

## SESLIP AD Education Network Update: October 25<sup>th</sup> 2024

### In Today's Update:

- DfE: Guidance and application info for new nursery grant, latest teacher pay scales, teacher retention payment application, fewer pupils on FSM went onto university in 2022-23, update IT monitoring standards, KS1 phonics screen test results, updated teacher appraisal guidance.
- National reports: NAO's assessment of DfE's current arrangements for SEND, NAO overview of the DfE and its current challenges, approaches to improving school attendance.
- Research: MetaSENse database and toolkit of target interventions for CYP with SEND, school staff retention affected by school leadership.
- News: Practical challenges for schools in reducing school absences, safer phones bill is introduced, DfE to review school maintenance arrangements, test data and predicting current pupil performance, DfE slows decision-making on free schools, MAT central teams and employment bill, survey finds lack of diversity across MAT leaders, first school inspection reports without overall judgement, link between NEETs and poor school attendance, provisional KS4 data postponed due to quality issues, support staff pay award agreed, profile of Leora Cruddas of CST, headline findings of the NAO SEND report.

#### 1. DfE:

- Guidance and process for eligible primary schools to apply for up to £150k grant towards the cost of setting up a new school nursery; deadline is December 19th. There is also the option to register interest in future funding rounds, if it is not feasible to apply by the December deadline. The DfE proposes to also publish legislation that would mean maintained primaries do not have to follow the current, statutory consultation procedures. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-based-nursery-capital-grant>
- Updated pay scales and conditions for teachers for 2024 have been published. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67165b0d9242eccc6c849b4b/School\\_teachers\\_pay\\_and\\_conditions\\_document\\_and\\_guidance\\_2024\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67165b0d9242eccc6c849b4b/School_teachers_pay_and_conditions_document_and_guidance_2024_.pdf)
- Applications are now open for the teacher targeted retention scheme. Eligible subjects are: maths, chemistry, computing and physics. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/targeted-retention-incentive-payments-for-school-teachers>
- Widening participation in higher education data published. The proportion of students eligible for FSMs going to university has fallen, as has the proportion who go on to 'high tariff' (top) universities. This is the first reduction recorded since these data started being published in 2013. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education/2022-23>
- Update to IT systems filtering and monitoring standards for schools. Update includes role guides for governing bodies and for in-person monitoring; there are also information for more comprehensive risk assessment of students including use of AI. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>
- KS 1 phonics screening test data (2024). The level of attainment is only comparable to 2023 and is at around the same level with 80% of pupils from participating schools achieving the expected standard. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/phonics-screening-check-attainment/2023-24>
- Updated guidance on teacher appraisal, following the removal of the requirement to offer performance related pay, and on teacher capability. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-appraisal-and-capability-model-policy>

## **2. Reports:**

- The National Audit Office's assessment of the current SEND system in England is highly critical of the lack of grasp of the problem that has the potential to push 40% of LAs into bankruptcy after March 2026 by the DfE. The delays and postponement under previous governments are criticised and the lack of robust planning and monitoring of progress in the DfE. It states that it sees that neither the Safety Valve nor the Delivering Better Value programmes will work to establish a sustainable SEND system. It is also critical of the NHS that SEND is not, in practice, a sufficient priority and gaps in healthcare have moved costs to the education system. It sets out 9 recommendations to achieve a more integrated system for SEND. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/support-for-children-and-young-people-with-special-educational-needs.pdf>
- National Audit Office overview of the DfE, its remit, expenditure and risks / concerns. Offers a helpful summary across the range education and children's services responsibilities and summarises key concerns for the system. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/department-for-education-overview-2023-24.pdf>
- Approaches to reducing the school attendance challenge, from LAs and schools in the North-east. Understanding the challenges is key, with headteachers commenting that responses are still too punitive bearing in mind it is vulnerable children and their families who have the lowest attendance. Alongside early intervention, the report also recommends cross-sector collaborations with schools as the hub for a joined up offer of support and intervention. [https://www.n8research.org.uk/media/CotN\\_Attendance\\_Report\\_10.pdf](https://www.n8research.org.uk/media/CotN_Attendance_Report_10.pdf)

