

SESLIP AD Education Network Update: October 11th 2024

In Today's Update:

- DfE: Latest school and college leaders survey findings, the effective use of TAs in schools research, updated guidance on academy closures for trusts, updated guidance for LAs for maintained school significant changes, latest parent and pupil survey report, Ofsted research and evidence reports about KS1 learning and learning in EYFS.
- National reports: Making the case for oracy in the curriculum, analysis of pupil movements in and out of secondaries by maintained, academy and large MAT.
- Research: How teachers are applying evidence-based retrieval practices in class, latest update on study assessing lasting impacts of covid on children who were in KS1 in the pandemic, trial shows positive effect of a coaching and decomposition approach for ITTs learning behaviour management.
- News: 10 articles on education over the past decade, DfE hubs - where's the evidence? discussion of the challenges of falling primary rolls, NFER's discussion of options for schools and Government in the face of falling rolls, Capita One sold off by Capita, pupil engagement and attendance research commission launched, a look at SEND units / RPs, large provider of NPQs has pulled out of its DfE contract, attempts to fund more inclusive approaches in mainstreams hit by dispute and difficulty, racism now and then (70s) - story of fragile progress.

1. DfE:

- Findings of the latest school and college leaders finds that the large majority of leaders report funding and external support are barriers to effective support for pupils with SEND and that the stresses and demands of leadership are off-putting for those considering a promotion.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-voice-omnibus-surveys-for-2023-to-2024/school-and-college-voice-february-2024>
- Research based on a nationally representative sample of TAs and school leaders, with some follow-up interviews, considering the barriers and enablers to the effective use of TAs. The findings include that low pay is the main driver behind TAs leaving working in school, whilst it found 53 per cent of secondary leaders and 51 per cent of special school leaders were planning to try to increase TA numbers.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66e31878718edd81771316c5/Use_of_teaching_assistants_in_schools_research_report.pdf
- Update to guidance for MATs about the process for making significant organisational changes to an academy, including closure, in the light of the removal of Ofsted one word judgements. Guidance includes forms trusts should use to raise the proposal with the DfE and processes of consultation and information gathering. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-significant-changes-to-an-existing-academy>
- Parallel update to changes in maintained schools for LAs, and to particularly take into account 'leadership and management' and 'quality of education' Ofsted sub-judgments when deciding whether to expand schools. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools>
- Latest report from the Department's parent and pupil surveys. Themes covers include SEND, asking KS4 students about career options and wraparound childcare. Responses from parents of pupils with SEND in mainstream schools found 60% consider their child is well-supported. For childcare, over 60% of primary and special parents reported their childcare needs were being met.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parent-pupil-and-learner-voice-omnibus-surveys-for-2023-to-2024/parent-pupil-and-learner-voice-february-2024>

- Ofsted's latest research paper, about foundational knowledge and skills in schools to the end of KS1. The reports highlights the importance of starting points for learning where individual pupils are rather than the curriculum alone. English in particular is singled out for discussion with weaknesses due to too many schools introducing complex reading and writing tasks too early.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school>
- A further Ofsted research and evidence report: about early years and the four learning domains in the EYFS: literacy, maths, understanding the world and expressive arts and design. The report emphasises the importance at this young age of the foundations of learning such as executive function skills and quality interactions with adults as well as their peers, and that learning should plan for these as well as for knowledge-based aspects of a curriculum. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-start-in-life-a-research-review-for-early-years/best-start-in-life-part-3-the-4-specific-areas-of-learning>

2. Reports:

- Final report from a body set up to highlight the value of oracy learning in the curriculum. In addition to recommending early language development and an oracy entitlement across the curriculum, the report proposes integrating the study of spoken language into the secondary English curriculum and assessing the feasibility of formally assessing speaking and listening.
<https://oracyeducationcommission.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/We-need-to-talk-2024.pdf>
- Analysis of secondary student movements in and out of state secondary schools, based on the academic years 2021 to 2023, broken down by maintained, academy, and size of MAT. The overall inflow and outflow were broadly the same, however maintained schools had a net inflow of vulnerable students while academies, and even more so those in large trusts, had a net outflow of vulnerable students. https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/measuring_pupil_mobility_report_final.pdf

