SESLIP AD Education Network Update:
June 28th 2024

From SESLIP:

- Following the discussion about flexi-schooling, I also attach an overview of South-east policies / statements about flexi-schooling produced by the CME Group from 2021, for information.

In Today's Update:

- DfE: School places scorecards, SEND data from January school census.
- National reports: Exploring how increasing child and family poverty is affecting primary schools and primary care, assessment of 5 years of levelling up (including education and skills), discussion paper about developing school scorecards.
- Research: Estimating the international costs of not having full access to school education, poorer more able pupils only start losing ground against their better off peers when they move to secondary school in England - why is this?
- News: Ofsted needs more funding rather than widespread change, is widespread educational disadvantage going to be the lasting impact of covid-19? controversial opaque DfE funding streams to support expanding trusts, why are so many APs full? Gaps in party manifestos about education funding, steps to restore trust in public bodies, exploration of the scale of school over-capacity.

1. DfE:

- Local authority school places scorecard updated with data from 2022-23. The scorecard present school places data by LA, mainstream phase and nationally, and projects demand to 2025-26 as well as providing DfE assessment of the quality of data projections by LA as well as the trend in terms of places created in the LA.   https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/la-school-places-scorecards/
- SEND pupil census information, based on school census data. It is consistent with SEN2-based data, showing the increase in numbers of pupils with SEND across those at SEN support and those with an EHC plan (increased by 11.6% this year). It also reports a small increase of 0.5% in the number of mainstream schools with an SEN unit or SEND resource provision. https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england/2023-24.

2. Reports:

- The extent that poverty in the UK is impacting on the work of primary schools, and GPs as well. Through a survey of a sample of primary schools and follow up interviews with those serving more deprived communities, the report sets out many of the challenges. About a third of pupils are reported to be coming to school hungry and affected by poor quality or insecure housing. All this is affecting pupils' learning and uses up school and NHS resources. https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdfs/the-impact-of-hardship-on-primary-schools-and-primary-and-community-healthcare-ef642badb1345ccdfec2c8bd5647c319.pdf
- Independent assessment from the IFS about the progress in Levelling Up under the last government. Although targets run to 2030, there are specific, measurable outputs in the White Paper, which are referred to in the report. Unfortunately both school (primary SATs) and skills targets have moved backwards and progress across nearly all aspects is generally described as 'glacial'. https://ifs.org.uk/publications/how-do-last-five-years-measure-levelling
- Discussion paper from ASCL setting out thinking about potential design and purpose of school report cards from Ofsted, to replace one word judgements. The paper illustrates the work that should be undertaken to make such a change as worthwhile and lasting as possible and ASCL propose any report card is shaped around a set of standards for state schools. It shares existing examples of 'report card-like models', but is less clear about how trust accountability aligns with these proposals. https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Our%20view/Campaigns/An-accountability-model-based-on-school-report-cards.pdf

3. Research:

- OECD report drawing on a range of sources of data to estimate the international costs to individuals and countries of inequalities in school enrolment and access to education through to the secondary phase, including social and emotional factors as well as financial. It acts as a timely reminder of gender inequalities in different countries, with notable disparities between boys and girls accessing and remaining in education in Europe as well as the global South, and estimates of costs to the nation and to individuals. https://tinyurl.com/4ru7655v

- Using data from the Millennium Cohort study, researchers from UCL IOE explore the comparative progress of children through school, dependent on their level of disadvantage. Those most able, but from poorer backgrounds, keep pace with their peers from more affluent backgrounds through primary, but begin to lose ground from KS3 onwards. How significant is making a good transition to secondary school in addressing this? https://johnjerrim.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/wp_mcs_high_ability_low_ses_v4_final.pdf

4. News:

- In a paper on schools accountability, the CEO of United Learning advocates that much of the Ofsted regulation of schools is not broken, rather it is under resourced (Ofsted's budget has dropped by 29% in real terms since 2010). He does call for the consequences of a poor judgment to be a change of governance and not a change of headteacher. https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dont-scapegoat-leaders-over-bad-ofsteds-says-top-trust-boss/

- Article considering the research about education performance since covid-19. It flags concerns that loss of progress in learning and disproportionate impacts on disadvantaged students, for example through persistent absenteeism, could be among the most lasting legacy of the pandemic. https://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cp678.pdf

- An investigation into 8 shadowy DfE funds that are only open to academies and trusts that plan to expand. These totalled £70million in expenditure in the past year and not all these funding streams have published guidance. https://schoolsweek.co.uk/the-8-funding-streams-for-new-trusts-or-those-looking-to-grow/

- Why are so many AP schools at or over capacity? With updated data the article highlights the continuing gaps in national data (e.g. over 1,000 pupils on roll at an AP as subsidiary do not have a mainstream enrolment) and infers that the reduction in number of AP schools since 2019 suggests place capacity has reduced, but these data are not collated by DfE. https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/06/why-are-alternative-provision-schools-so-full-an-update/

- Further analysis of party manifestos highlight uncertainties about commitments to future school funding. With pupil numbers starting to fall, two of the major parties only commit to maintaining 'per pupil' funding and do not address the budget challenges that schools will face. Schools 'in the dark' over budgets after manifesto pledgest.co , this includes addressing the challenge of SEND funding SEND: EPI slams 'lack of urgency' on 'most pressing' issueschoolsweek.co.uk

- Statement from the Institute for Government calling the next Government to take 7 steps to restore people's trust in public life and institutions in the UK. https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/press-release/seven-steps-restore-trust-government-ethics

- 11 councils have 20% or more unfilled primary school places, which will rise to 33 LAs – a fifth of all councils – by 2025-26. This trend is already starting to filter into the secondary sector, in London. Leaders call for a strategic approach from the incoming Government, to avoid a financial crisis for schools and negative consequences for communities as a result of school closures. https://schoolsweek.co.uk/unfilled-primary-places-soar-as-falling-rolls-crisis-spreads/