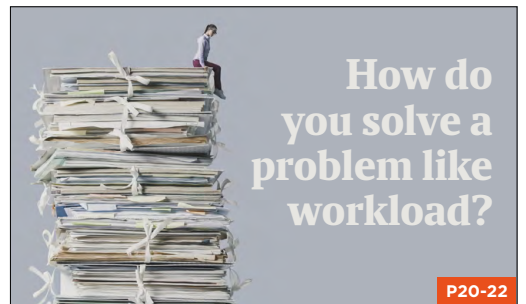


SCHOOLS WEEK

A digital newspaper determined to get past the bluster and explain the facts.



P20-22

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FRIDAY, SEP 22, 2023 | EDITION 332

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- Cash-strapped local authorities have targets to 'manage demand' on SEND plans
- DfE insists it had no role in setting targets, as campaigners call for transparency

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SCHOOLS WEEK

Meet the news team



John Dickens
EDITOR

@JOHNDICKENSSW
JOHN.DICKENS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Freddie Whittaker
DEPUTY EDITOR

@FCDWHITTAKER
FREDDIE.WHITTAKER@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK




Samantha Booth
CHIEF REPORTER

@SAMANTHAJBOTH
SAMANTHA.BOOTH@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Amy Walker
SENIOR REPORTER

@AMYWALKER
AMY.WALKER@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



Jack Dyson
SENIOR REPORTER

@JACKYDYS
JACK.DYSON@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK



JL Dutaut
COMMISSIONING EDITOR

@DUTAUT
JEAN-LOUISDUTAUT@LSECT.COM



Jessica Hill
INVESTIGATIONS AND FEATURES REPORTER

@JESSJANEHILL
JESSICA.HILL@LSECT.COM



Nicky Phillips
HEAD DESIGNER

@GELVETICA
NICKY.PHILLIPS@FEWEEK.CO.UK



Shane Mann
MANAGING DIRECTOR

@SHANERMANN
SHANE.MANN@LSECT.COM

THE TEAM | Senior designer: Simon Kay | Classifieds Manager: Clare Halliday | Sales Executive: Tony Hudson | Operations and Finance Manager: Victoria Boyle | Event Manager: Frances Ogefere Dell | Senior Administrator: Evie Hayes | Office Administrator: Zoe Tuffin | Office Administrator – Apprentice: Sanchez Nandi

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Schools made to pay for Khan's political gamble

The mayor of London's £135 million initiative to extend universal free school meals to all primary pupils has laudable aims.

It will save families, struggling in a cost-of-living crisis, hundreds of pounds. Many will be those 'just about managing' – earning just above the ridiculously low threshold to get benefits.

But, like many other worsening social problems, dealing with rising child poverty is increasingly falling on schools' shoulders.

Funding from City Hall, though more generous than government rates, won't cover all of schools' set-up costs, and in many cases won't even cover the cost of meals.

Budgets have been squeezed for many years. For many leaders it's another unwelcome cost. As one put it: "I didn't freeze all staff recruitment only to go back into deficit for a cooker, when what I really need is staff!"

"Especially when the cooker is needed as an unintended consequence of a well-intentioned but ultimately external (and therefore unplanned on my part) policy."

The policy is also only funded for a year, and with a mayoral election next year, you can't help but think schools are paying the price for a political gamble.

As the NFER writes this week in our Knowledge column, school staff are "on the front line in grappling with the challenges faced by pupils and their families brought about by the cost-of-living crisis".

Another example is the school attendance crisis. As a worrying report this week shows (page 9), the pandemic has caused a "seismic shift in parental attitudes to school attendance" that will take a "monumental, multi-service effort to change".

Schools are operating in a new normal. Policymakers must recognise the scale of this new challenge.

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- 2 [Grammar school told to stop demanding tenancy documents](#)
- 3 [6 ways to solve teacher shortages, according to experts](#)
- 4 [Ofsted: 7 key findings from its geography subject report](#)
- 5 [RAAC: Keegan under fire over holiday and 'portacabin' claims](#)

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School leaders fear financial impact of pupil withdrawal over RAAC

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOTH

EXCLUSIVE

Parents are withdrawing their children from schools with crumbling concrete, with heads warning of a “catastrophic” impact on their budgets amid uncertainty over when buildings will be fully repaired.

Schools Week has spoken to four leaders across nine schools with RAAC who are aware of parents applying to move or are actively considering it since the start of term.

Heads say some families of pupils are worried about further disruption to their child’s education after the pandemic. There is uncertainty both over the time to complete mitigation works – such as installing temporary classrooms or boarding up RAAC – so children can learn at school again, as well as longer-term repairs or rebuilds for those affected.

Leaders are also worried RAAC will put parents off from applying next year.

Parents of children going into secondary school must make choices by end of October. Open days are also held during the Autumn term, with some schools with RAAC unable to host them.

‘Long-term uncertainty’

One large multi-academy trust leader said more than 20 parents across several schools with confirmed RAAC have applied to transfer in three weeks: “We are having conversations with these parents, but it’s mainly caused by parents not really wanting



their children to be mucked about and sent to a variety of different locations for school.

“Then there’s the long-term uncertainty of what’s going to happen to schools and it’s clearly not going to be removed in the near future.”

The government will fund longer-term refurbishment or rebuilding projects to permanently remove RAAC through capital grants or through the school rebuilding programme, education secretary Gillian Keegan told the Commons this week. However, she gave no timeline on when this could start to happen. Under the rebuilding programme, for instance, many schools will not be rebuilt until 2030.

The head said: “We are keeping parents well up to date, but we can only tell them what we know and are allowed to tell them. It’s not like I

can make all of these decisions myself. I’ve got to check with civil servants.”

They said five or 10 students leaving “is a devastating amount of money”, adding that ministers should safeguard future years’ funding at this year’s level for RAAC-impacted schools.

Schools need funding reassurance

Geoff Barton, general secretary at ASCL heads’ union, said this “underlines the need for the DfE to set out a long-term plan of how they are going to support schools with RAAC. School leaders need reassurance over the wider funding implications of managing this situation and it is only natural for parents to want clarity over the form their child’s education is going to take going forward.”

The leaders would only share their stories on the condition of anonymity amid fears sharing their concern could trigger more parents to leave.

Another head said two families had already moved, with up to four considering it.

“The families that have moved have said it’s nothing to do with you,” he said. “They are thinking that the rest of the academic year in temporary accommodation – it’s not going to be what they expected or planned. If there’s a school down the road where everything is stable, and isn’t potentially changing, then some parents might look and see that.”

Any drop in pupil numbers would be “catastrophic for our budgets” and “it’s not our fault at all”, he added. Most funding schools get is on a per-pupil basis.



Geoff Barton

RAAC decision timeline

End of July: Ministers hear of first incident of non-critical RAAC collapsing, in a Scottish school



August 21: Ministers advise Gillian Keegan to ramp up RAAC policy and close schools

August 25: Keegan goes on holiday to Spain for her father’s birthday



Over the summer holidays: Technical advice sought from experts as second non-critical collapse occurs

August 24: Third case of non-critical RAAC collapses, this time in English school

August 31: RAAC schools told they should close – days before start of new term. Keegan lands back in UK



NEWS: RAAC

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Parents putting kids 'on strike'

Another head said "a couple of parents" had mentioned transferring, with parents "getting quite agitated" at the situation. Some had threatened putting their children "on strike" by refusing to allow them to engage with remote learning to put pressure on government to "do something quicker". "Heads are at the sharp edge of it. We are trying to deal with the staff, kids and governors who are stressed, then trying to manage builders on site."

A fourth leader has fewer than five parents wishing to transfer, but is concerned that number could grow as the term goes on.

"I worry about the degree of patience of the parents and the children," they said. "The [DfE] caseworkers are generally trying to do their best... it's the length of time for resolutions we face, I'm not sure how many parents have realised that."

The leader is also worried about admissions and the possibility of being "put off applying to be part of a school community – no matter how successful – where there's maybe an ongoing

significant degree of disruption".

Schools Week spoke to three other heads with RAAC-affected schools who said no parents had mentioned moving school yet.

Mitigations 'take the clock off'

Baroness Barran, academies minister, told MPs this week that putting temporary classrooms "is very often not a quick fix".

The Bromfords School in Wickford, Essex, has pupils learning at home as it waits for temporary classrooms. However, it is currently looking at reopening "no later than" November 20.

Barran also said "semi-permanent" timber ceilings can be put in place under RAAC-affected areas and these can last for 10 years.

Susan Acland-Hood, DfE's permanent secretary, said these "comfortable and reasonable" mitigations "take the clock off, but it does not mean we will not want to do a permanent fix".

The school rebuilding programme has 100 spare slots, but Acland-Hood said the Treasury has an "agreement that they will make this a priority for the next spending review will allow us to increase the total number if we need to. Therefore, if we have more schools that need rebuilding than we have slots, we will increase the size."

Project directors are working with schools on the immediate mitigation and assessing what is needed in the longer term, she added. However, Barran shot down a bizarre suggestion from Conservative MP Nick Fletcher to install netting under RAAC ceilings.

"I don't think as a child or member of staff I'd be particularly comfortable under a net," she said on Tuesday.

A DfE spokesperson said schools with concerns about future funding should speak to their RAAC case worker.



Baroness Barran



Susan Acland-Hood



Nick Fletcher

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOOTH

Keegan under fire (again) over holiday and portacabin claim

The education secretary came under further fire this week over her handling of the RAAC crisis after it emerged she went on holiday four days after ministers advised her to close affected schools.

And Gillian Keegan's claims that children in a RAAC school prefer learning in their new temporary "Portakabin" were labelled "embarrassing" by shadow schools minister Catherine McKinnell.

She told the Commons on Tuesday: "At the first school I went to, the children were all petitioning me to stay in the Portakabin because they actually preferred it to the classroom."

Baroness Barran, the education minister in charge of the response to the RAAC crisis, revealed this week she advised Keegan on August 21 to close affected schools. Another collapsed RAAC case in a school came on August 24. The education secretary then flew to Spain on August 25. The decision to close schools was announced on August 31.

This week, shadow education secretary

Bridget Phillipson asked: "How on earth did she think she could get away with going on holiday rather than taking any sort of action at all?"

Keegan said it was the "first time I could go abroad for my father's birthday" and that she had chaired meetings remotely before travelling back.

Asked this week if the DfE could have acted quicker, Barran told the education committee: "I genuinely think the answer to that is we couldn't have acted quicker, because clearly the advice we received went through a range of options from immediate closure to staged closure in a kind of warning period."

DfE permanent secretary Susan Acland-Hood said, as of Friday, project directors and caseworkers had "enquiries requesting potential orders ... relating to 180 single classrooms and 68 double classrooms".

Meanwhile, the DfE is having to chase responsible bodies that have yet to respond to questionnaires about whether they have RAAC by phone. Those yet to respond represent 1.4 per

cent of school buildings that were constructed between the 1930s to 1990s, the era RAAC was used.

Barran said the non-response was "despite me writing to them repeatedly", adding: "Honestly, we are now at the point where we are just going to be ringing them up individually. Luckily, it's a very small number, but those calls are starting imminently. I mean, it's worrying."

She added that the change to the government guidance at the end of August had also prompted a "big influx" of updated responses from schools that had already filled out the questionnaire. The minister also revealed her department was "speaking to" Ofqual about how any "significant disruption" to exam year groups may be "taken into account".

However, Ofqual pointed out that students were "not eligible for special consideration because their education has been disrupted – it is only for things that happen at the time of assessment".

Councils DO have targets to ration EHCPs

SAMANTHA BOOTH

@SAMANTHAJBOOTH

EXCLUSIVE

Some cash-strapped councils do have targets to “manage demand” for education health and care plans, *Schools Week* has found, amid concerns support for vulnerable children is being “rationed”.

It emerged last week a £19.5 million Department for Education contract with Newton Europe, to help 55 councils “deliver better value in SEND”, included “targeting at least 20 per cent reduction in new education, health and care plans [EHCPs] issued”.

The education committee wrote to the government this week saying it “appears to contradict evidence” from former children’s minister Claire Coutinho.

She told the committee in May the government schemes to help councils get huge SEND deficits under control were “not about targeting a particular reduction” in EHCPs.

Robert Halfon, skills minister, pledged this week “with absolute certainty” that DfE “has not provided any local authorities either nationally or locally with targets to reduce provisions” in EHCPs.

However, *Schools Week* has found both Kingston and Richmond councils have conditions to “manage demand” for EHCPs. Six key performance indicators reference EHCPs measured against an annual “target”.

The councils are among the 34 who have been promised bailouts of nearly £1 billion in total under the government’s safety valve scheme. In return, they must make savings on their SEND spend.

A statement issued by both councils said when agreeing the safety valve funding, they modelled “where we thought we would be over the five-year plan period and what that meant in terms of funding we needed”.

“The targets reflect those projections,” they added. They said no targets look “to change our threshold for issuing an EHCP.”

“We are focused on making sure the threshold complies with legislation and appropriately meets the needs of children and young people who require support.”

When asked about our findings, the DfE said it was “untrue to suggest



any targets relating to EHCPs were created or agreed by the department for any safety valve local authorities”.

But the DfE refused to clarify whether it signed off, or had involvement in, setting the KPIs as part of the safety valve contracts.

One of the councils said in a safety valve update that they are “required to submit a set of KPIs and updated DSG (dedicated safety grant) plan” to the DfE.

Matt Keer, a SEND specialist for Special Needs Jungle, said this was a “key question. It’s unclear, but if the metrics need DfE sign-off, and if the DfE reviews them as the agreement progresses, then they’re effectively EHCP restraint targets in all but name.”

In Haringey, which has a £22.9 million safety valve deal, an April presentation sets out its “key project goals” to bring EHCP figures in line with comparable councils.

One of the points included to “reduce the numbers of children following annual review who have an EHCP by 7% by [20]27/28”.

The council said the DfE has not set a target number for EHCPs as part of its funding agreement.” A DfE spokesperson said safety valve agreements “do not contain such targets” on EHCPs.

However, Bexley’s £30 million deal explicitly states an aim is to “reduce the growth in numbers of EHCPs required for SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) children by 48 in six years’ time”.

