

## SESLIP AD Education Network Update: March 28<sup>th</sup> 2025

### From SESLIP:

- Confirmation that DfE will not be able to attend the Network meeting on 9th May. Instead, we will now meet at **Broadway House in London on 27th June** and have had confirmation that Paul Schofield will join us for that meeting. Updated invites have been circulated.

### In Today's Update:

- DfE: Interim report from the curriculum review, overall attendance data for 2023-24, school and high needs capital allocations 2025-26, school capacity data (2024), verified 16-18 attainment data, HoC report about how DfE could better support disadvantaged pupils, mental health in schools funding has ended, research into modelling child-level funding for children's services, research into the contributions of key workers in reducing serious youth violence.
- Reports: The crisis of current learning loss and strategies to achieve an inclusive response, showcasing secondary school approaches to students returning from absences.
- Research: Updated guides on deploying teaching assistants, a KS2 science programme with positive effects on attainment.
- News: SofS speech to ASCL, critical response to RISE proposals from CST, evidence about the lives of children 5-years on from the pandemic, employers' NI increase: concerns about shortfalls for schools, articles about addressing key attendance challenges in secondary, thoughts on partnerships between schools.

#### 1. DfE:

- Interim report from the Curriculum & Assessment Review: including findings from evidence submitted and views of learners and parents. It also sets out initial findings and the next steps to finalise recommendations. Initial findings include too much specified content in primary, a more detailed review of EBacc, SATs remain, and GCSEs broadly the same but looking to reduce exam burden. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/curriculum-and-assessment-review-interim-report>
- Validated attendance data for the year 2023-24 includes some positive trends: overall attendance shows a small increase and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, a small reduction to 20%. However there are concerns regarding those missing most school: an increase in the proportion who are severely absent and of those, an increase in those who have SEND (both an EHCP and at SEN support) and those from a disadvantaged background. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england/2023-24>
- High needs fund capital allocations for 2025-26 per local authority. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-provision-capital-allocations> . Also the school capital funding allocations <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capital-funding> including allocations from the condition improvement fund and school condition allocation, and basic need allocations to 2028: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/basic-need-allocations> with allowance for increasing mainstream places where required for Sept 2028.
- Data about school capacity and place uptake by phase and LA. It includes a breakdown for SEN places (across mainstream and special schools) with projections into the future as well. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-capacity-in-england-academic-year-2023-to-2024>
- Final verified A-level and other 16 - 18 year olds results for 2024, including personal characteristics such as SEND and disadvantaged background. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/a-level-and-other-16-to-18-results/2023-24>
- Report from HoC Public Accounts Committee enquiring about how effectively the DfE supports the improvement of outcomes for disadvantaged children. Strategic recommendations include working more effectively across government departments, setting goals for closing the disadvantage gap over

coming years and clearer information about to what extent schools expenditure on disadvantaged pupils is aligned with guidance about the use of those funds.

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/46799/documents/242293/default/>

- Confirmation that any DfE funding for mental health leads in schools training and further development of this programme finished at the end of January. This page summarises the materials available to schools. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges>
- Research report exploring possible child-level basis for future funding of children’s services. The paper explores multi-level modelling and a range of ‘children known to services’ indicators as well as deprivation and ethnicity. It would appear the broad conclusion is that it is complex and a key gap is up-to-date local population statistics for the age group concerned. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67c0905f72e83aab48866c15/Children and Young Peoples Services Formula Review research report Feb 2025.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67c0905f72e83aab48866c15/Children_and_Young_Peoples_Services_Formula_Review_research_report_Feb_2025.pdf)
- The role of key workers in support of young people who have been involved in serious violence. The research finds that key workers with good relationships with young people can lead to impacts such as reductions in future incidents and in engagement with education and positive activities, but that settings such as schools need a better understanding of their role and how to enable their work. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67b456d2b56d8b0856c2fdd7/The role of key workers in supporting children and young people with experience of serious youth violence.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67b456d2b56d8b0856c2fdd7/The_role_of_key_workers_in_supporting_children_and_young_people_with_experience_of_serious_youth_violence.pdf)

