manifesto-2024-all-the-schools-policies/> Conservatives: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/conservatives-manifesto-2024-all-the-schools-policies/> and finally, Labour: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/labour-manifesto-2024-all-the-schools-policies/>
- Analysis using the National Pupil Database to explore categories of students who left school or moved school between 2017 and 2023, across years 7 and 11. Broadly the rate of moving school and leaving state education are relatively stable: at about 7% of the cohort each. The analysis also confirms that disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are disproportionately represented in both groups. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/06/how-many-pupils-leave-schools-between-year-7-and-year-11/>
- The DfE will not publish the government response to the School Teachers' Review Body pay recommendation until after the election. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/teacher-pay-response-wont-come-before-election-keegan-confirms/>
- Interview with an Oxford academic who is exploring school level mental health interventions and her research highlights that some of these are having negative impact rather than positive. She urges caution, particularly about whole school interventions, that the evidence base of interventions should

be assessed by schools and says a focus on school culture and learning demands might be more effective. [Pupil mental health: what works in schools - and what doesn't](#)

- As many as 900,000 children living in poverty are not eligible for free school meals partly due to the threshold for eligibility not having changed for six years (household income of no more than £7,400 excluding benefits). Despite 30% of families on Universal Credit being considered “food insecure”, 69% of families on Universal Credit are not eligible for FSMs. <https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/content/news/appalling-7-400-free-school-meals-cap-has-not-increased-in-six-years/>
- Blog considering the opportunities that school trusts and school leaders have available to grow trust with local stakeholders and partners. Leaders should aim to redress the balance and value relational capital which can have practical implications and gains for local people, including charities and community organisations. <https://cstuk.org.uk/news-publications/cst-blogs/trust-is-the-glue-we-need-but-it-needs-to-be-built/>