

SESLIP AD Education Network Update: December 6th 2024

From SESLIP:

- Following on from the recent AD Education Network meeting, Julia has shared the updated Surrey section 19 policy: [Section 19 Policy Statement - July 2024](#).

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In Today's Update:

- DfE: Child poverty policy paper, Ofsted annual report 2023-24, paper on children's social care reform, guidance and grants to implement new ITT arrangements, high needs funding guidance 2025-26, national and local KS4 performance data, HoL inquiry into education to employment transition for young people with disabilities, suspension and exclusion data for autumn 2023.
- National reports: Review of T-level programme so far with recommendations for change and improvement, analysis of school nurseries plan and whether this will meet needs, report about CME in England concludes numbers could be twice as high as those officially recorded, working with 3 LAs to reduce exclusions.
- Research: Critical analysis of Ofsted's maths research review, estimate of wider negative impacts of youth club closures (including attainment and crime), is school avoidance more prevalent in English-speaking countries?
- News: Leak sheds light on Ofsted's early thinking for the school report cards from Sept, the crisis of LA school improvement, how much does the current curriculum contribute to the SEND crisis? SEND resource base tips, no new Safety Valve agreements, TIMSS data shows continuing good performance in England in maths and science, LA consults on a levy for exclusions.

1. DfE:

- Policy paper about child poverty jointly published with DWP. It sets out the scale of the challenge with current levels being the worst recorded in 21st century. By 2022-23, 4.3 million children are estimated to be living in poverty and around 800,000 reliant upon food banks. 70% of those in poverty are working families and 50% of children in poverty are from families with three or more children.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-poverty-developing-our-strategy/tackling-child-poverty-developing-our-strategy-html>
- Ofsted publishes its annual report for 2023-24. Among themes highlighted are concerns about increasing numbers opting out of school education or having high levels of absence. There is a focus on SEND, with criticism of too many EHCPs being issued and AP is too often used when a specialist place is not available. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202324-education-childrens-services-and-skills>
- DfE policy paper on children's social care reform, including addressing concerns with the costs and funding for children placed in care and continuing commitment to placing children with families and not in residential settings where possible. There are proposals to further extend the role of the VSH and make schools statutory 'relevant agencies' and committing again to legislation for Children not in School registers.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67375fe5ed0fc07b53499a42/Keeping_Children_Safe_Helping_Families_Thrive_.pdf
- Guidance and how to apply for grants to support implementing changes to ITT requirements, for providers and schools. This includes support for the new lead mentor role and for intensive training.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-reform-funding-guidance>
- Detailed operational guidance for the high needs funding block for 2025-26, together with guidance about making place changes for special schools and hospital schools.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2025-to-2026>

- KS4 performance statistics for 2023-24, with national and LA breakdowns. Attainment levels are at similar levels to those recorded pre-pandemic. There is some small increase in students with SEND both being entered for GCSEs and achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance/2023-24>
- Report from the House of Lords about better supporting young people with disabilities to make the transition from education into employment and address the fact that employment levels are 30% lower for adults with disabilities. Many young people with disabilities really want to work, yet this is too often not the expectation and too many employers are unaware of the potential and the assistance available. Concerns are expressed about the impact on students with SEND of the planned discontinuation of BTECs and the inquiry highlights the value of supporting work experience to assist good transitions. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5901/ldselect/pubserv/12/12.pdf>
- The data for autumn term 2023/24 shows a suspension rate of 4.13 per 10,000 pupils, a significant increase from the rate of 2.96 for the Autumn term in 2022/23. Exclusions also increased from 0.04 to 0.05 over the same period. Persistent disruption continued to be the main reason identified: for 50% of suspensions and 36% for exclusion <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions-in-england/2023-24-autumn-term>