This would be done by creating four full-time specialist teaching assistant posts to support 80 children in both primary and secondary settings.

DfE said this reduction is “clearly as a consequence of positive actions” to improve early intervention.

The government’s SEND review, more generally, is pushing for early intervention which would mean fewer children need to access support through EHCPs.

However, Catriona Moore, policy manager at legal advice charity IPSEA, said: “Some transparency is urgently needed on what local authorities have been told by central government about the use of targets for reducing the number of EHC plans they issue.”

On the Newton contract, DfE said the “indicators” around EHCP numbers “were not formalised or agreed”. As they are not formal key performance indicators in the contract, they are not legally binding, they added.

But Robin Walker, chair of the education select committee, has asked new children’s minister David Johnston to “provide us with further detail about this contract and explain if and how this is compatible with the approach” described by Coutinho as not “targeting a particular reduction” in EHCPs.

A DfE spokesperson added: “We have been clear programmes like Safety Valve and Delivering Better Value are just one part of our wider reform work, as set out in our improvement plan, to help local authorities effectively and sustainably deliver high quality SEND services for families.”



Claire
Coutinho



David
Johnston

Incoming Ofsted chief accused of misleading MPs over exclusions

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER

@SCHOOLSWEEEK

EXCLUSIVE



Sir Martyn Oliver

The incoming Ofsted chief inspector has been accused of misleading MPs over claims exclusion rates in his turnaround trust's schools were "lower than most" in the areas they work.

Analysis by Schools Week found Outwood Grange Academies Trust's secondaries excluded twice as many pupils as other schools in some of their regions.

The trust's chief executive, Sir Martyn Oliver, made the comments to the education committee earlier this month at a pre-appointment hearing. The committee later endorsed him for the top job.

Frank Norris, an education adviser at the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, said the comments "could be viewed by members of the committee to have been misleading and those statements were relied upon by those who voted that he was indeed appropriate to appoint".

Kim Johnson, the only education committee MP who voted against appointing Oliver, said he should now be "brought back to the committee to answer for his words. Had we heard the truth at the committee, others may have raised similar concerns."

Oliver made the comment after being challenged by MPs over the trust's high suspension rates. He said: "Our figures for permanent exclusion are lower than most in the areas in which we work."

However, our analysis shows OGAT's 13 secondary schools in the Yorkshire and Humber had a 0.31 exclusion rate, equivalent to three in every 1,000 pupils, compared to 0.17 across the region's other secondaries.

In the north east, OGAT's seven secondaries had a 0.64 exclusion rate, compared to 0.30 in others.

The trust has four secondary schools in the East Midlands and two in the north west, where its exclusion rates are negligibly smaller (see table). We only looked at secondary schools.

The national permanent exclusion rate for secondary schools in 2021-22 was 0.16, compared to 0.33 at OGAT.

An OGAT spokesperson told Schools Week that Oliver was "grateful for the opportunity to clarify his comment".

"He was comparing permanent exclusion rates between some individual schools in Outwood to some of the other schools in the same LAs [local authorities] which have a similar profile," they added.

The trust did not provide any analysis or examples to back up the claim.

Schools Week looked at the three councils where OGAT had three or more secondaries in 2021-22.

The trust's schools had higher exclusion rates than other secondaries in two of the areas, and negligibly higher rates in the third.

In Wakefield, OGAT's four secondaries had an exclusion rate of 0.36, compared to 0.24 among the council's other 15 secondaries.

The trust spokesperson added schools had been "under-performing for years and were some of the most challenging in the system when we took them on. These schools have been transformed by OGAT.

"They now provide academic rigour and high standards in our academies alongside high levels of personalised care and support, and our

approach has achieved some of the best Ofsted grades in our schools' histories, with most 'good' or 'outstanding' – sometimes the only schools rated 'outstanding' in the areas we work."

All OGAT schools also "play a full role in taking permanently excluded children, children educated off site and children directed to us via fair access panels," the spokesperson added.

Supporters of zero-tolerance turnaround approaches, such as OGAT's, say short-term rises in exclusions are sometimes a necessary consequence of embedding better behaviour policies to both improve standards, and protect pupils and staff.

However, of OGAT's 13 Yorkshire and Humber secondaries, the three schools that joined most recently have been in the trust since 2018 – five years ago. On average, the schools have been with the trust for nine years. In the north east, the average is seven years.

Norris, who has been analysing school performance across the north in his role for the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, said: "This is not sustainable school improvement. High exclusions over a long period of time doesn't suggest a trust that has got a handle on embedding effective school improvement."

After a fall during the pandemic, permanent exclusions rose nationally in 2021-22. However, they are still below the peak in 2018-19.

Suspensions (or fixed-period exclusions) are at their highest rate since recent records began. One in 17 secondary school pupils were suspended at some point in the 2021-22 academic year.

OGAT's exclusion rates are actually higher than most

	OGAT secondary schools' exclusion rates	Other secondary schools' exclusion rates
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.31	0.17
North East	0.64	0.3
East Midlands	0.13	0.15
North West	0.25	0.23
England	0.33	0.16

Source: Department for Education exclusion data, 2021-22

SCHOOLS WEEK

Half of councils face funding shortfall under Khan's school meals scheme

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

EXCLUSIVE

Half of London boroughs face funding shortfalls for Sadiq Khan's extension of universal free school meals to all primary school pupils, analysis suggests.

Funding for the £135 million initiative is based on an assumption that only 90 per cent of pupils will take up the offer of free meals. However, Department for Education data for take-up of infant meals among pupils who would not qualify for means-tested benefits shows 17 of 33 London boroughs had take-up of more than 90 per cent.

Some councils had already warned that the funding rate – £2.65 per meal – was less than they actually spent on meals. Our analysis suggests the funding plans will still leave a shortfall of £33 million across London, which would be passed on to schools.

The Mayor of London's office has said boroughs that can demonstrate take-up of more than 90 per cent will receive additional funding. But this would not arrive until next year, leaving schools having to make up any shortfalls initially.

Appearing on *Newsnight* earlier this month, Khan claimed it was "not the case" that schools would have to subsidise the cost of meals from their teaching budgets.

"If there is a shortfall between a school and the money that they provide their caterers or a shortfall between the council and the money they provide the caterers, we, City Hall, will provide the shortfall," Khan added.

Asked for clarification on what form that support would take, the mayor's office said the average take-up of universal infant free school meals was between 80 and 85 per cent in London, and this would create a "buffer" that schools could use for headroom. If any school can "evidence" higher than 90 per cent take-up, the "necessary funding will be made available to them".

City Hall also said funding was being provided based on 2022 census data, when there were more primary school pupils on roll in the capital. This was a "conscious decision" to create "more headroom for schools and boroughs".

However, school food campaigner Andy Jolley said Khan was "another politician who doesn't



'I didn't freeze all staff recruitment only to go back into deficit for a cooker'

realise, unless universal free school meals are fully funded, schools have to step in and subsidise the service. Relying on low take up to ensure schools aren't out of pocket is a bizarre way to run an anti-poverty scheme."

A lack of capital funding for upgrades or expansions to kitchens has also been criticised.

In correspondence obtained under FOI, the head of two schools in Barnet warned City Hall of the challenges they would face in providing the meals from September. In one school, they would need to batch-cook two rounds of meals, which has "lengthened lunchtime and added to staff costs". In the other school, cooking the additional meals required would "require us to replace a faulty steam oven, which we currently don't need to use. Have you thought about this at all? We are talking about a £10,000 cost to the school and – to put this into context, after a huge cut in staffing over the last 12 months – we have set a surplus budget for next year by just £14,000. I didn't freeze all staff recruitment only to go back into deficit for a cooker, when what I really need is staff! Especially when the cooker is needed as an unintended consequence of a well-intentioned but ultimately external (and therefore unplanned on my part) policy."

Khan's office has already been forced to make several concessions in response to concerns about the scheme. A £5 million fund to help with "extraordinary costs associated with implementation" has been created, which includes an increase in the funding rate for Kosher meals to £3.50 following concerns from boroughs with large Jewish communities.

City Hall has also amended the grant conditions to remove its right to claw back funding from boroughs that had less than 90 per cent take-up.

Letters to councils, obtained under freedom of information, state: "We have listened to schools and boroughs and that no clawback will be applied to the grant agreement. With the removal of the clawback, boroughs will not need to report on meals taken, so if take-up is lower than 90 per cent (which we expect it will be initially, looking at existing schemes) then there may be some additional funds available for schools to use at their discretion."

A spokesperson said the mayor will be "closely monitoring implementation of the scheme as it is rolled out across the capital – this will include ongoing engagement with boroughs and their schools".

‘Seismic shift’ in parental attitude to school attendance revealed

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

The Covid pandemic has caused a “seismic shift in parental attitudes to school attendance” that will take a “monumental, multi-service effort to change”, according to new research.

Public First held focus groups across England to investigate the rise in pupil absences since 2019. It found a “fundamental breakdown in the relationship between schools and parents across the socioeconomic spectrum”.

Government data shows one in five pupils were persistently absent from school last year, with an attendance gap between poorer children and their better-off peers widening.

The research found an “increased willingness among parents to take children on holiday during termtime”, a rise in mental health problems and the cost-of-living crisis were among the factors driving lower attendance.

Ed Dorrell, partner at Public First, said the findings “signpost a deeply troubling issue that will take many years, a lot of hard work and substantive investment to resolve”.

“Anyone who thinks this will be the kind of problem that can be resolved by pulling one or two policy levers is sadly mistaken.”

One mother of children aged five and 10 from Manchester said: “After Covid, I’m not gonna lie to you, my take on attendance and absence now is like I don’t really care anymore. Life’s too short.”

Parents reported that having a child at home had “got easier” since Covid. However, “despite popular political and media opinion, the increase in parents working from home is not driving the attendance crisis”.

The report also pointed to a “radical shift in the way term time holidays are viewed”. One mother from Bristol with a 15 year old said she “always took them skiing ... in February half term to try and comply. Now I look back and I think why on earth did I do that? Why didn’t I just take them out for a cheap week in January? I would almost say skiing is ... an educational holiday.”

One mother from Newcastle with an eight and 10-year-old said they had “ages off school” during Covid “so two weeks out in a year is not going to make a massive difference to the fact that the damage has been done”.

Meanwhile, parents from poorer families “expressed a fundamental mistrust of schools”,



and they “do not think that schools and teachers have the best interests of their children at heart”, the report found. Many of them identified their children as having “varying challenges which would impact on their schooling, such as SEN, being bullied, or being long-term sick. They did not feel supported by schools in tackling or improving these issues.”

More affluent parents “also expressed a disenchantment with school, although they felt more disengaged than angry”.

One of the mothers from Bristol said: “They do come up with the statistics, don’t they, you know, if you miss one week of school, it’s the equivalent of dropping a grade at a GCSE or something like that. And I just think, because we’ve all been lied to so much, that we are becoming a bit more militant.”

A father from Newcastle said: “You can’t live your life around what the school wants, and what the local authority wants, because their expectations are a bit unrealistic. Let the parents parent.”

Parents talked “at length about their concerns

about their children’s mental health and how this impacted upon their attendance. They often blamed schools for not doing enough to support their children.”

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the NAHT school leaders’ union, said schools “absolutely have a role to play in encouraging good attendance, but the reality is they cannot address the issue alone”.

A mum from Manchester said her 11-year-old daughter was previously “well into her sport, confident, outgoing, and then we were put on lockdown. Now she gets herself worked up about situations. And then obviously, because she gets herself worked up, then she’s getting headaches, stomach aches, she feels sick. So she misses school due to it now.”

The intersection of SEND and mental health challenges “came up frequently. Across the social spectrum, parents felt like any child who needed additional support for whatever reason were not having their needs met, and that this was significantly impacting upon their attendance.”

8 policies to solve absence woes

- A review of how schools and the wider education system communicate with parents and the messaging
- A review and potential abolition of absence fines, which are “deeply unpopular”
- Support for schools to provide intensive, nuanced support to families for whom attendance is a significant issue
- Better joined-up working and signposting to para-educational agencies including those in mental health
- Improvements to the accuracy of school-level attendance monitoring systems so that information shared with parents is accurate
- Highlight the importance of coding attendance to schools – it is impossible to design strategies without this
- Fund schools better, because other strains on education system are manifesting in the attendance crisis
- Invest in SEND and CAMHS to significantly improve attendance

IN FLANDERS FIELDS MUSEUM: THE STARTING POINT FOR YOUR BATTLEFIELD TRIP

The In Flanders Fields Museum brings the story of the First World War to life through thought-provoking, interactive displays. Housed in the rebuilt Cloth Hall of Ypres, Belgium, a visit to the museum is the ideal starting point to take your school on a battlefield tour to Ypres and Flanders Fields. The museum's Learning Team has developed a wide range of educational programmes for different age groups, inside and outside the museum. Brand new is the free e-book '5 ways to learn about in Flanders Fields', written for British (history) teachers.

Museum at the heart of the Ypres Salient

Week by week, the war evolved from a war of movement to a more static way of waging war. In the Ypres area, both armies dug in. From then on, soldiers fought from a system of trenches and mining galleries. In late October 1914, a bulge formed in the Front Line on the east side of Ypres. The city found itself in the middle of this salient. Known as the 'Ypres Salient', it became one of the most notorious war zones along the Western Front. Houses were destroyed, valuable heritage sites such as churches and the Cloth Hall were shelled to rubble. The ruin of this magnificent building symbolises the destructive power of war, while its reconstruction shows impressive resilience. Today, inside the rebuilt Cloth Hall, the In Flanders Fields Museum is housed.

Human experience of war

The In Flanders Fields Museum focuses on the human experience of war. Hundreds of authentic objects give a captivating overview of wartime life. Dynamic and experiential displays tell the story of five years of warfare on both sides of the frontline. Lifelike characters revive testimonies of soldiers but also experiences of refugees and civilians. A personalised poppy wristband pairs the students with a particular eyewitness. These various narratives confront students with the consequences of war and highlight how relevant its themes remain today. It is also possible to climb the belfry (bell tower). With more than 200 stairs, it's worth the effort to give students a bird's eye view of the former Ypres Salient battlefield.