## **2. Reports:**

- This report draws on wide range of recent evidence and schools’ data to highlight an overriding concern about children and young people missing out on learning and how an inclusive offer can be shaped for children, young people and their families. With many indicators, such as suspensions, move to home education and school attendance, heading in the wrong direction, the report pin-points that families with low social and economic status are over-represented among those missing education. Responses called for that could help to address the scale of lost learning include: inclusive leaders in school, addressing the fragmentation of services for children and families, beginning with a shared outcomes framework, and the most underserved schools should be able to recruit and retain the best teachers. <https://www.ippr.org/articles/who-is-losing-learning-solutions>
- Report highlighting approaches adopted by secondary phase schools to support pupils returning from a period of absence. We are reminded about the main drivers of significant school absence: prolonged illness, mental health difficulties and term-time holidays. Teachers’ views were that other influences include: parents having a lower threshold for allowing a day off sick, post-covid orthodoxies of not exposing others to infections, increased working from home meaning a pupil being off sick is less disruptive at home and times in lock-down have brought some families closer together or less at ease with being away from home. Case examples showcase flexible approaches drawing on a school’s toolbox of resources and adaptations to establish a welcoming environment for return. <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/voices-from-the-classroom-understanding-how-secondary-schools-support-pupils-returning-from-absence/>

## **3. Research**

- EEF has updated its guidance and support resources to inform schools about the most effective approaches to deploying teaching assistants. Key themes include deploying TAs so pupils can access high quality teaching, train TAs and plan their work so they can scaffold learning with pupils and support independence and train and engage all staff in the effective deployment of TAs. <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/teaching-assistants>

- Evaluation of the 'Stop and Think' programme finds that it supports improved attainment in KS2 science (though not in KS2 maths). It is a 10-week computer programme which uses quizzes and games to help Key Stage 2 pupils learn counterintuitive concepts in science and maths. Each 12-minute computer-assisted session of games is designed to challenge common misconceptions.  
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/promising-programmes/stop-and-think>

#### **4. News:**

- Speech by the SofS to ASCL where she sets out key priorities for RISE (English, maths, attendance and attainment), that the Dept is reviewing the different 'overlapping' complaint routes and promotion of inclusion, including a call for best practice in mainstream SEND. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/rise-improvement-teams-to-prioritise-english-and-maths-reception-inclusion-and-attainment-says-phillipson/>
- The CST's response to the consultation about the [Regional improvement for standards and excellence](#) policy and advisers is critical of the approach and that it overlooks existing arrangements. It calls for the policy to be rethought and better use of public money.  
<https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/cst-rise-teams-are-deeply-questionable-use-public-money>
- Informative programme focusing on the statistical evidence of the impact of the covid pandemic lockdowns on children and young people, five years on. It confirms largely 'amplification' impacts: adding to existing inequalities; however a worrying trend of declining mental wellbeing is also identified.  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m00291y1>
- Although DfE has announced nearly £1 billion to cover the additional cost of the employers National Insurance contributions, early indications from trusts and schools is that this represents a shortfall of between 10% and 35%. Detailed school by school allocations are expected to be published in May ready for payment from September 2025. <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/1bn-for-schools-to-cover-national-insurance-hike/>
- Bulletin with a series of articles about inclusion and attendance drawing on practice from secondary schools. Items include creative ways to work with parents and help them to value education and getting under the skin of reasons vulnerable learners might be missing days at school.  
<https://email.sec-ed.co.uk/q/112bl0sSvSt8SytKnx1/wv>
- Some thoughts from a MAT director of partnerships about their first principles for effect partnerships between schools. Three of the four, mutuality, sustainability and impact / evaluation, are insightfully discussed and broadly applicable. Their fourth, disadvantage, is perhaps more specific to context or the purpose of a partnership. <https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/content/best-practice/building-local-partnerships-between-schools>