

## SESLIP AD Education Network Update: January 10<sup>th</sup> 2025

### From SESLIP:

- Happy New Year! I hope you have returned following a good break.

### In Today's Update:

- DfE: Children's Wellbeing Bill published, evidence to STRB on teachers' pay, latest survey of teachers' working lives, policy paper about future devolution of government powers to LAs / regions, submitting EHE & CME data.
- National reports: Analysis demonstrates the strong link being low income households and higher school absences, SEND funding: analysis looks at the shift to mainstream & its costs, school pupil numbers projected to reduce across the whole OECD area, analysis of education spending for 2025 onwards.
- Research: Trial use of generative AI by science teachers finds time savings in lesson preparation,
- News: Curriculum overload within scope of the Review, United Learning's response to curriculum review, more evidence of reading gap for summer born boys in KS1, statutory compliance orders for academies, further delay to SEND financial override announcement, SofS responds to criticism of parts of the new schools bill, HMCI reports to the Education Select Committee, ongoing slow progress with RAAC schools, tips for schools to poverty-proof themselves, reminder of the large increase in child poverty in the UK reported by UNICEF, education people in the latest honours list.

#### 1. DfE:

- Dept publishes its anticipated Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. Proposed legislation includes: - extending powers to open schools to LAs; - removal of automatic academy orders for schools causing concern; - plus items already announced such as statutory register of children not in school, all schools to cooperate with LA admission arrangements, removal of entitlement to home educate if there are safeguarding concerns or a child protection plan.  
<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3909> & <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-wellbeing-and-schools-bill-2024-policy-summary>
- Further details of powers proposed:
  - there will be a definition of full-time education;
  - children not in school registers will extend to those assessed as suited to flexi-schooling or in temporary AP;
  - powers for LA to visit home educated children in the home and take a view that the home environment is suitable as well as the education;
  - School Attendance Orders with timescales statutory and the process aligned for maintained and academy schools
  - duty for academies to cooperate with LAs will include place planning and fair access
  - definition of a private school will be extended and the SofS have powers to suspend a private school's registration where there is risk of harm
  - Ofsted to have increased powers to enter a suspected illegal school
  - safeguarding arrangements to include schools as relevant agencies, including in their multi-agency partnership
  - single unique identifier for all children to be developed and introduced (with a pilot of using the NHS number for this purpose)
  - children under 16 to be able to work longer than 2 hours on a Sunday and require a work permit to be in child employment. Useful summary here: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/schools-bill-all-39-proposed-policies-and-when-theyll-start/>

- The DfE's evidence to the teachers pay review body setting out its case for 2.8% across the board pay award. It also asks the body to make recommendations for updating teachers' T&Cs to allow more flexible working such as 9-day fortnight. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-to-the-strb-2025-pay-award-for-teachers-and-leaders>
- Latest wave of the DfE's survey of teacher and their working lives. Findings include that leaders (56.6 hours) and teachers (48 hours) work long hours on average and that there has been a reduction to 45% of teachers agreeing that student behaviour was good overall. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/674ddf916f6baefc2a9ca1aa/Working\\_lives\\_of\\_teachers\\_and\\_leaders\\_wave\\_3\\_summary\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/674ddf916f6baefc2a9ca1aa/Working_lives_of_teachers_and_leaders_wave_3_summary_report.pdf)
- Government white paper on future for devolution of government in England which proposes a "devolution revolution," aiming to transfer powers from Whitehall to local communities to address regional needs more effectively. The South-east is currently the region with the lowest level of devolution arrangements. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth>
- Updated information about submitting termly EHE and CME data to the DfE. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/elective-home-education-and-children-missing-education-submit-your-data>

## **2. Reports:**

- Report exploring the connections between poverty and poor school attendance finds that CYP eligible for FSM are more prone to school absences and there has been a threefold increase in FSM pupils being severely absent, since the pandemic, as compared with their peers. The analysis suggests that in recent years, school absences have been occurring earlier at primary school age, and poor school readiness has become an indicator of higher absences downstream in school life. As well as Government action, schools are recommended to note poverty as part of monitoring school attendance. [https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/65b6b3c3bd2e7d160db2dbc0/6749a0f54b2bfb3ef7f498b5\\_TSFS%20Final%20-%20Gen%20Z%20Group%20Mail.pdf](https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/65b6b3c3bd2e7d160db2dbc0/6749a0f54b2bfb3ef7f498b5_TSFS%20Final%20-%20Gen%20Z%20Group%20Mail.pdf)
- Another report analysing the challenges involved to make the funding of SEND / high needs financially sustainable. The IFS sets out that, although a greater focus on learning in mainstreams is likely to be sustainable and result in better outcomes, the cost of transition would require some period of dual funding of specialist and enhanced mainstream places. Retaining parental confidence through the changes will be a significant challenge as well. <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/spending-special-educational-needs-england-something-has-change>
- Report analysing the current and future demographic profiles of the school aged population of OECD countries and its implications for schooling and funding of education. UK is among the OECD countries most affected by reductions in school age population to 2031 (top 25%), and most OECD countries have teacher shortages even with the reductions in student numbers. [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/how-are-demographic-changes-affecting-education-systems\\_158d4c5c-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/how-are-demographic-changes-affecting-education-systems_158d4c5c-en.html)
- Analysis of the current and future state of education budgets in England from the IFS; for the first time under the present government. The combined settlement on teachers' pay and the future offer, together with the £1billion committed to high needs, will more than use up the additional £2.3billion allocated for 2025-26. Since there is little or no allowance for the rise in other costs, schools and trusts are still going to face tough decisions about cutting spending. <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/annual-report-education-spending-england-2024-25>

