

SESLIP AD Education Network Update: September 27th 2024

From SESLIP:

- An LGA online workshop on transport and children and young people with SEND: [SEND \(assisting with travel\) virtual event taking place 16 October 2024 5.00pm-6.30pm](#).
- A 1.5 hour virtual session for assistant directors, heads of service, lead members with send portfolios and children's scrutiny chairs who are looking to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND travelling to school. It is designed to provide knowledge and support to drive meaningful improvements to your travel service for children and young people with SEND. Session aims to:
 - gain invaluable insights from the children and young people who use these services
 - learn best practice from a Council that has transformed their services
 - find out how cutting-edge technology has streamlined an authority's journeys to yield financial savings
 - put questions to speakers.

In Today's Update:

- DfE: Revised school inspections handbooks from Ofsted, curriculum review consultation opens, post-16 qualifications and funding updated criteria etc, National Reference Test guidance, period products for schools guide, school capacity exercise updated list of schools to visit.
- National reports: How non-specialist mental health support services vary across England, annual survey of MAT leaders.
- Research: Research into ingredients for effective ways to increase innovation in schools.
- News: 10 articles on education over the past decade, summary of main changes in Ofsted's revised handbooks, regional mayors join the debate about how regional oversight of education should be structured, DfE to review options to be more even-handed between maintained and academy schools, CEO outlines MAT changes to become more inclusive, hints of wider SEND reform from the Government, analysis of the profile of students not getting GCSE grade 4+ in English and maths, childhood poverty and inequality in the UK, SofS's speech to Labour conference, analysis of falling rolls in primary schools, changing trends in KS2 writing and reading results, updated exam access arrangements guidance offers additional options.

1. DfE:

- Ofsted publishes its revised school inspections and monitoring visits handbooks, which include some changes following its Big Listen exercise. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif>
- The consultation has been launched for the curriculum review. It seeks evidence about what is working well currently as much as for improvements and changes. The consultation survey is open until 22nd Nov: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/curriculum-and-assessment-team/curriculum-and-assessment-review-call-for-evidence/>. DfE also publishes its paper about subject trends over time to inform the review and consultation responses. https://consult.education.gov.uk/curriculum-and-assessment-team/curriculum-and-assessment-review-call-for-evidence/supporting_documents/Curriculum%20subject%20trends%20over%20time.pdf
- Revised manual of guidance and criteria for post-16 qualifications and their funding, updated for 2024-25 in the light of the on-going review of qualifications and funding which is due to report before the end of 2024. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/qualification-funding-approval>
- Latest statistical release about occupations where there is high demand for staff together with information about the industries these are found in and the average level of wages in the occupations. As well as adult care, most other occupations in demand involve skills of level 4 or above. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/occupations-in-demand/2024>

- Guidance about National Reference Tests that are planned to take place in most secondary schools last week of Feb / early March 2025 and will be administered by the NFER. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-reference-test-information-for-schools/national-reference-test-information-for-schools>
- Updated information about the Period Products for Schools programme that continues for secondary schools and 16 - 19 institutions through 2024-25. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england>
- Net capacity assessment of secondary and special schools. An updated list of schools to be visited in autumn 2024 (132 in South-east) and spring 2025 (128). <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/net-capacity-assessment-nca-programme#full-publication-update-history>

2. Reports:

- Report exploring the availability and commissioning of non-specialist, mental health support services for young people. Overall there was significant inconsistency across England of commissioners' information about the services available and of level of need. And despite evidence that mental health need is higher in more deprived areas, there is little correlation with there being a good range of services available in these locations. https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/PT-report_FINALpdf-1.pdf
- Annual survey of MAT leaders from the CST, based on just over 400 responses in June 2024. Not surprisingly, finance / budgets are the biggest priority and challenge. This has eclipsed aspects such as quality of education and growth as top priorities. Leaders also identify SEND as the second key barrier to achieving their priorities. <https://edurio.lv/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/National-School-Trust-Report.pdf>