Learning inside and outside the museum

The museum's educational programme includes several tools to make a visit more captivating. A member of the Learning Team can guide the



students through the museum, with or without a thematic focus. The visit can be combined with a workshop. Pupils can also explore the museum individually with an audioguide. On the Museum's website teachers can find a set of questions for a self-led visit to help students reflect on the stories they see and hear in the museum. In addition, the Learning Team brings the history of the First World War to life by honing in on the personal stories of eyewitnesses and by offering insight into the landscape where the battles raged.

During the newly developed day trip '*The Salient Illustrated*', students discover the former battlefields of the northern Ypres Salient. A visit to the museum and a workshop will ensure they are well prepared to explore the landscape. During the tablet walk in the afternoon, students visit two battlefield cemeteries and the recently renovated site of Yorkshire Trench and Dugout. As they walk through the only British trench,

still in its original location, they compare the contemporary situation with historical images, videos and aerial photographs on their tablet. The large landscape illustration by British cartoonist Dave Chisholm helps them understand life in the trenches and shows how Yorkshire Trench fitted into the larger trench system.

Download '5 ways to learn about In Flanders Fields'

In the museum's free e-book, the Learning Team offers you a glimpse of their educational approach. Moreover, it provides five sample First World War themes. For each topic, the team highlighted captivating objects on display inside the museum and a personal story told outside the museum walls.

Download your copy for free: iffm.be/ebook

Schools 'expected' to report careers progress

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@FCDWHITTAKER

Schools will be expected to report their progress against national careers advice benchmarks at least once a year, under plans to beef up statutory guidance.

The Department for Education has also announced plans for a new "strategic action plan for careers", a single "digital front door" for young people to access guidance online and to eventually create an "all-age careers system, unified under a single strategic framework".

However, ministers have rejected calls for direct funding of careers advisers and extra "numerical targets" for the number of schools meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks of good careers guidance.

The Parliamentary education committee has published the government's response to its report into careers advice and guidance in England. Chair Robin Walker welcomed ministers' "broadly positive response".

Secondary schools and colleges are encouraged to self-report their progress against careers education benchmarks through an online tool called "Compass".

The committee's report, published in June, recommended that the DfE "update its statutory guidance to make reporting through the Compass tool compulsory for all secondary schools and colleges".

At present, more than 90 per cent of secondary schools and colleges use the Compass evaluation, and 3,172 use "Compass+", which enables tracking of Gatsby Benchmark achievement "at an individual pupil level".

The DfE said in its response it wanted to "avoid mandating the use of Compass as a reporting tool". However, it said it would update statutory careers guidance to "set a clear expectation that all secondary schools and colleges should self-report progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks at least once during every academic year".

The committee's report criticised a "confusing, fragmented and unclear" careers system. Schools are responsible for providing advice and guidance, overseen by the Careers and Enterprise Company. Some responsibility also



Robin Walker

sits with the National Careers Service, and with the Department for Work and pensions and its agencies.

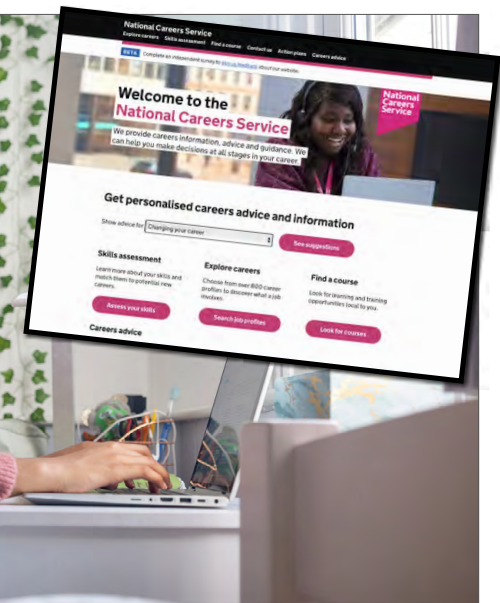
The DfE said it agreed there needed to be "greater coherence between publicly funded careers services, across all ages". Its ambition is to "develop an all-age careers system, unified under a single strategic framework, that helps to address the fragmentation in careers services identified by the committee". However, they "do not have firm views yet on what this will look like but we want to start exploring the issue further". Stakeholder and "early market engagement" will begin this autumn.

The first step will be a "single starting point for careers and skills", launching this autumn. This "digital front door" will help young people and others find the "trusted impartial careers and skills information that they need". User testing of the prototype "has revealed that young people found it useful and would return to it in future".

The government has also launched a "new and inspiring look and feel to the National Careers Service website" to make it more accessible to young people. The new "front door" will be built on this.

"Our goal is to build digital and inperson services which form a unified careers system which best enables citizens to explore and develop their careers, skills and training options at any point in their lives," the report states.

The committee also called



for a refreshed careers strategy, which was last updated in 2017. Instead, the DfE said it would publish a "strategic action plan for careers" in 2024. It will set out "strong objectives to continue to increase the number of schools achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks in full". However, setting additional numerical targets for benchmark achievement "risks encouraging a tick-box approach", ministers said.

The committee's report criticised an administrative "burden" preventing access to work experience. The DfE said it would "look at what more we can do to address barriers to organising work experience". Ministers agreed with the committee that there was "potential for an online platform that promotes a range of work experience placements both locally and across the country. But again, this is a "longer-term aspiration".

Beefed-up legislation requiring schools to give alternative education providers access to their pupils came into force earlier this year. The committee said the DfE should "directly track compliance" and ensure "appropriate action" against those failing to comply.

The DfE said schools could already record compliance through the Compass tool and that the CEC had a "single place for providers to register a concern if they have reason to believe that a school is not complying".

However, although there have been "lots of requests for clarification and support, there have not been any concerns registered by providers to date through the CEC's website".

Three more councils slammed over 'systematic SEND failings'

SAMANTHA BOOTH
@SAMANTHAJBOOTH

Three more areas in England have been slammed by inspectors for "widespread, systemic failings" in special educational needs services.

Oxfordshire, Oldham and Plymouth must make urgent improvements after receiving the lowest rating in inspections by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission this summer. All had reports published in the past month.

It means one in four areas visited under the new area SEND inspection framework so far have "widespread and/or systematic failures leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes" of children with extra needs.

In Oxfordshire, "far too many children and young people are lost in the system", amid "lengthy waiting times" for help with many not receiving help "until they are close to crisis point".

A "tangible sense of helplessness" runs through parents' descriptions of their lived experiences, the report reads.

Inspectors found when families and professionals "face an absence of early intervention, some feel the only way to get help is to secure support through an education, health and care plan (EHCP)". But these plans "frequently" do not describe the child "accurately enough".

In schools, staff are "not always well supported" to understand and meet needs amid a shortage of specialist and alternative provision (AP) places. Some children "wait years" for specialist provision.

Despite a commitment to inclusion, "some school leaders are unable to meet pupils' increasingly varied needs".

"This is due to a lack of suitable advice, guidance and support from specialists. Consequently, many school leaders and staff feel overwhelmed because they cannot support children and young people as well as they aspire to."

There is sometimes a "breakdown of placements" leading to children "spending too much time out of school". There has also been "little strategic oversight" of AP.

Ofsted did find that recently appointed area leaders "recognise the significant weaknesses of the current system".

Stephen Chandler, an interim director at Oxfordshire County Council, said: "I am so sorry



we have let families down."

The council "unequivocally accept the findings" and will develop a "joint action plan" with families.

In Oldham, pupils face "unacceptable delays" in having their speech and language needs identified. Some children with complex SEND in nursery do not have these needs assessed "until the middle of their primary school education".

More than half of pupils admitted to the council's referral unit in key stage 3 require an EHCP on arrival "because their needs have not been identified early enough".

In a statement, the council and NHS authorities said they will urgently improve delays in gaps in access to health services. Oldham is also on the government's pilot project to test the government's key SEND reforms.

In Plymouth, children "get 'stuck' in the system" and their needs get greater while waiting for help. Wait times for autism assessments, and speech and language therapy "exceed national guidelines". Leaders from health, social care and education "are not working together well enough". Too many secondary school pupils with SEND "do not get the necessary help to succeed" and are more likely to have poor attendance than other similar pupils nationwide. There are "particularly high" incidents of suspensions and part-time timetables for pupils with SEND. Leaders and practitioners "do not have a shared understanding" of EHCPs, which are sometimes "seen as forms to be completed to access additional funding or specialist placement". Many pupils arrive at AP with unidentified SEND and stay in the provision "too long. This 'blocks' places and reduces the capacity to offer support to others who need it."

Councillor Sally Cresswell, Plymouth's education cabinet member, said "increasing demand" for SEND services has caused "additional pressure

on all the organisations involved... [we] will work together at pace to address this as well as the priorities highlighted in the inspection."

The councils must submit a priority action plan to inspectors and have a monitoring inspection within the next 18 months.

A fourth council, Nottinghamshire, was given the lowest rating. A May report found some children in mainstream schools with SEND "do not receive advice to prepare for moving to their next stages of education".

A further six areas must also make improvements as inspectors deemed their work led "to inconsistent experiences".

Five of the 15 inspected had the top rating, which "typically lead to positive experiences".

More than two thirds of councils inspected under the old framework in 2021-22 had "significant weaknesses" – the worst record since the watchdog started visits six years ago.

Ministers' SEND and AP reforms include earlier identification and more inclusion in mainstream schools, meaning fewer pupils will need support through an EHCP. But changes will not be rolled out nationwide until, potentially, 2026.

Thirty-one councils will pilot key reforms, such as national standards, through a £70 million change programme.

How areas have been rated so far under the new Ofsted SEND framework

Area	Ofsted rating
Rutland	"Typically positive experiences"
Greenwich	
Telford and Wrekin	
Brighton and Hove	
Hartlepool	
Sandwell	"Inconsistent experiences"
Enfield	
Gateshead	
Southend-on-Sea	
Warrington	
Cornwall	"Widespread systemic failings"
Oxfordshire	
Oldham	
Plymouth	
Nottinghamshire	

Source: Ofsted reports

NEWS: WORKFORCE

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Include support staff in recruitment plan, ministers told

SCHOOLS WEEK REPORTER
@SCHOOLSWEEK



Ministers should widen the scope of their recruitment and retention strategy to cater for support staff, a new report has said.

This week, the government promised to update its key teacher workforce plan “this winter”. First published in 2019 it will include the setting out of “priorities for the coming years”.

But the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) said ministers should expand its scope into a wider education workforce strategy.

The recommendation featured in a new report, published yesterday, which showed that most headteachers had teaching assistants who were taking up additional employment during the cost-of-living crisis.

Ruth Maisey, programme head of the Nuffield Foundation which funded the study, said: “Teaching assistants play a critical role within schools, running intervention groups to improve children’s outcomes and supporting teachers

with a heavy workload.

“It’s vital for pupils and teaching staff alike that a schools’ workforce strategy incorporates teaching assistants and support staff, as well as teachers and leaders.”

More than seven in 10 senior leaders reported TAs leaving their school because they could earn more in another job, such as retail and hospitality. TA starting salaries were just over £20,000 last year.

Nearly half of secondary school leaders reported that low salaries were the single biggest barrier to recruiting TAs. One leader told the study: “TA pay is appalling.

“We cannot offer salaries that are an incentive. The school budget cannot sustain the increase in costs without letting high-quality staff members leave.”

The study found around three-quarters of leaders reporting that TAs were taking second jobs for the first time.

Jenna Julius, NFER research director and report co-author, said the pressures were “intensifying existing recruitment and retention challenges”.

She added: “A new, long-term workforce strategy, including teaching assistants, school support staff and tutors, alongside teachers and leaders, is needed. For wider support staff, this should include looking at whether pay is competitive enough to attract and retain sufficient high-quality staff.”

However, *Schools Week* understands that widening the scope of the recruitment plan as part of the refresh is unlikely to be considered this year.

The NFER study surveyed more than 2,500 senior leaders and teachers.

FREDDIE WHITTAKER | @FCDWHITTAKER

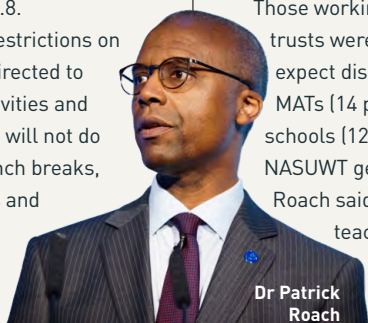
1 in 4 secondaries expect work-to-rule disruption

One in five secondary schools and one in ten primaries were braced for disruption this week as members of the NASUWT teaching union began limiting their working time.

Polling by Teacher Tapp shows 14 per cent of secondary teachers and 5 per cent of primary teachers planned to participate in the action short of strike, which began on Monday.

Members are taking action as part of an industrial dispute over workload. According to a government survey leaked to *Schools Week* this year, teachers work on average 48.7 hours a week, while leaders work 56.8.

NASUWT’s action includes restrictions on meetings and refusing to be directed to undertake extracurricular activities and midday supervision. Members will not do work-related tasks in their lunch breaks, on weekends or bank holidays and will refuse to cover absences and not cooperate in mock inspections.



Dr Patrick Roach

Polling data shows 24 per cent of secondary heads anticipated some disruption as a result of the action, while 1 per cent said they expected disruption to be “severe”.

Forty-nine per cent of secondary leaders did not expect any disruption, however, while 24 per cent were “unsure”.

Ten per cent of primary heads expected some disruption, while 1 per cent again said this would be “severe”. Sixty-one per cent anticipated no disruption, while 24 per cent were “unsure”.

Those working in large multi-academy trusts were more likely (22 per cent) to expect disruption than those in small MATs (14 per cent) and community schools (12 per cent).

NASUWT general secretary Dr Patrick Roach said they could “no longer allow teachers to be overworked and exhausted by the demands of the job”.

He added: “Our action will ensure that teachers and headteachers can focus their time on teaching and learning while bringing immediate downward pressure on workload and working hours.”