3. Research

- Descriptive paper exploring retrieval practice for learning, the focus is on ways teachers are applying evidence based findings in their regular practice. One theme discussed is that teachers have been motivated to adopt the approach for its wider benefit to student learning beyond improved test results. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/mbe.12420>
- Latest longitudinal study of the continuing impacts of covid-19 education disruption on pupils who were in KS 1 at the time. The negative impact on pupil outcomes generally, now the pupils are in years 4 and 5, has started to wane, but the disadvantage gap continues to be substantial as schools deal with the long-term impact of the pandemic. Patterns of high school absence and difficulties in accessing external support for disadvantaged pupils were among the most common challenges.
https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/projects/key_stage_1_longitudinal_recovery_study_-_october_2024.pdf
- Using a specific approach (decomposition and re-composition) to support initial teacher trainees develop confidence and skills when managing behaviour for learning in class. Small random trial where teacher educators used this stepped approach as part of teaching simulations, assessed against a control group. There was stronger uptake of timely and effective practices by those who had been coached including this approach. https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/ambition-institute/documents/Decomp-Recomp_2024_EducatorSummary_Digital.pdf

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/>

- Good article taking a critical look at 'hubs' initiated and funded by the DfE. In particular the piece notes that more than half have had no published evaluations, or a formal evaluation planned. Across the 13 types of hub, some are disproportionately led by (and based from) schools in more affluent areas, whilst the funding for some hubs has been cut-back from initial plans leading to uncertainty and reduced scale. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/700m-spent-on-dfes-hubs-but-to-what-effect/>
- Longer article about the theme of falling primary school rolls and how this is playing out in parts of London and the South-east. It highlights the challenges for LA school place planning and that this has placed London councils at odds with trusts and the DfE via the Schools Adjudicator and judicial reviews. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/falling-rolls-the-true-cost-of-declining-school-populations/>
- Further instalment of a blog series about falling pupil numbers. This article focuses particularly on the primary phase and options that are available both to schools, in response to reduced budgets (no options are attractive and increasing numbers of schools are in deficit), and to government (increase NFF, the current nursery expansion proposal or parachute payments for schools). <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/blogs/fewer-pupils-more-unfilled-places-increasing-deficits-what-can-be-done/>
- Capita agrees the sale of its Capita One business to a company called Orchard Information Systems. Its holding company, MRI Software is a provider of 'real estate software' and it intends to grow Capita One's business. <https://www.capita.com/news/capita-agrees-sale-capita-one>
- The future of the DfE convened Attendance Action Alliance is unclear, ImpactED has set up a research commission to consider pupil engagement and evidenced approaches in schools to improving attendance. The commission is largely made up of trust leaders and will inform research at UCL_IOE. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-attendance-new-research-commission-to-examine-pupil-engagement/>
- Investigation into the apparent growth in SEND units and resource bases as part of mainstream schools. It highlights the need for guidance from the DfE about these types of provision and the quality of support and learning. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/is-send-provision-in-mainstream-schools-working-inclusion>
- A provider of a sizeable number of NPQ training programmes, the Teacher Development Trust, has pulled out of the DfE's programme. It cites reductions in funding (fewer free places announced in March) and the constraints the DfE places on providers. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/lead-npq-provider-lastest-to-pull-out-of-scheme-after-cuts/>
- Challenging debates between schools and trusts and their LA about proposed changes to allocations of High Needs Funding. There are additional funds that schools can apply for and make the case that they will be more inclusive and teach those with additional needs without resorting to the EHC needs assessment process (in Kent). Whilst others are reviewing place allocations in order to support more pupils with SEND in mainstream schools (including Brighton & Hove). Unhappy heads and CEOs are interviewed as well. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/send-backlash-and-legal-threats-as-inclusion-push-turns-sour/>
- Interested personal reflection on racism from an Oxford professor, and how there have been major steps forward since the 1970s. However this summer's riots show how fragile progress can be. <https://www.tortoisemedia.com/2024/10/04/anand-menon-on-racism-uk-has-made-progress-but-far-right-riots-show-theres-a-long-way-to-go/>
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