## **3. Research**

- The MetaSENse database and toolkit are launched, aiming to provide an evidence base of targeted interventions that improve the academic outcomes of CYP with SEND. The project carried out a systematic review and meta-analysis of the effectiveness of targeted interventions aiming to improve educational abilities for different children with SEND. Whilst scanning the available research (half of which is from the USA), the team identified the primary issue is major gaps in coverage by research and quality (many studies included had small sample sizes). This link takes you to an overview of the project, the meta-analysis paper and the toolkit: <http://www.educationalneuroscience.org.uk/metasense/>
- Paper considering school staff retention, exploring the extent that staff members views about their leaders affects decisions to leave their post or report positive job satisfaction. The data finds, over the period of a school year, that a positive view of leaders results in 0.4SD higher level of job satisfaction. There is a high correlation between a poor view of leaders and moving to work elsewhere. [https://johnjerrim.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/wp\\_school\\_leadership\\_july\\_2024.pdf](https://johnjerrim.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/wp_school_leadership_july_2024.pdf)

## **4. News:**

- Piece exploring the challenges with raising attendance faced by schools as the DfE and Ofsted are pressurising them to drive down unauthorised absences. A balance of support and engagement with parents is proposed, alongside the enforcement regimes. Quote from the DfE: "We must tackle the national epidemic of school absence", whilst offering a "support-first approach for children who are facing barriers to regular school attendance". <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/schools-stumble-on-the-attendance-tightrope/>
- The safer phones bill, a private members bill, is introduced. Among its provision would be to increase 'internet adulthood' to 16 in order to reduce the exposure to the more additive elements of social media and to provide a legal basis for smartphone free schools. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/oct/14/new-bill-could-force-social-media-firms-to-make-content-less-addictive-for-children>

- DfE to review current, over-complex school maintenance and repair processes and recognises it has a need to deal with a significant backlog presently. Changes will include designing a single “education estates management portal” to bring together its interactions with trusts and councils. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfе-to-review-complicated-school-maintenance-funding-system/>
- Exploring the use of test data to predict pupils' current performance in English and maths. Using data from one large MAT, the analysis finds that KS2 results data is a strong predictor of year 8 performance as much as end of year 7 tests. Schools are recommended to draw on older test data and to challenge themselves about the learning benefit of tests with current workload pressures. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/10/how-valuable-are-end-of-year-tests-for-predicting-pupils-future-achievement/>
- The number reviews at DfE and ministerial level prior to final approval is slowing decisions for new free schools, including special schools, as well as affecting rebuilding projects. This is causing concern to LAs and making capacity planning a challenge. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/repeated-review-of-new-special-school-buildings-irks-councils/>
- Under the recently published Employment Bill, academy trust central teams, possibly including CEOs and other senior roles, fall under the category of school support staff. The Bill is explicit that its scope includes academies and trusts. CST is consulting about any concerns. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/new-law-mustnt-rule-ceos-are-support-staff-dfe-told/>
- Article following a survey on diversity in senior trust roles reports 35% of CEOs in trusts with >15 schools are women. However only 4 CEOs (2.3%) are of non-white ethnicity. There are calls for more open reporting on diversity across senior roles and for pathways into leadership. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/diversity-gap-in-academy-trust-top-jobs-fails-to-narrow/>
- Ofsted publishes the first school inspection reports without headline judgements. Instead the 15 schools have graded, sub-judgements across the four main aspects of the inspection framework. The 15 include 2 schools located in the South-east. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/revealed-ofsted-publishes-first-school-reports-without-headline-grades/>
- Concerns that the relatively high level of poor school attendance and funding changes for entry-level and level 1 courses are fuelling an increase in those 16-plus who are NEET. Many lower level courses were reliant upon EU funding which has not been fully replaced since Brexit. There is a call for more long-term destinations data (currently limited at two terms after leaving school), so schools can be better informed and play their part and/or be held to account. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-absence-epidemic-gives-labour-a-neet-problem/>
- Support staff have settled their pay award for 2024-25: £1,290 flat rate for all staff. This follows Unison and GMB not achieving the required threshold in their strike ballots. Schools are expected to meet this award from the additional allocation for pay awards including for teaching staff. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-support-staff-unions-accept-1290-pay-deal/>
- As a result of data quality concerns and more errors than usual, the DfE has delayed publication of KS4 provisional data. The checking exercise for KS4 and post-16 has been extended until Nov 7th and the 2024 data published after that. <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/secondary/deadline-exam-results-checking-extended-due-data-quality>
- Profile of Leora Cruddas, leader of the Confederation of School Trusts. She talks about her early teaching in South Africa and then in the East End of London, and progress through LA leadership starting as a SEND adviser. She has led CST since its launch in 2018 and states her focus is to help groups of schools work together to achieve improvements for pupils. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/leora-cruddas-the-confederation-of-school-trusts/>
- A summary of the key findings of the NAO’s report into SEND and the 9 recommendations to address their concerns. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/send-in-crisis-naos-8-damning-findings/>