He added that the action “will mean that for the first time in a decade specific measures and protections are being put into place to tackle excessive workload and working hours and to ensure teachers’ health, safety and welfare”.

According to the poll, however, 63 per cent of secondary teachers and 72 per cent of primary leaders did not plan to take part. More than a third of teachers in both phases said the question was “not relevant” or that they could not answer.

Those working in schools rated ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’ were twice as likely (14 per cent) to take part in the action as those working in ‘outstanding’ schools.

Teachers aged 50 and over were also twice as likely to take part than those in their twenties.

Sponsor seeks answers to academy bullying allegations

AMY WALKER
@AMYRWALKER

EXCLUSIVE

The academy sponsor of a school accused of bullying and suspending staff who spoke to Ofsted inspectors during an inspection has demanded an explanation from governors.

All Saints Academy Dunstable in Bedfordshire has been granted permission for a judicial review over a recent 'inadequate' judgment.

Schools Week reported last week that court documents from the hearing revealed that the watchdog had received "credible intelligence from a whistleblower" that its executive principal "had been bullying staff in relation to the inspection".

A former employee separately told *Schools Week* they were suspended a day after talking to an inspector during the November inspection. The staff member said the school had told them the suspension was due to information disclosed in feedback parent surveys and because they created a toxic environment in their department – but

said these allegations were later dropped.

The staff member claimed the suspension was the result of them talking to an inspector, adding "it was just too glaringly obvious".

In a statement this week, the Diocese of St Albans board of education said it had "responded with concern to the allegations that were made public on Friday 15 September regarding All Saints Academy Dunstable".

The board had contacted the school's chair of governors "so it can understand the full context of the allegations and to assess the actions which are being taken by the governing body, as responsible body, in response to them".

However, it added that it did not have "powers of investigation" into the



whistleblowing allegations.

The school's chair of governors did not respond to a request for comment.

A spokesperson for the school denied the claims heard in the court hearing, saying that the "intelligence was not credible and if the allegation is raised in the proceedings this will be formally denied".

When contacted about the staff member's individual claims, the school said: "We have made our response and have nothing further to add."

EXCLUSIVE

SAMANTHA BOOTH | @SAMANTHAJBOTH

Still no sign of cyber-security scorecard scheme

The rollout of a new cyber security tool to help schools "safeguard their pupils' education" amid rising hack attacks has been delayed by over a year and a half.

And it is still not known when the 'Cyber Secure' tool will be launched.

Following a spate of high-profile cyber-attacks, the Department for Education (DfE) piloted the application in schools between September and November 2021. It intended to launch the scheme nationally in January 2022.

However, the DfE told *Schools Week*: "Pilots of this nature take time to develop and this was delayed due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic."

Its launched was pushed back until "the start" of this academic year. However, three weeks into term there is still no sign of it.

The DfE added that, since announcing the scheme two years ago, it had "reiterated

and tested the content alongside cyber-security experts to ensure sufficient subject coverage to increase resilience within school environments."

The free and anonymous self-assessment tool allows schools to assess their cyber-security measures through a grading system of 0 to 5.

A freedom of information (FOI) response on the results of the pilot – in which 50 schools were asked to review the tool – showed views were mixed.

One school told the department it would be "lucky if anyone bothers after seeing what it involves" due to staff already being "overworked".

Another school said it "didn't like anything about it", adding that the tool was a "complete waste of time".

However, the responses led to "several

iterations and changes".

The tool was first announced by schools minister Nick Gibb in May 2021, when he revealed the sector was struck by more than 70 ransomware attacks during the pandemic. He said the tool would "enable schools to assess their cyber security, helping school leaders and staff safeguard their pupils' education".

A government-commissioned survey carried out between September and January found education institutions were more likely to have identified cyber breaches or attacks in the past year than the average UK business. The survey of 241 primaries and 217 secondaries by market research firm Ipsos found 41 per cent of primaries and 63 per cent of secondaries had identified breaches or attacks in the past 12 months. This compared with 32 per cent of 2,263 surveyed businesses.

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FEWEEK

Ofsted music report: Teachers need 'more support'

AMY WALKER
@AMYRWALKER

Inequalities in music education that Ofsted first highlighted more than a decade ago persist, the watchdog has said, while some secondaries are not giving the subject enough time.

Ofsted published three subject reports this week. The music report, published on Thursday, was based on research visits and inspections between December and June.

Chief inspector Amanda Spielman said that while primaries were making music "more prominent", it was "not given enough time in secondary schools and it's clear that in most schools, teachers need more support to deliver a high-quality music education".

1. Secondaries not giving music enough time

Inspectors found that while almost all primary schools made sure pupils had "adequate" time to learn music, there was "considerable variation" in the amount of curriculum time allocated to music at key stage 3.

In just under half the schools visited, leaders had not made sure pupils had enough time "to learn the full breadth of the national curriculum".

The report added that where time was limited, pupils were "far more likely simply to 'do music' than get better at it".

It recommended that pupils, particularly at key stage 3, had enough curriculum time to develop musical knowledge and skills "incrementally".

2. Singing faring best at primary

The strongest part of the curriculum identified by inspectors in primaries was teaching pupils to sing.

In some schools, leaders had set out how the curriculum would support pupils to become better singers. Curriculum plans also "clearly specified" the component knowledge pupils needed to learn to develop their signing technique.

However, the report found that most secondaries did not build on the strong progress and enjoyment that pupils had experienced in signing at primary. Only a "very small number" of secondaries placed singing as a significant aspect of the curriculum.



3. Music composition often 'weakest' part of curriculum

Across both phases, the weakest aspect of the curriculum at most schools was teaching pupils to become better at composition.

At primary, composition was the area where pupils "knew and remembered least". Very few pupils demonstrated "secure" knowledge of musical devices, how to manipulate musical ideas and how to organise ideas into musical structures.

At secondary, though leaders had "high-level aims" for pupils' compositional work, few had given "sufficient thought" to the detail that would allow pupils to achieve these aims.

Ofsted recommended the curriculum identified "precise end points" in performance, composition and listening work, and then set out the knowledge and skills pupils need to reach these points.

4. Impact of Covid still apparent

Many heads and music leaders told Ofsted that Covid had a "significant" impact on the range of extracurricular activities at their school. Many are still in the process of re-establishing provision.

At primary, leaders said the number of pupils taking extracurricular music lessons "remained well below pre-pandemic levels".

This led to a "significant reduction" in the number of year 7 pupils who had learned an instrument in primary school. Lots gave up instruments because of the pandemic.

In some secondaries, music groups and ensembles had not restarted. Ofsted said schools

should make sure pupils "develop" their musical talent by offering extracurricular activities.

5. Inequalities highlighted more than a decade ago persist

Ofsted said that the "inequalities in provision" it highlighted in its last music subject report in 2012 persisted.

Inspectors found there was still a divide between the opportunities for children and young people whose families could afford to pay for music tuition, and for those who came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

"Concerningly, in some [secondary] schools, pupils are only well placed to continue their musical education and achieve well after key stage 3 if they have access to paid instrumental or vocal lessons," the report said.

Meanwhile, many school leaders reported that in the past few years they had reduced the extent to which they were subsidising instrumental lessons, "because of wider pressures on school budgets".

6. Some music teachers lacking confidence and knowledge

Many primary teachers said they "lacked the confidence and musical knowledge" to teach aspects of the curriculum "well". And while leaders in most primaries had a "realistic view" of teachers' subject expertise, "far fewer" had a clear plan for addressing weaknesses.

In most secondaries, music specialists were delivering the curriculum. In only a "small number of schools" was it delivered by non-specialists, but these teachers were "rarely supported or given any training".

7. Too many instruments can make for 'shallow encounters'

In the schools where inspectors found "the most effective teaching", leaders understood that it takes a lot of time "to develop fine motor skills" on any instrument. They had decided to "narrow" the range of instrument choices within the curriculum as a result.

"By contrast, where the practice was weaker, pupils often had shallow encounters with too many instruments or insufficient time to rehearse and practice," the report said.

SPEED READ: OFSTED

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Ofsted PE report: Provision fails to match 'national curriculum'

AMY WALKER
@AMYRWALKER

Most schools do not provide "clearly defined and broad" physical education lessons, Ofsted has found. While enough time is generally allocated to the subject, many schools are "not matching the ambition of the national curriculum".

Ofsted published three subject reports this week. The PE report, published on Wednesday, was based on visits to 50 schools between November and June.

"It's great that most schools allow enough time for children to be physically active," said chief inspector Amanda Spielman. "I hope the findings in this report help all schools develop their PE curriculum so all children get enough opportunities to experience a range of different activities."

1. Many PE curriculums lack coherence

Since May, schools have been advised to do a minimum of two hours of PE per week, although this is not statutory. Ofsted found "most schools" were dedicating enough time to the subject.

Most primaries offered two hours a week, while around half of secondaries did so. But Ofsted said "many schools do not match the ambition of the national curriculum".

Only "a smaller number of schools" had "clearly defined the broad and overarching aims of their curriculum".

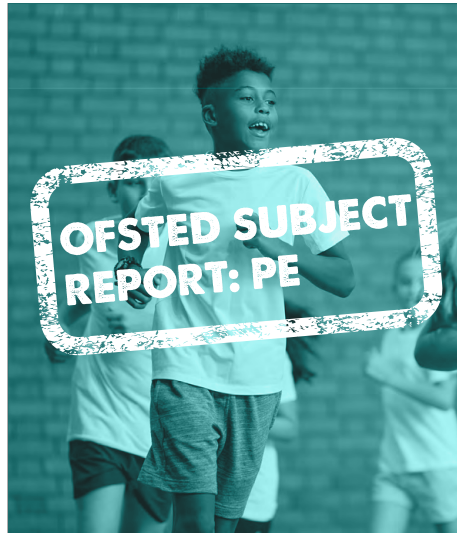
In some schools, this was because the curriculum had "significant breadth" at the expense of depth. This meant "what pupils know and can do as a result of what they have been taught is often limited".

2. Dance not offered to enough pupils

Some activities "specified in the national curriculum" are not being taught. In just over a third of those schools visited, dance is either not taught at all or only taught to some pupils.

In three-quarters of the schools, outdoor adventurous activities were either not taught or not taught "effectively". However nearly every curriculum included football to support the teaching of attack and defence.

Ofsted warned that the discrepancy could "narrow pupils' experience" of the subject. Schools should include "carefully sequenced and



taught" dance lessons in primary and secondary schools.

3. Swimming attainment at primary is 'mixed'

A lack of funding for transport to swimming pools and the rising costs of pool hire made it difficult for some primary schools to "provide an appropriately balanced and ambitious PE curriculum", the report found.

Pupils' swimming and water safety attainment was "mixed" as a result.

The "evaluation" of the swimming and water safety element of the curriculum was "limited" in many schools. Others were not making full use of the PE and sport premium, which can be used to fund top-up swimming lessons.

4. SEND pupils well supported in just half of schools ...

Most primary pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) were being taught the same curriculum, "with support and adaptations", as other pupils, inspectors found.

But the curriculum did "not always" make clear what was most important for pupils with SEND to know and be able to do in "readiness for future learning".

Outcomes for these pupils "varied within and between schools". Where pupils showed a secure understanding of what they were taught, they were receiving the precise support they needed and their progress and attainment were "closely monitored".

Outcomes at secondary were "variable", with staff tailoring support to the needs of pupils with SEND where they achieved better outcomes in PE.

5. ... while pupils miss PE lessons for support sessions

Across both phases, a small number of pupils routinely missed PE lessons in order to receive support "in other areas of the curriculum".

Just over a third of pupils and staff at primary said PE was "sometimes missed to support reading". But leaders said the subject missed was often "rotated", rather than a deliberate decision to miss PE.

At secondary, some timetabled PE lessons were missed so pupils could spend "extra time on other subjects" in key stage 4. "This meant they had significantly less time to learn the PE lesson," said Ofsted.

6. After school PE activities 'broad and ambitious'

Across both primary and secondary schools, Ofsted found that extracurricular provision was "broad and ambitious". All pupils had opportunities to experience different activities and to "get better at what they are learning in PE".

But over half of schools did not monitor attendance at clubs and activities, so it was not always clear whether the programme was sufficiently "inclusive for all".

Ofsted said policy leaders should support schools to develop extracurricular programmes that provided "additional depth to timetabled PE".

7. 'Significant differences' in how PE assessment is used

At schools where assessment was stronger, the knowledge to be taught and what pupils need to know and do next "has been precisely identified".

In schools where assessment "reliably checks what pupils need to remember", pupils were able to recall important knowledge clearly and in more detail. But, where it was weaker, this was often because assessment was "not always aligned with what is in the curriculum".

Ofsted recommended that schools "clearly define" the important knowledge that pupils need to be taught so that staff can use the information to support assessment.

SPEED READ: OFSTED

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Ofsted geography report: Improvements, but more to do

AMY WALKER
@AMYRWALKER

Geography teaching in schools has seen “substantial improvements” over the past few years but there is “clearly more work to be done”, Ofsted has said.

Ofsted published three subject reports this week. The geography report, published on Tuesday was based on visits to 50 schools between December and May.

Chief inspector Amanda Spielman said: “It’s great that both primary and secondary schools have made such strides in their geography teaching.

“I hope that schools can now focus on ensuring that children get more opportunities to develop their data collection and analysis skills so they can master the fundamentals of geography fieldwork.”

1. ‘Substantial improvements’ in geography...

Ofsted’s previous report found that the subject was “lost in cross-curricular” approaches at primary. Geography was “particularly weak” at key stage 3, with pupils sometimes receiving “very little specific” geography education.

The issues were further highlighted in its 2015 report, *Key stage 3: the wasted years*. But inspectors found there had been “substantial improvements in those areas over the last few years”.

Almost all primaries now had distinct geography lessons, while leaders thought “carefully” about what they wanted pupils to learn.