## **3. Research**

- EEF trial of the use of ChatGPT by science teachers (KS3) finds that there was a saving of about 30% on time spent on lesson preparations by the group guided in the use of the generative AI. It was particularly used for preparation of quizzes and questions for class discussion.  
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/choices-in-edtech-using-generative-ai-chatgpt-for-ks3-science-lesson-preparation-2024-teacher-choices-trial>

#### 4. News:

- At an event, the chair of the curriculum and assessment review confirmed that curriculum overload / subjects which are content-heavy are within the scope of the review. The recommendations will expect to set out an 'evolution not revolution' approach.  
<https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/curriculum-panel-ask-why-teachers-face-content-overload>
- United Learning shares its submission to the DfE's curriculum review. While emphasising that the NC broadly works well among its thoughts for change are: - functional skills assessment in maths and English for all pupils - some focus on stage not age, particularly those who didn't meet early learning goals - more focus on attainment by age 19 (eg >90% achieving L2)  
[https://unitedlearning.org.uk/Portals/0/unitedthinking/curriculum\\_assessment\\_review\\_response.pdf](https://unitedlearning.org.uk/Portals/0/unitedthinking/curriculum_assessment_review_response.pdf)
- Article using data from a Reading Assessment Programme (RAP) analysing it against other progress measures during KS1 (there is also a link to their report about the data and programme across KS1 and KS2). The authors mapped their data against early literacy and KS1 literacy assessment. It provides further evidence of the lower attainment of summer born boys compared to their year group, with indication that the gap persists for disadvantaged boys to GCSE and beyond.  
<https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2024/12/low-oral-reading-fluency-at-the-end-of-key-stage-1/>
- The DfE commits to publishing new statutory compliance orders for academies that are not complying with requirements in the new Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. These will include over admissions, school uniform and adhering to new national curriculum.  
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/government-will-publish-new-academy-compliance-orders/>
- The Government has delayed an announcement about the statutory override for SEND deficits until early 2025. This is a second postponement and has sparked LA leaders to seek urgent clarity since the override is currently due to end in 2026. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/councils-kept-waiting-on-key-send-deficit-override-decision/>
- Looking ahead to 2025: Sam Freedman sees a lack of clarity about the direction of education policy from this government. How much difficulty will it face with the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill? Meanwhile SEND, including funding, is the biggest problem. It might be awaiting the spending review, for more funds for inclusion in mainstreams, and will probably generate a need for more legislation.  
[Schools policy: what to expect in 2025tes.com](https://www.tes.com/news/schools-policy-what-to-expect-in-2025)
- Following the second reading debate the Secretary of State responds to criticism to the newly published children's wellbeing and schools bill. She highlights that limits to academy freedoms are to ensure a more coherent wider system and to address failings such as the high levels of school absences. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/schools-bill-wont-cut-pay-and-restores-academies-core-purpose/>
- Key points from Martin Oliver's appearance at the Education Select Committee include: that the school report card consultation should begin in Feb, that SEND is a bigger challenge for the education system than safeguarding and that leadership and governance should be the most important element of future report cards. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/martyn-oliver-on-ofsted-reform-8-things-we-learned/>

- Update about the RAAC removal programme from affected schools reveals that 30 of the 232 schools have had RAAC removed so far, with others partially under way or awaiting commencement. The minister estimates a 3 - 5 year timescale for the completion of all remedial works.  
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/raac-yet-to-be-removed-from-90-of-crisis-hit-schools/>
- Households in poverty face additional pressures through the winter. This article signposts practical tips and resources for schools to support their pupils and families who are facing these pressures.  
<https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/content/best-practice/the-cost-of-winter-supporting-your-families/>
- Opinion piece that highlights UK's need to reduce child poverty and that responding to the child poverty taskforce in the spring will be a key challenge for the government. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/labour-must-ratchet-up-reform-in-2025/> . Here's the link to the latest UNICEF child poverty index which showed nearly a 20% increase in child poverty in the UK - the highest in the whole OECD sample: <https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/media/3301/file/UNICEF-Innocenti-Report-Card-18-Child-Poverty-Amidst-Wealth-Exec-Summary-2023.pdf>
- Education leaders, present and past, are among those recognised in the New Years Honours.  
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/former-schools-minister-nick-gibb-knighted-in-new-years-honours/>
-