3. Research

- Exploration of approaches to innovation in schools, in Germany. The survey-based research finds that these schools are largely reliant upon internal knowledge and the lack of interaction with external sources of knowledge and insights limits the extent of innovation and change. The article puts forward an "open innovation" approach through school innovation networks as a way to mobilise innovation. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JPCC-02-2023-0012/full/html#sec005>

4. News:

- Ten articles reflecting on a decade of school reform from Schools Week: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/supplements/turning-the-pages-on-a-decade-of-school-reform/>
- A summary of the main changes in the Ofsted school inspections and monitoring visit handbooks published this week. Changes include trialling a pause if there is a poor safeguarding grade if a school is otherwise good or better; giving the school up to three months before a revisit. Plus, no new use of Ofsted grade logos and use a 'category of concern' for any school where a key judgement is inadequate. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ofsted-logos-banned-for-this-years-inspections-and-9-other-handbook-changes/>
- Debate and discussion within the Labour party about regional leadership of education and schools, with regional mayors making the case that strategic oversight of schools should be added to their responsibilities. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/mayors-bid-school-oversight-role>
- Ministers have tasked civil servants to identify changes to rebalance national policy between maintained schools and academies. This could include reviewing the free school presumption and enabling groups of schools to be organised under their local authority, not just within an academy trust. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/does-labour-have-an-academies-problem/>

- CEO of a trust in Kent outlines the steps the trust has taken to, in his view, offer more inclusive education and provide for more students who have SEND. This has included a focus on mental wellbeing, from an app for all secondary students through to a dedicated transition unit for those with high levels of anxiety and distress. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/leadership/strategy/how-our-trust-improved-inclusion-send-offer>
- SofS suggests that wider reforms to the SEND system across England are being considered. Although not the immediate priority, there are discussions by policy makers about this. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/phillipson-hints-at-wider-send-reforms/>
- Analysis of the demographic of students achieving a good pass (grade 4 or above) in English and maths, and those who did not. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds were most likely to not achieve 4 or above in English and maths, and most likely to either not be entered or get grade 2 or lower. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/09/a-closer-look-at-pupils-who-did-not-achieve-the-basics-at-gcse/>
- The internationally unusual scale of inequality and child poverty in the UK is demonstrated in these graphs from the UN. One effect the author notes is that the average height of five year olds has reduced by 1cm since 2010. <https://theconversation.com/getting-shorter-and-going-hungrier-how-children-in-the-uk-live-today-238364>
- Bridget Phillipson uses her speech to the Labour conference to highlight making a start to the plan to create over 3,000 new nurseries with a fund to support 300 new nurseries in primary schools this year. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/phillipson-wants-school-based-nurseries-open-next-year-under-15m-capital-scheme/>
- Article from NFER discussing the scale of the reduction in primary school pupil numbers. Although London is seeing the largest reductions, some in the South-east, such as Brighton & Hove, the Isle of Wight and E Sussex, are seeing reductions of between 6% and 10% over recent years. Schools with Ofsted grade good or outstanding are much less likely to be experiencing reducing rolls. <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/blogs/what-happens-when-pupil-numbers-fall/>
- Discussion about KS2 attainment, specifically recent trends in the gap between reading and writing assessment. The main discussion point is that rather than writing being higher than reading up to 2018, this has largely flipped in 2022. How much this is localised, or affected by the move to teacher assessment, or linked to lock-downs is then flagged. <https://www.insightinform.co.uk/2024/09/23/writing-a-wrong/>
- Updates to exam access arrangement guidance now include the facility for certain students to have access to white noise or music (schools will have to check play lists) and can apply for flexibilities with a CAMHS or NHS referral letter as evidence (rather than formal diagnosis). Whilst welcomed, schools have commented about the workload for SENCOs managing the arrangements with nearly 9% of students having these in place. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/send-pupils-now-allowed-to-listen-to-music-during-exams-gcses-alevels/>
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