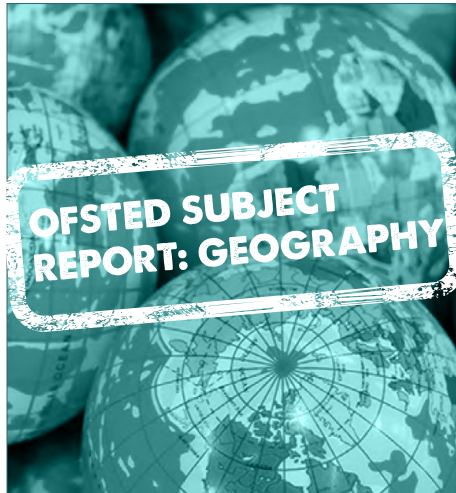
Meanwhile at secondary, “improvements at key stage 3 were notable”.

2. ...but staffing is a ‘significant barrier’

Ofsted noted “significant pressures” caused by issues with the recruitment of trainee geography teachers, amid the current workforce crisis. Staffing was one of the “significant barriers” to high-quality lessons taking place.

In most secondary schools, at least some lessons were taught by non-specialists. Support for them was “often ineffective”.

While detailed notes “helped”, they worked best when subject leads had time to work through them with the non-specialist. But this time was “rarely available”.



Non-specialists were not able to provide the same “rich explanations” and less able to “identify and address misconceptions”.

At primary level, teachers often “miss pupils’ misconceptions and sometimes even pass them on to the pupils in their class”.

3. Fieldwork is ‘underdeveloped’ in most schools

In many schools, fieldwork was “underdeveloped”, leaving pupils ill-equipped.

During the pandemic, fieldwork was halted and the exam board requirement was suspended. Despite this, “opportunities to learn about fieldwork could have continued”, the watchdog said.

But even pre-pandemic, Ofsted said “very little fieldwork” was done “beyond that needed to fulfill the requirements of the exam boards”.

In primary schools, fieldwork was “often conflated with field trips” and pupils “rarely learn” about how to carry out geographical work.

In secondaries, pupils “rarely do fieldwork” beyond exam board requirements. For some schools, key stage 3 fieldwork was “completely absent”.

This left pupils “ill-equipped for the non-examined assessment at A level and for higher education”.

4. Some primaries don’t spend enough time on geography...

While geography lessons at primary had become more distinct, Ofsted said its evidence suggested “little time” was still being dedicated to the subject. There was “huge variation” in the amount

of geography education that primary pupils received.

Some schools had as little as one hour a week for half the year, others had as much as two hours a week throughout the year.

Where fewer hours were taught, teachers were “more likely to teach the subject in superficial ways”.

Schools attempted to cover the national curriculum in “distinct blocks”, but without giving pupils time to apply what they were taught.

5. ...And some secondaries use exam spec as ‘de facto’ curriculum

In some secondaries, exam specifications had become a de facto geography curriculum, inspectors found. This “results in a curriculum that does not match the breadth and ambition that geography is capable of”.

In the weakest examples, the curriculum involved “little more than working through the textbook a few pages at a time” until all the exam content had been covered.

But this approach “ignored” the synoptic nature of geography and “lacked ambitions” in terms of developing pupils’ knowledge.

6. Little sense of ‘knowledge building’

In many schools, there was little sense of knowledge-building across topics. Each topic “stood in isolation”, with pupils not developing a “synoptic understanding” that is fundamental to geography.

This was more likely to happen where time for geography was “more limited”, it added.

7. Summative assessment works better at secondary

Ofsted found summative assessment was being used well in most secondaries.

Where practice was most effective, leaders planned assessments with shorter questions that checked pupils gained the component knowledge needed. This was combined with longer questions to check their ability to apply this knowledge “to novel situations”.

At primary, teachers were often asked to make summative judgments about their pupils’ progress. But these were “not always underpinned by assessments that gave a sufficient or accurate picture of pupils’ knowledge and skills”.

This “raises a question about whether making these judgments has any value”.



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Feature

AMY WALKER | @AMYRWALKER



How to solve a problem like workload?

The government is set to miss its secondary teacher recruitment target for the 10th time in 11 years. A record rate of teachers left the profession last year.

Alongside the 6.5 per cent pay deal, the government this week unveiled a new workload reduction taskforce charged with cutting five hours from teachers' working week.

But ministers have been trying to drive down workload for the best part of a decade, with progress slowing significantly in recent years.

Schools Week investigates...

What has been announced?

A workload reduction taskforce, made up of 14 sector leaders, has been set the challenge of slashing five hours from the working week of teachers and school leaders within three years.

The government will publish an updated recruitment and retention strategy this winter – setting out priorities for the coming years and

updating on whether previous commitments have been met.

The workload taskforce was promised as part of the government's pay deal with unions to end teacher strikes. It met for the first time on Wednesday.

The deal included a "revised list of administrative tasks that teachers should not be expected to do" into the schoolteachers' pay and conditions handbook.

Initial teacher training (ITT) recruitment figures shows just over half of required trainee secondary teachers are set to be recruited this year – despite a rise in bursaries for many subjects. The panel will be tasked with turning around stalling progress on cutting workloads.

The government's 2014 Workload Challenge led to about five hours being shaved off teachers' average working week by 2019, which then stood at 49.5 hours. However, the 2023 workload survey showed classroom teachers' working week has

fallen by less than an hour in three years.

At the current rate, it would take more than six years to realise the government's pledge to reduce teachers' workload by five hours a week.

Leaders now work longer on average, up from 55.1 hours in 2019 to 56.8 this year.

The workload gains already made...

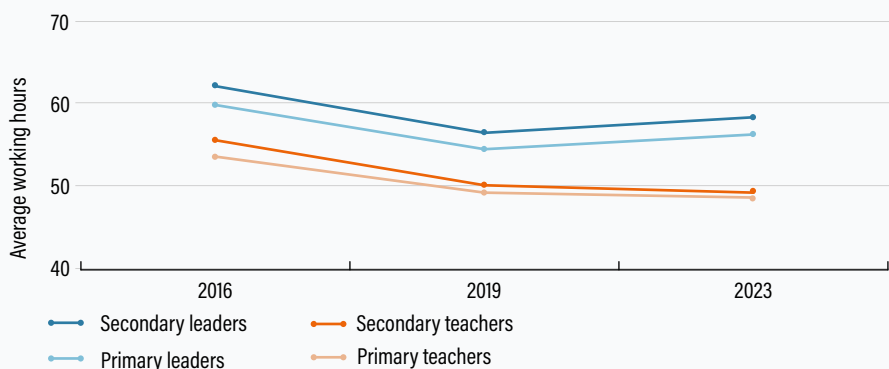
Schools minister Nick Gibb said the DfE wanted to "build on the past successes in reducing workloads and continue to remove additional burdens, so that teachers can focus on what they do best: teach".

The 2014 Workload Challenge identified recording, inputting and analysing data, marking, lesson planning, and administrative and support tasks as areas presenting the greatest opportunities to reduce workloads.

In its response to a consultation with the sector, the DfE encouraged schools to think about "sparing use" of more detailed and written feedback and "effective use" of whole school data management systems. It

Feature: Workload

Teacher workload reduction progress stalls



Source: DfE's Teacher Workload Survey 2016 and 2019, Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders 2022



MEET THE WORKLOAD REDUCTION TASKFORCE:

- James Bowen**, assistant general secretary, National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)
- Cassie Buchanan**, CEO, Charter Schools Education Trust
- Jon Hutchinson**, director of training and development, Reach Foundation
- Emma Knights** and **Emma Balchin**, co-chief executives, National Governance Association (NGA)
- Selena Lansley**, senior advisor for workforce and negotiations, Local Government Association (LGA)
- Stuart Lock**, CEO, Advantage Schools
- Sinéad Mc Brearty**, CEO, Education Support
- Darren Northcott**, national official, National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
- Adrian Prandle**, director of government relations and workforce policy, National Education Union (NEU)
- Steve Rollett**, deputy chief executive, Confederation of School Trusts (CST)
- Janet Sheriff**, CEO, Collaborative Learning Trust
- Dr Sam Sims**, lecturer, UCL Institute of Education – Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities
- Sara Tanton**, deputy director of policy, Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- Kate Treacy**, English teacher, Parliament Hill School

‘Do we need to do that work, or could technology do it quicker?’

also encouraged the use of “tablets” for planning, assessment and recording lesson notes and more “peer and self-assessment”.

A 2019 DfE teacher workload survey found the average total self-reported working hours for teachers and middle leaders in 2019 was 49.5, down from 54.4 in 2016. The survey found reductions in reported working hours were “concentrated in DfE’s areas of focus following the 2014 Workload Challenge”. Compared to 2016, teachers and leaders reported spending fewer hours on marking or correcting pupils’ work, individual planning and preparation lessons, and undertaking pupil supervision and tuition.

While progress has been made, research shows there is still scope to go further. A government-commissioned report on workload reduction this July found leaders and teachers estimate they still worked more than seven “unnecessary hours” a week on average – down from 8.75 hours five years ago.

Other government



Jack Worth

reports have highlighted that non-teaching tasks remain an issue. Its working lives of teachers and leaders’ survey found that about half of teachers said data recording, inputting and analysis, individual lesson planning and marking took up “too much” time. A separate government-backed study exploring teachers’ admin time, published this year, found more support staff were needed to prevent teachers spending 380 hours a year on admin.

Jack Worth, workforce lead at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), said workloads were still hampered by “a lot of the same issues – they haven’t gone away”.

In terms of admin and marking, he added: “I’m sure there’s more easy, low-hanging fruit [the taskforce could look to] to reduce admin time.”

...and where to look for more

Nansi Ellis, former NEU assistant general secretary and education policy specialist, was part of the planning and resources review group under the 2014 Workload Challenge.

She suggested the taskforce should “remind”



Nansi Ellis

schools of the government messaging last time round.

“That was the period of triple-marking ... but a lot of schools are still doing it,” said Ellis. She added that where schools had moved to verbal feedback over written

Feature: Workload

marking in the intervening years, other issues could have cropped up “around recording that feedback”.

Ellis said advancements in technology could be harnessed: “[The taskforce] need to be asking the question of whether we actually need to do that work, or whether technology could do it quicker.”

The DfE has launched a call for evidence about the future use of AI in education, amid hopes it could save time. A Teacher Tapp survey this month showed a third of teachers were using tools such as ChatGPT to help with work.

As part of the response to the Workload Challenge, the DfE asked Ofsted to make changes to reduce workloads. These included clarification about what is required by inspectors, offering shorter inspections to good schools and “simplifying and shortening” its handbook.

However, Helena Marsh, deputy principal at Linton Village College and another former member of the department’s workload review groups, said the shift in focus from results to curriculum in the 2019 Education Inspection Framework led to “a lot of schools feeling they had to do a lot of new stuff. So, I think it’s worth going back and looking at those things.”

‘The landscape has shifted’

Marsh pointed out that the “landscape has shifted” since before the pandemic. A report from wellbeing charity Education Support found in May that most school staff were working at least four extra hours a week to provide additional support to pupils, amid warnings that schools are now the “de facto and unofficial brand of social and healthcare services”.

NFER research published this month showed leaders have expanded the scale and range of support available to pupils in response to the cost-of-living crisis.

Emma Knights, chief executive of the National Governance Association and a member of the DfE’s new workload taskforce, said the group must consider “the additional challenges that have been handed to schools because of what’s happening in the world around them.

“We need to seriously look at what is reasonable for schools to take on and what really does need to be covered by other people.”

Marsh added increased workload wasn’t just down to staff attending to more pastoral needs themselves, but demonstrating that they had done so.

There is no extra cash

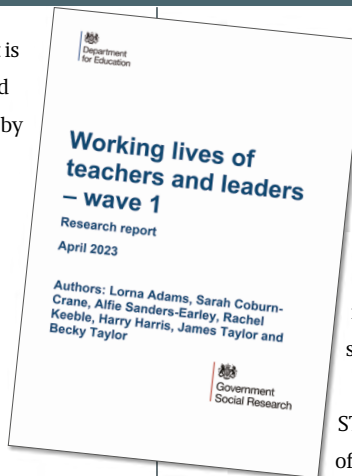
The workload push comes with no additional cash. “High levels of workload are driven by the underfunding of the education system, which leaves teachers and leaders doing more work with fewer resources,” said ASCL union general secretary Geoff Barton. He remains “sceptical about whether there is the will in government to take some of the steps that are required”.

Ellis added that areas with the potential for a “massive reduction” in workload include “supporting children with [SEND]. If you had the staffing you needed for that... or there weren’t children coming in needing uniforms washed or food given to them.”

Knights questioned whether workload reduction could boost retention, with pay and incentives going “hand in hand” with workloads.

“We need this work to be alongside a real look at pay incentives,” she added.

All four unions wrote to education secretary Gillian Keegan on Thursday calling for “urgent proposals” to “repair the damage to teacher pay”.



They called for the School Teachers’ Review Body to be given a remit on workload to make recommendations “that will speed up the reductions in workload, working time and work intensity that are necessary and urgent in schools”.

In its report this year, the STRB called for the withdrawal of the obligation on schools to operate performance-related pay

progression (PRP). The body ruled the “burden of administering it exceeds any benefit that it is achieving”.

The unions called on Keegan to ditch PRP immediately, as it made “critical workload problems worse”. Many schools and trusts have already stopped using it.

The unions want a return to a “fair pay progression” system that automatically awards pay rises each year based on experience. Experts such as Worth also warn that “it’s not just about reducing hours, it’s about improving teachers’ perceptions of their job”.

Ellis suggests frustration around workloads is partly over tasks that feel “less meaningful” and that a risk lies in schools cutting tasks that “make the job enjoyable”.

Despite the barriers, Knights remained optimistic. “We need to achieve [a fall of five hours] and we don’t want to go into this process being defeatist,” she said.

FLEXIBLE WORKING RESOURCES

A toolkit with “practical resources” launches this month to help leaders “embed flexible working” in their schools. This includes information on job shares, part-time working and personal days.

Five more flexible working ambassador trusts have been named, adding to the seven announced in June

and delivering the 12 promised by the government. They are: Lapal Primary School, part of Hales Valley Trust; Newport Girls’ High School Academy Trust; Aspire Alternative Provision School; The Halifax Academy, part of Impact Education Multi-Academy Trust; and The Reach Academy Feltham.