2. Reports:

- Early review of the T-level programme so far, based on participation levels over the first three years but outcomes achieved by students in 2021-22. The range of success rates varies between pathways, with digital T-levels having the highest success rate and 'health and science' and 'early years and education' the lowest. Concerns are expressed how many students who drop-out from T-levels either become NEET or do not re-engage in L3 study. The report is most critical of the 'transition programme' and advises that it is either scrapped or heavily reformed. https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/T-Level-Report-final_1.pdf
- Some analysis about the expansion of school nurseries to meet demand for additional early year and childcare places. Although in London there is likely to be sufficient spare capacity to develop, this is unlikely to be the case in certain other regions. The report also asks questions about why existing school nurseries are not prioritised for expansion, will the size of new nurseries be viable and whether they will be located in the neighbourhoods with demand. https://www.frontier-economics.com/media/1mdlgy0n/report_using-spare-capacity-in-schools-for-new-nurseries_clean-004.pdf
- EPI publishes an investigation into children missing education and estimates that the number missing education could be 2.5X higher than DfE estimates. Pupils with SEMH difficulties and care-experienced children were more than twice as likely to miss a period of mainstream education that their cohort as a whole. The report highlights the urgency of legislation being passed to begin a register of children not in school. https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CME-report_final-1.pdf
- Report from The RSA about its programme with 3 LAs (including E Sussex) to support multi-agency work to prevent exclusions. Approaches included headteacher-led peer support between primary schools to increase inclusive practices, supporting training for good primary to secondary transition with transition ambassadors in four secondary schools and a review and refresh of local FAP and developing a FAP for AP. <https://thersa.org/globalassets/foundation/new-site-blocks-and-images/reports/2024/10/pse-lessons-from-the-front-line-final-version.pdf>

3. Research

- Analysis of the approach taken by Ofsted in its research review about the teaching of maths. The analysis is critical of its lack of rigour and transparency and concludes there are aspects where some evidence is cherry-picked and cited in order to fit policy direction. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14794802.2024.2418082>

- Using a novel before-and-after closure of youth work provision across Greater London up to 2019, the research estimates the impacts on levels of crime and on links with academic attainment at age 16. Since youth clubs largely support more deprived communities, these were more impacted upon by closures and estimates indicate, in areas where provision was withdrawn, increases in youth crime, and reduced involvement in events and reductions in GCSE grades.
https://ifs.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-11/WP202451-The-effects-of-youth-clubs-on-education-and-crime_1.pdf
- Using PISA data covering the period 2012 - 2022, the authors consider whether there are any patterns to truancy, based on self-reports from year 10 aged students and school-level data. Across OECD countries there appeared a marked increase in skipping school across English-speaking nations, but this is not the case in other OECD countries of Europe and East Asia. This increase does not correlate with Covid-related school closures but there is a noticeable increase in female students skipping school. <https://repec-cepeo.ucl.ac.uk/cepeow/cepeowp24-10.pdf>

4. News:

- A leak from a 'closed-doors' early consultation session suggests Ofsted are testing an approach to inspection and the school report card that is designed across 10 themes: curriculum, teaching, achievement, leadership, behaviour and values, attendance, preparation for next steps, opportunities to thrive, inclusion and belonging and safeguarding. There will be an evaluation scale under each of these themes and Ofsted will notify the DfE of any schools causing concern following inspection.
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ofsted-proposes-giving-schools-one-of-five-ratings-across-10-areas/>
- Financial constraints in LAs mean that even those with some in-house school improvement services are now having to cut these further or leave the responsibility to schools to buy-in their own support.
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-improvement-unaffordable-for-countrys-biggest-council/>
- Thoughtful article raising the question about how much have students with SEND been let down by the current approach to curriculum? If we have assessment based on deficits rather than strengths and norms-based exams with built-in failure rates, what is the offer for those with SEND?
<https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/curriculum-reforms-created-send-crisis-says-mat-leader>
- Opinion article from 6 SEND leaders about what successful SEND resource bases look like.
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/solutions-six-tips-for-opening-a-specialist-resource-provision/>
- Example of locally trialled school report card which includes an app for parents to access and be able to compare local schools. Developed in Camden, other similar early adopting report cards are being used in Sheffield and Milton Keynes. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn0180y5r1eo>
- DfE will not set up any new SEND safety valve agreements with LAs pending wider reforms to the SEND system and commits about £750M of capital fund announced in the budget for specialist places in mainstream schools. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/740m-earmarked-to-create-send-places-in-mainstream/>
- Some headlines from the latest (2023) TIMSS international data comparison. Whilst there can be issues about the balance of the sample, the overall is that maths learning levels were on a par with already higher than average levels in 2020 and that there was some upward movement in science, despite there being a pandemic between the two rounds of data. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/timss-2023-maths-holds-steady-while-science-improves/>
- Devon County Council is consulting on its strategic approach to inclusion which proposes a charge to schools for an exclusion. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/financial-blackmail-council-to-charge-schools-21k-exclusion-levy/>
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