Opinion

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JAI STANNARD

Chief executive,
School-Home Support

Schools can't rebuild parental support for attendance alone

A new report lays bare a collapse in parental support for attendance and the colossal effort needed to put it right, explains Jaime Stannard

The impact of the pandemic on every aspect of education has been much discussed, and the ramifications are increasingly evident and understood.

But one of the most pressing issues, which until now has been largely ignored, is the breakdown in the relationship between schools and parents when it comes to sending children to school every day.

Since 2019, overall absence has rocketed by more than 50 per cent, with persistent absence (students missing 10 per cent or more of lessons) more than doubling.

New groundbreaking research, funded by a trio of charities, School-Home Support, Impetus and Khulisa, sought to understand parental views on sending their children to school every day. This deterioration spans socioeconomic groups and requires immediate attention.

The heartbreaking headline conclusion of this work is that very many parents no longer see it as a priority to ensure their children attend school daily, eroding the long-established belief that every

day in school counts. The research, undertaken by Public First, found that the impact of school closures on parental attitudes to compulsory education as a result of the pandemic lockdowns cannot be understated.

However, the work also found other factors are contributing to this situation. One significant aspect is the cost-of-living crisis. The financial strain this places on families is directly impacting attendance, as many children from disadvantaged backgrounds face barriers that hinder their regular school attendance.

Another critical element is the increase in mental health problems among children and young people. The pandemic has exacerbated

these issues, and parents are grappling with the delicate balance between their child's mental wellbeing and academic obligations.

We've also found an increased willingness among parents to take their children on holiday during term time. The high costs associated with travelling during the school holidays have driven many families to opt for term-time vacations. This practice has been normalised across socioeconomic groups, undermining daily attendance.

However, it's important to note that the study did not find evidence to support the often-suggested idea that increased numbers of parents working from home post-pandemic was a driving force behind the attendance crisis. Furthermore, the imposition of fines for significant absence was found to be counterproductive and ineffective.

The report offers ways forward to address these pressing concerns. Communication between schools and parents must be reviewed and improved to convey the importance of attendance. The efficacy and implementation of fines should be re-evaluated, and schools should receive support to provide intensive assistance to families struggling

with attendance issues. Better coordination and signposting to external agencies, including those in mental health, should be implemented. Improving the accuracy of school-level attendance monitoring systems is crucial and the government must emphasise the importance of coding attendance for schools.

Similarly, school funding plays a pivotal role in addressing the attendance crisis, as better-funded schools tend to have better attendance rates.

Investment in special educational needs (SEND) and children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) could also significantly contribute to improving attendance.

The attendance crisis is a complex issue with far-reaching consequences. The study's findings underscore the urgency of the situation, and the need for a concerted effort to bridge the gap between home and school.

Schools need the support of wider society to make participation in education non-negotiable for our children. They cannot tackle this crisis alone. It requires collaboration, support and a holistic approach to address the underlying causes of high absence.

The school attendance crisis is a pressing issue that demands immediate attention and action. The implications of poor attendance are huge for children and young people's prospects. It affects not only academic achievement but also mental health and overall wellbeing.

The findings of this report highlight the interconnected challenges facing parents, schools and society. We must work together to ensure that every child has access to a quality education and the opportunity to thrive. Their futures depend on it.

“ Many parents no longer see daily attendance as a priority



Opinion

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MARK WILSON
CEO, Wellspring Academy Trust

Westminster, we have a (£11 billion) problem

An obsession with what happens in the classroom has distracted ministers from making sure those classrooms are safe and conducive to learning, writes Mark Wilson

Instruction to Deliver: Fighting to Transform Britain's Public Services, Sir Michael Barber wrote that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its infrastructure. I agree.

A recent report from the National Audit Office revealed the astonishing (and shameful) fact that 700,000 of our children are attending schools requiring major repairs that are not fit for purpose. The same report identified that the government does not have sufficient information to manage the "critical" risks to the safety of pupils and staff from learning and working in these buildings.

What on Earth are we saying to our children and education professionals if we expect them to spend their days in schools that are quite literally falling down around their ears and exposing them to safety risks?

The English school system's 30-plus year, downstream, what's-happening-in-the-classroom obsession has been a key contributor to what is now an £11.6 billion funding gap in meeting school building condition needs – despite education spending

accounting for approximately 5 per cent of GDP.

Investment in crucial public assets has been systematically deprioritised in favour of short-term, frontline fixes. At the current rate of new school building, a full refresh of the school estate in England will take over 400 years. Even the new schools that are

being built have a lifespan of just 60 years. I do not have to point out that the numbers don't add up.

In May 2022, I wrote to the chancellor of the exchequer, sharing my experiences as a MAT leader. I emphasised chronic under-investment, neglected maintenance, health and safety issues and dangerous practices I had witnessed across various

local authority areas. This is not a localised problem; it is a national crisis that demands urgent attention.

To tackle this issue, we must re-evaluate how we measure school effectiveness and the role of strategic authorities responsible for schools. Every school administration should have a comprehensive, costed and committed investment plan prioritising the maintenance and improvement of the infrastructure they are entrusted to uphold.

We must shift attention to ensuring that public-realm infrastructure receives the attention and funding it deserves. Achieving this shift will require support and a fundamental overhaul of the current accountability framework. We must

“ We must shift attention to infrastructure ”

ask ourselves when the condition of our school estate becomes a matter of sufficient concern to trigger decisive action.

We must in parallel explore solutions to address the infrastructure funding gap. Developers have long advocated for the construction of new schools, gifting them to the nation as part of their new-build programmes.



There is currently no legislative mechanism to facilitate such transactions, leading to the rejection of hundreds of millions of pounds that could have contributed to resolving our £11.6 billion problem.

It is also time to reconsider the role of private finance initiatives (PFI) in financing school buildings. While repayment costs and perceived inefficiencies tarnished their reputation, PFI projects initially garnered enthusiasm.

They could again if it was pointed out that PFI-funded schools boast well-maintained facilities that remain fit for purpose while non-PFI schools from the same era have suffered 25 years of under-prioritisation, contributing significantly to the ever-widening infrastructure gap.

While there are legitimate concerns regarding the costs associated with PFI, these challenges can be mitigated through long-term planning and a comprehensive understanding of budgetary considerations. PFI may have been an expensive way to fund new schools, but the argument that PFI-funded schools have not been able to provide sufficient resources to the frontline just does not stack. PFI is not the bogeyman it has been made out to be.

All young people deserve to learn in a safe and weather-tight school building. An £11.6 billion shortfall in infrastructure needs means that we cannot afford to dismiss any potential solutions. This investment is not just in bricks and mortar but in the future of our society and the wellbeing of generations to come.

We need bold action to create an educational landscape that is more than just safe – one that truly supports the growth and success of all our children. And to deliver that, politicians must start looking upstream for the fixes.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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WRIGHTHead of school,
Southmoor AcademyThe social mobility commission
is a fig leaf for inaction

We know what works, but making progress on social mobility requires politicians who care enough to act on that knowledge, says Sammy Wright

Saying that something is important costs nothing – actually putting it first is a lot harder.

When I joined the social mobility commission in 2018, part of the induction day involved a whistle-stop tour of every administration of the past 30 years and how each and every one of them had stated that “social mobility” in some form or other was key to their programme.

A couple of weeks ago, we heard that social mobility was at its lowest for 50 years. How can both be true?

My time on the commission taught me the simple answer. For all the high-flown rhetoric, no one in government cares enough to act.

I am not saying they are all heartless. I did not say no one cares. They just don't care enough. In my mind, I am reminded of the anguished conversations I had with other young parents when my kids were in nappies.

“Isn't it terrible,” we would say. “All this waste. We really shouldn't use disposables.”

But, when it came to the hard work of washing nappies, no one

wanted to get their hands dirty.

Look at the commission itself: a public body, widely recognised. When I joined, people would say, “Isn't that amazing?” and “Wow! You're going to really make a difference.”

But here is a little bit of cold water. When I joined, there were 12 commissioners but only five full-time staff. Each commissioner was contracted for one day a month.

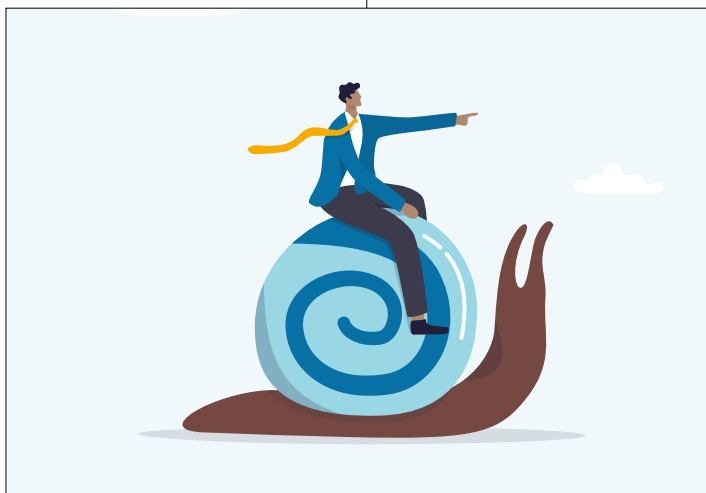
In 2019, I was grilled by the education select committee. It was weirdly aggressive. They seemed outraged that we had achieved nothing in our first six months.

We pointed out that, for us, that was six days' work. They seemed obsessed with the vast resources at our disposal. At one point, they suggested that we might be better off just redirecting our budget into schools.

I pointed out that our budget was about half of what it takes to run one secondary school for a year.

The levels of ignorance in the politicians I encountered was only really matched by my own. I was appointed, but I wasn't trained. We were amateurs – just like the politicians who were guiding us.

I thought – and still think – that group of commissioners were brilliant and committed. But, if you actually wanted to shift the dial on



“ I didn't say no one cares. They just don't care enough ”

social mobility, that commission was not how to do it.

Because this is the other thing that even the education select committee seemed unable to grasp: We had no power.

Our statutory obligation was to place a report in front of parliament once a year. But the government had no obligation to respond. We could not make policy; we could only recommend it.

But, most of the time, they just said no. I was the lead for schools and HE – and yet I never met a secretary of state for education. In three years, I had half an hour with Nick Gibb, and half an hour with Michelle Donelan when she was minister for universities.

We were invited as a group to Downing Street – but not to actually talk to anyone in government, just to look around and sit in a meeting room.

During the slow-motion car crash of the Covid exams fiasco, I spoke again and again to Ofqual and the DfE, making precisely the point

that tripped them up. I told them repeatedly that they could not hope to have the same distribution of grades as exams without egregious unfairness to individuals – but they ignored me completely.

So, if we weren't influencing policy, what were we for?

We were a distraction; a mask for inaction. We signalled that social mobility was “on the agenda” even though it was being ignored by everyone.

The most frustrating thing of all is that the answer to social mobility is not complicated. On that first day, we were shown the Gatsby curve – a simple graph that shows social mobility is directly related to income equality. On the first day of my tenure, we had all the evidence we needed.

You want social mobility? Tax wealth. Tax inheritance. Build council houses. Fund schools. Pay proper wages. End the two-child benefit cap.

Anything less? Stop pretending that you care.

Opinion

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JASON TOMLINSON

Managing director,
RM Technology

The first exams of the AI age are over, so what now?

AI's potential is tremendous but failing to engage with it now could widen inequalities and normalise bad practices, says Jason Tomlinson

It has been less than a year since the launch of the generative AI tool ChatGPT4, yet its impact has already been felt in classrooms across the country.

According to recent research commissioned by RM Technology, teachers believe over two-thirds of students are regularly using AI to help with their schoolwork. From solving maths problems to writing English essays and translating foreign-language texts, AI has become pervasive.

Naturally, the epitome was exam season. As it approached, over 70 per cent of students were worried about struggling in exams without the help of AI. The sheer speed at which AI is fundamentally transforming their educational experience is breath-taking.

While it is difficult to determine how much AI shaped this year's exam results, it is clear that it will continue to do so. Now is the time to ask how we should prepare for that.

Back to school

First and foremost, ensuring that students are equipped with the right knowledge and skills to

handle the technology is essential, as some will be using AI for the first time.

From interviewing Emmeline Pankhurst to asking Marie Curie questions about radioactivity, AI can bring learning to life. Why ignore that potential?

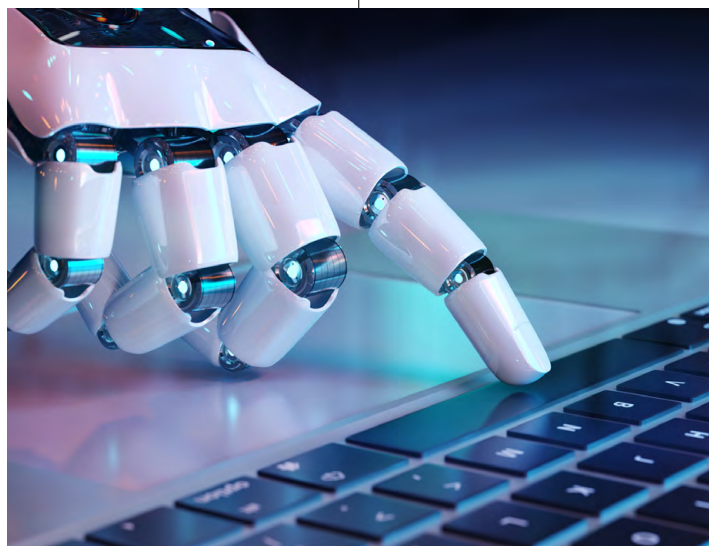
Incorporating AI into the classroom will help to demystify the technology and allow teachers to guide young people in the best ways to use it – whether that is to prepare for exams or to aid day-to-day learning.

Just as AI literacy will rapidly become essential for students as they prepare for the future jobs market, a lack of clarity around the technology's usage in classrooms will be detrimental to teachers. Indeed, students' fears about not being able to access AI during exam season only confirmed the confusion in classrooms around the best way to regulate and monitor the technology.

Careful implementation

By now, it should be clear to decision makers that teachers need to receive proper training around AI. In addition, the government must start regulating its use in the sector.

Currently, 60 per cent of students are prevented from accessing AI programs at school and 65 per cent of teachers associate its use



“The countdown has begun. There is no time to waste

with cheating. This benefits neither students nor their teachers.

AI's potential to increase productivity and efficiency for both groups means that it will inevitably be normalised. This must happen in an informed and careful way, within clear frameworks and parameters.

Reducing inequalities

This year's exam results followed the pattern of previous years, exposing some of the stark inequalities within the education system.

Ahead of exam season, Lee Elliot Major, professor of social mobility at the University of Exeter, described the rapid rise of private tuition as creating an “education arms race” in the UK. Indeed, this year's exam results reveal widening regional inequalities in England.

Unequal access to AI could further widen these gaps. But, properly implemented, it has unrivalled potential for levelling the playing field.

AI can provide pupils with

access to personalised learning experiences while reducing teacher workload. For example, algorithms can use information on learning difficulties to customise lesson plans and flag areas where students may require additional support. It can read out loud and design and mark personalised assessments at speed and with unending patience.

In and out of schools, young people are already leading the adoption of these technologies. They will soon become a defining feature of the classroom, and we cannot afford for early adopters to tear ahead. The potential for unethical practices and widening disadvantage gaps is clear – but so is the possibility of transformative innovation to enhance the classroom experience.

The countdown to next year's exams has begun. There is no time to waste in developing and modelling ways to use this technology that uphold our core values and deliver the rich and inclusive results that technology has long promised.

Solutions

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
CONTACT US NEWS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

AIMEE STEVENS

Head of culture, life and social sciences, Penrice Academy

Three ways one simple survey is improving our PSHE provision

Aimee Stevens sets out how NHS research is powering her school's PSHE teaching with data, influencing its curriculum and giving its students a voice

The value of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) in schools has never been more important. As teachers across the country well know, the disruption to students' development caused by the pandemic has had serious consequences for their social, emotional and physical health. Meanwhile, schools are increasingly expected to provide wraparound care for students with extra breakfast and after-school clubs to extend opportunities for their social learning.

These contributing factors mean that there has never been more pressure on PSHE teachers to nurture students' personal development. This is why reviewing your school's approach to PSHE is vital to ensure that provision supports every school's overarching objective of nurturing happy, healthy and engaged children and young people.

Teaching facts, not fear

At Penrice Academy, it is our belief that PSHE should be data-driven

and information-led. One of the challenges of teaching PSHE is that pupils can think their teachers are scare-mongering and trying to dissuade them from experiencing things without reason.

This is why I build my lessons around government-sourced, genuine statistics. In my classroom, I want to have healthy discussions that are based on facts and not fear. Being able to use statistics and data in my lessons provides strength and clarity to my teaching and helps students to understand these issues in a wide and balanced context.

A free personalised resource

With school budgets squeezed, the investment and resource put into PSHE certainly feels the pinch. Despite this, the range of topics and important conversations we need to cover in a thirty-minute per week PSHE lesson is ever growing.

Therefore, taking advantage of opportunities that can bolster your provision but don't require any budget are crucial. Penrice Academy has recently taken part in the pilot of the new online version of the NHS England *Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England* survey.

The data from this survey reveals the current prevalence, trends and attitudes towards smoking, drinking and drugs among students



“ Discussions should be based on facts, not fear

aged 11 to 16 across England. Helpfully, this year the survey is being conducted completely online, which has improved its accessibility for our students and reduced administration time.

Once the survey is complete, every school receives an individual report from NHS England, which can then feed back into your school's PSHE curriculum and pastoral provision. Having this information has helped us to ensure that we are being responsive to the behaviours, experiences and attitudes of our students by adapting our PSHE provision accordingly.

A voice in national policy

As a teacher in a school in a relatively remote part of the Southwest, I am conscious that our young people are not always given a voice or a platform to share their stories and experiences. This does not mean that their voices are not important or that their contributions are not valuable.

My job is to show them that they should and are being heard. That is why surveys like this are such an important part of our PSHE

provision.

Not only does it build a national picture of trends and behaviours among young people, but it is one of the main sources of information for government departments, local authorities and charities. The information therefore helps the formulation of national government policy and wider guidance.

I want our students and their experiences to be a part of that conversation. Not only is it important for the accuracy of the data for NHS England to have schools participate across the country, but it is also important for our students to know that their experiences matter, and for us as teachers to reflect that within our curriculum and our lessons.

In order to be able to respond to the emerging and changing behaviours of our students, we need to have accurate information about what those changing trends are. Utilising this to open up conversations in the classroom is the most effective way to shape your PSHE curriculum so that it genuinely delivers for students.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



NATIONAL CEREMONY
27 February 2024
ICC, Birmingham

FE WEEK & AELP
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THE REVIEW

PRIDE AND PROGRESS: MAKING SCHOOLS LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE SPACES

BOOK
TV
FILM
RADIO
EVENT
RESOURCE

Authors: Dr Adam Brett and Jo Brassington

Publisher: Corwin UK

Publication date: 31 May 2023

ISBN: 152961905X

Reviewer: Cassie Hayward-Tapp, Year 6 teacher, Southover CE Primary School

Pride and Progress is an essential read for all educators, and particularly for those in leadership roles. Creating change to ensure that your school is more inclusive and equitable for those in the LGBTQ+ community may seem daunting, but this book is the perfect companion to start you on that journey.

After years of progress on LGBTQ+ rights, members of this community are suddenly increasingly vulnerable again (not least those who are transgender). That is why it is even more vital for us to create safe spaces for all of our pupils and to educate them to be accepting and understanding people. If you feel ill-equipped for the task, *Pride and Progress* is just the thing to arm you with the knowledge and understanding you need for everything from making small practical changes to creating an inclusive school culture.

Informed throughout by discussions with the guests on the authors' *Pride and Progress* podcast, the book provides plenty of new knowledge alongside fascinating and informative anecdotes. It also encourages readers to reflect on their own experiences and practice.

Some of those discussions and reflections may make you uncomfortable, but Brett and Brassington provide reassurance throughout; discomfort, they rightly argue, is a necessary and normal part of the process. We may feel like our schools are inclusive, but the reality is that we may still have a long way to go.

Each chapter is split into three sections: "in theory", "in practice" and "in action". I particularly liked the "in action" sections, which provide

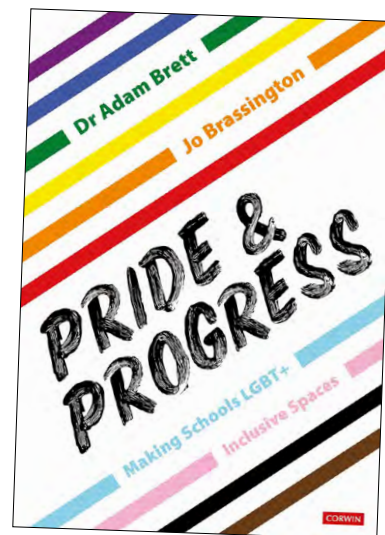
regular and challenging questions. These kept me thinking about how I could use what I was learning in my school. More than that, they had me reflecting on my own experiences, not only as an educator but as a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

I found the chapter titled *Curriculum, representation and visibility* particularly helpful. Its discussion around the books we read in our classrooms and the role models and representation we create space for in our curriculum are deeply thought-provoking. Many of the suggestions in this chapter are easy for educators to implement and to share with colleagues.

The chapter on *Community and connection* was also particularly insightful. In education, we need to work alongside our families and communities to ensure that everyone is seen and heard. This chapter provides research and suggestions to do just that. Crucially, it also touches on the potential backlash that schools can face when doing LGBTQ+ inclusive work. It explains the importance of communication and addressing concerns head on.

At times, there are elements of *Pride and Progress* that are more geared towards secondary schools and colleges. However, even this helped me to see the greater picture of where this inclusive work can take us.

But it is the sensitivity of the authors' writing that really struck a chord with me. Not once do they assume what the reader does or does not know, and nor do they patronise or make you feel like you are not doing enough. Instead,



they provide hope for what we can do next, advice on how we can improve and continue to learn, and motivation to better understand the LGBTQ+ community and what our pupils might need to feel safe, seen and included.

From a glossary of basic terminology to suggestions for small but hugely impactful changes, Brassington and Brett will leave you with workable solutions and a feeling of excitement for what you can achieve. With this book, they have created something that will help many to begin important discussions about how to move forward in supporting the LGBTQ+ community in and around your school, and the tools to take action – wherever you are on your inclusive journey.

I look forward to sharing *Pride and Progress* with my colleagues and to listening to the back catalogue of their podcast episodes (while making more notes!). But most of all, I am excited to continue to take action to ensure the children in our care are "free to be themselves [...] and feel like they belong".

★★★★★
Rating



Zara Simpson

Deputy head of prep, Streatham and Clapham High School


LEADERSHIP LEARNING

For pupils, staff and senior leadership teams alike, returning to school after the summer holidays offers a moment of renewal. It is a time to reconnect and reflect as we set ourselves new goals.

This process is echoed in our wider professional networks too, and I was particularly delighted to come across this thread by Sanum J. Khan on X/Twitter. In it, she shares 15 valuable insights based on her experiences of starting a new SLT role last year.

I assumed the role of deputy head of prep at Streatham and Clapham High School GDST in January, so I have been filled with enthusiasm embarking on my first autumn term – but also a little daunted.

We welcomed more than 50 parents to our “meet the leadership team” breakfast event, during which we outlined our plans for the upcoming year, encompassing both academic and pastoral priorities. Now, I will be following Khan’s advice.



Sanum J Khan
@Sanumjkhan

7. Plan reflection time after events or projects. What worked, what didn't? What successes were planned, which ones were happy byproducts?

I wasn't the only one who was both excited and terrified by the first week. An interaction with a year 4 pupil who has joined our school this term really struck a chord with me. It highlighted the impact that a strong and positive transition

can have on the way we move forward thereafter.

I think we both benefited from meeting each other. As Khan wisely says, “the strength of the wolf is the pack, and the strength of the pack is the wolf”.

THE HALO CODE

Further setting the tone of our inclusive culture from the start, we began this week with a pupil-led assembly about “belonging” on Monday and ended it by marking **World Afro Day** on Friday. This global day of celebration and liberation for Afro hair and identity, endorsed by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, offers schools the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

At SCHS, we add a B to the EDI acronym to emphasise the significance of experiencing a sense of belonging and our commitment to ensuring that every girl in our school feels like a full part of our community.



As a testament to this commitment, we have embraced the **Halo Code**, which calls on every school and workplace to uphold the rights of its staff and pupils to embrace all Afro hairstyles. We recognise that Afro-textured hair is an integral part of the racial, ethnic, cultural and religious identities of our Black staff and pupils. As such, we welcome Afro-textured hair in all its diverse styles, including afros, locs, twists, braids, cornrows, fades, straightened hair, weaves and wigs, as well as headscarves or wraps in the school colours.

Your school can too. By doing so, you can join in a collective effort to eliminate discrimination against children with Afro-textured hair.

GIRLS IN STEM

Our next celebration will come in October to mark Ada Lovelace Day. Ahead of that, I thoroughly enjoyed reading through the organisers' **comprehensive resource pack** for educators, which includes teaching scenarios, informative posters and valuable web links. Of notable interest is their crib sheet, which illustrates the diverse career pathways available in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Promoting and encouraging girls to pursue these fields is pivotal to advancing gender equality. It requires us to dismantle stereotypes and barriers. Doing so holds a central place in our educational offer and we prioritise it across our school curriculum, starting in nursery, where we actively celebrate numerous female role models in these fields.

READING AND LISTENING

In other news this week, I was pleased to hear about a new award and database to encourage diversity in children's books, launched by the charity **Inclusive Books for Children**.



IT'S LAUNCH DAY!!! 🚀

Introducing Inclusive Books for Children, and our easy-to-use website with loads of book recommendations, reviews & curated lists from our expert team.

Discover all we have to offer on our shiny, new site: inclusivebooksforchildren.org

#ChooseInclusiveBooks

I also found the most recent **podcast by the Education Endowment Foundation** invaluable. Delving into the topic of SEND in mainstream education and adaptive learning, it features insightful discussions and practical advice for senior leaders.

Now I just need to work out how many of Khan's top leadership tips I have followed just by writing this article. I certainly feel a little less daunted by the term ahead.

Click the links to access the blogs and podcasts

The Knowledge

What we've learned about schools and their communities this week



How are cost-of-living pressures on families affecting schools?

Megan Lucas, Research manager, NFER

School staff are on the front line in grappling with the challenges faced by pupils and their families brought about by the cost-of-living crisis. Conducted by ASK Research and funded by the Nuffield Foundation, NFER has published the full report from our three-part series to understand the scale of the challenges which schools are facing and the impact these are having on them.

Drawing on responses from more than 2,500 senior leaders and teachers in mainstream and special schools in England, the report concludes that urgent action is required. Recent cost-of-living increases risk having far reaching and long-lasting repercussions for pupils across all school settings, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

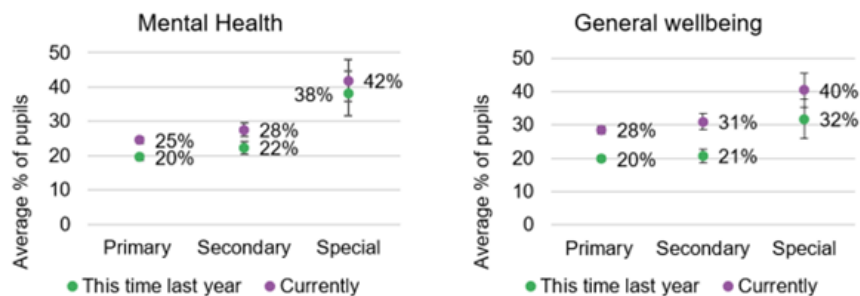
Mental health and wellbeing exacerbated

The vast majority of senior leaders (at least 84 per cent across primary, secondary and special settings) report that cost-of-living pressures have increased both the number of pupils requiring additional support and their level of need, especially in the most disadvantaged schools. This is based on a definition of additional support as anything over and above the usual provision that pupils might receive in relation to pupil premium and/or SEND support.

Schools are particularly concerned about the escalation in the level of pupil wellbeing and mental-health needs. As shown in Figure 1, when the fieldwork was undertaken in April and May this year, senior leaders reported that over one-quarter of pupils in mainstream schools required additional support for mental health and wellbeing. This was even higher in special schools, where over 40 per cent of pupils needed additional support.

Participants were asked to recollect the number of pupils requiring additional support in the previous year. Therefore, estimates may be influenced by factors which have affected respondents' perceptions and recall. Nevertheless, the year-on-year increase is statistically significant.

Figure 1 Average percentage of pupils requiring different types of additional support



Note: Confidence intervals have been included on the charts. Where confidence intervals do not overlap, they indicate that differences in the average per cent of pupils over time can be considered significant.

Source: NFER survey of 1441 senior leaders: the minimum number of responses given to an individual item was 1322

Scale and range of support expanded

In response to this escalation in need among pupils due to cost-of-living pressures, the vast majority of schools are providing unprecedented urgent support to pupils and in some cases their households. Schools have expanded both the scale and range of support they offer to ensure that pupils are able to continue to engage in education. Indeed, while this may go beyond schools' statutory responsibilities, pupils whose most basic needs are not being met are less likely to attend school and successfully engage with learning.

Our research has found that, most schools (over 70 per cent across primary, secondary and special settings) report providing food to some pupils through food parcels/food banks/food vouchers and subsidised breakfasts. In addition, nearly all schools (at least 90 per cent across settings) are subsidising extra-curricular activities.

Provision, recruitment and retention affected

Not only are schools having to meet increased levels of pupil need, but the increased cost of living, together with other challenges, has had a considerable negative impact on their own financial positions. In effect, cost-of-living pressures are affecting schools' core provision and compounding recruitment and retention challenges.

Schools have had to make cuts to their provision (including staffing, learning resources and maintenance) that staff feel are having a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Schools are only expecting the situation to get worse next year and for further cuts to be necessary.

Recruitment and retention challenges have also been exacerbated by recent cost-of-living increases as salaries in schools have not remained competitive and additional pressures have affected staff retention. This is amplifying the impact of cuts and hindering schools' ability to meet pupil need further.

Recommendations

Together, our findings paint a concerning picture of the profound impact that cost-of-living pressures are having on schools. Worse, these pressures show no sign of abating in the short to medium term.

Among other things, we are recommending that schools are given greater financial support in the short term to address pressing wellbeing and welfare needs, alongside meeting the additional direct costs associated with the increased cost of living.

Families should also be provided with additional support, which might include revisiting current levels of welfare support and/or additional cost-of-living payments.

Week in

Westminster

Your guide to what's happening in the corridors of power



FRIDAY

Skills minister Robert Halfon took aim at comments from Chris Vince, the Labour parliamentary candidate for Halfon's Harlow seat, that he said were inaccurate.

Vince had raised his concern after it was revealed the Department for Education's contract to deliver "better value" in SEND spending included a target to cut the number of education, health and care plans (EHCPs) issued.

In a letter to the local paper, he wanted to "reassure readers with absolute certainty" that the DfE has not provided any councils "either nationally locally" with targets to cut EHCPs.

However, the letter actually called them *Economic, Health and Care Plans* and then gave it the wrong acronym of *(ECHP)*.

And whoever said the government doesn't take SEND seriously!?

TUESDAY

Academies minister Baroness Barran and the DfE's top civil servant Susan Acland-Hood got a good grilling from education committee MPs over the crumbling-concrete crisis.

Pushed into detailing a specific timeline of when decisions were made to escalate the RAAC policy response over the summer, Barran revealed ministers advised Gillian Keegan to close schools because of recent serious collapses on August 21.

Four days later, Keegz made a decision. Not on RAAC (don't be silly). She made the call that she would go on holiday – flying to Spain to celebrate her father's birthday!

This is all fine though, because she was still chairing meetings from Costa Del Keegz, and she flew back as soon as she had decided to close RAAC schools, which was communicated to everyone else on August 31 – 10 days after the advice from ministers.



In what was quite an eventful committee meeting, special

guest Mark Francois MP promised not to "take up the whole morning", before taking up the whole morning talking about two cases in his constituency – accusing civil servants of "talking guff" and "telling fibs".

PS. Just to be clear, Francois does not blame his Tory pals for any of this. In fact, the opposite – he actually chose to "pay tribute to everything" that Barran and schools minister Nick Gibb have done.

PPS. Barran showed again what a bad-ass minister she is. Asked by Conservative MP Nick Fletcher whether she had looked at netting (!!!) above suspended ceilings as a fix for RAAC, she said without flinching: "I don't know how strong netting is, but I don't think that, as a child or a member of staff, I would be particularly comfortable under a net."

Meanwhile, skills minister Robert Halfon told a T-Levels APPG that he views the reform of vocational and technical qualifications akin to the JF Kennedy quote that "we choose to go to the moon ... not because they are easy, but because they are hard".

Reminds of us that other famous JFK quote: "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do to kill off a load of already successful BTEC qualifications in favour of an untried and untested pet project for ministers."

WEDNESDAY

Another week, another Keegan media masterclass (see exhibit A and B m'lud).

Challenged by Labour on her response to the RAAC crisis yesterday, Keegz made quite the statement on why everything is all fine with sticking a load of kids in temporary classrooms because her government has underfunded the rebuilding of schools so badly over the past 13 years that their roofs could literally fall down at any time.

"On the Portakabins, I would just like to say that I have been to a number of these schools and met the children. At the first school I visited, the children were all petitioning me to stay in the Portakabins, because they actually preferred them to the classroom. The Portakabins are very high quality."

Keegz just can't keep herself of those front pages.

We don't want to cause mass panic, but the robots have taken over at DfE towers.

A case study published this week explained how ARNOLD (Automated Robot Negating the Onerous Logging of Data) now rifles through all 100,000 enquiries and comments the department gets each year.

ARNIE scans the content of emails, prioritises them based on risk and then logs them into the relevant database for an actual person to pick up.

Owen Roffe, head of digital communications and public enquiries at DfE, said this means the public get a faster response and staff can "focus on more rewarding work, develop their skills and provide a quicker service to customers".

Three cheers for our new robot overlords!



CREATING
transformational
SCHOOLS

At Nova Education Trust we are committed to our vision, values, ambitions and principles, and we are determined to achieve our mission of creating transformational schools. We are looking for a talented and inspirational leader who is committed to transforming the lives of our learners, with the imagination, passion and experience to support and challenge us to even greater things in the service of our young people.

Nova Education Trust's Director of School Improvement (Primary) will need a proven track record of success in leading others to bring about and sustain transformational improvement in schools. Driving and further developing our ongoing strategy for improvement, the post-holder will strategically lead complex and sustainable change across the Trust's primary schools. This will involve providing high-level direction, support and guidance, rigorous quality assurance, and high-quality professional development to build a strong primary team that enables our academies to achieve excellence and, as a result, transform the lives of all the children and communities they serve.

The successful candidate will have experience of developing, motivating, and empowering highly effective teams through an

ethos of excellence. A strategic thinker with drive, creativity and high expectations, you will have a clear vision for leading and sustaining school transformation through collaborative working.

They will be an integral part of the Executive Leadership Team, advising and leading on the transformation of Nova's primary academies. They will have openness, approachability, diplomacy, warmth, and the ability to engage and communicate clearly with all stakeholders with integrity.

We hope you are excited by the prospect of this role, working with committed colleagues across the trust, to lead genuine transformation. If you wish to join a values-driven organisation, then we look forward to hearing from you.



CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

Scholars' Education Trust

Salary: £65,000 circa per annum

Full year, full time, 29 days holiday + BH

We are looking for an exceptional finance manager who has the necessary skills and personal qualities to lead the finance function within this forward looking, successful and growing Trust. The person appointed will be supported by an experienced COO and will oversee a dedicated central finance team. Candidates will need an accountant accreditation. The finance provision within the Trust is based in our central offices on the Samuel Ryder Academy site in St Albans. Travel to schools within the Trust will be required. We are a dynamic cross phase Multi Academy Trust (MAT) based at locations across Hertfordshire and Central Bedfordshire.

For further details, please visit www.scholarseducationtrust.co.uk or call 01727 734424

Closing date: Monday 02nd September 2023, 9am

Interview date: W/C 02nd October 2023



St Philip's C of E Primary School: Head of School

Salary: L12 to L17 (£61,882 to £69,970)

The Governors of this successful, innercity Manchester school are looking to appoint an exceptional, inspirational, dynamic individual to become our Head of School.

This is an exciting opportunity to play a lead role in developing and shaping our school. Our new Head of School will have a proven track record in developing themselves and others, be able to show high quality experience of leading and working in high performing teams and will be driven to achieving the very best for our children.

We prize staff wellbeing very highly and can offer the successful candidate a supportive environment in which they will have the opportunity to make a difference. Please contact our school to find out more.

Closing Date – Tuesday 17th October

Interviews – Monday 30th October



Haberdashers'
Borough Academy



Haberdashers'
Academies Trust
South

Principal

Haberdashers' Borough Academy opened in 2019 as a Free School in the heart of London and is firmly grounded in the values of our Trust. It is a school with great potential and deserves a Principal who can support staff and pupils in building on the foundations of its first few years to continue their journey to excellence.

The Haberdashers' reputation is built on a tradition of high standards and academic excellence, and we are proud to continue this legacy by supporting every single student, and staff member, in reaching their full potential. This an exciting opportunity for an experienced leader to bring this vision to life.

The Principal is accountable and responsible for standards within the school and the performance of it. They will lead and inspire excellence in all that the School does and will support staff in enabling every child to be successful at every stage.



Your leadership will be open and engaging, in recognition of the significant contribution it will make to the success of the school.

You will be joining Haberdashers' Academies Trust South, an organisation deeply committed to excellence. Working alongside our other Principals and senior leaders, you will be an integral part of the Trust Executive, which places school improvement at the heart of its work. We will in turn offer you the resources and support you need in order to be successful.

We want the best people to join our Haberdashers' community and are committed to a diverse and inclusive student and staff body. If you are passionate about making a difference and feel that you have the right experience and expertise, we encourage you to apply to join us on our journey.

Teacher SEN



Oakfield Park School is an "Outstanding" LA-maintained school providing high quality education for young people aged 11 to 19 years who have severe/profound and/or multiple learning difficulties. Many of our pupils have additional complex needs including Autistic Spectrum Disorders, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour and physical difficulties. The school is well equipped, providing excellent facilities and resources for all pupils.

We would be interested in hearing from you if you have experience of teaching students with:

- Complex or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, and/or
- Complex sensory needs
- ASD / Challenging behaviours

For further details, please visit:

<https://www.oakfieldpark.wakefield.sch.uk/home/vacancies>

Closing Date: 12 noon Thursday 12th October 2023

Interview Date: Wednesday 20th October 2023



The Oaks Primary School: Headteacher

Salary: L18 - L24 (£71,729 - £83,081)

We are looking for a Headteacher who shares our values and has the vision, drive, and resilience to lead The Oaks Primary School, securing rapid improvement whilst also bringing leadership capacity that supports other Trust schools to learn from each other and beyond.

This is an exciting and unique opportunity for a highly effective and inspiring school leader to move this school forwards and improve outcomes for all pupils.

We prioritise staff wellbeing and are deeply committed to investing in staff at every level of our organisation through clear professional development pathways and opportunities. Interested candidates are encouraged to contact the Executive Director of School Improvement to discuss the opportunity in more detail.

Closing date: Thursday 12th October 2023, 12pm

Interviews: Wednesday 25th October 2023



Secondary Curriculum Roles

United Learning is developing a coherent, ambitious and aspirational curriculum to support our growing number of teachers across England. The curriculum and its resources aim to both reduce teachers' workload, and ensure that all our pupils receive an excellent education.

We are therefore adding to our secondary curriculum team, and are recruiting for roles in **Design & Technology**, **French** and **Spanish**. Roles in secondary **Religious Studies** and **Physics** will also be opening soon.

As part of the team, you will refine and further develop an outstanding curriculum for our teachers to deliver. This will include working with the subject team to refine the KS3-4 sequence and schemes of work. Where appropriate, you will work alongside the wider secondary curriculum team to make meaningful links between subjects.

You will also develop the resources that can help teachers explicitly teach this curriculum – including lesson slides, printable resources, quiz questions, and other resources as appropriate. You will work with the subject team to ensure that the curriculum resources support high quality teaching, and you will collaborate with our central team to ensure that all resources are consistent with United Learning's overall approach to curriculum design and are IP compliant.

As required, you will develop and refine a wider range of resources for pupils, such as knowledge organisers or explanatory videos and you will respond to feedback from teachers, the curriculum team, and the Director of Curriculum.

This an exciting opportunity to work alongside the wider curriculum team to help to shape our vision for the curriculum, and to develop resources that will have a very tangible and positive impact for teachers.

For more information about each of the roles, please visit the United Learning vacancies page: <https://www.unitedlearningcareers.org.uk/current-vacancies>



SECONDARY ENGLISH STRATEGY LEAD

Location: The Kemnal Academies Trust
(ideally based in Hamps/Sussex)
Salary: £80,000+ travel expenses

Are you a strong secondary English Lead Practitioner and experienced leader looking for a role where you can have wider impact? The Kemnal Academies Trust is currently looking for a full-time Strategy Lead for secondary English to join part of our school development team across the Trust. This role will see you setting whole-trust secondary strategy, coordinating and line managing the work of English Lead Practitioners, and providing support in-school to develop English department provision.

Your key responsibilities will be:

- Setting and leading a trust-wide strategy in English to ensure provision is having a positive impact on student outcomes and the development of staff at all levels.
- Ensuring the Senior Director and Directors of Education have an up-to-date and accurate view of English provision in all trust secondary schools.

- Supporting the quality of leadership, teaching, learning and progress across the Trust so that agreed targeted outcomes are achieved. Experience of senior leadership work, including a secure English background, is essential for this role. Whilst this role is across the whole of the trust, it would be ideally suited to someone based in the Hampshire/Sussex region; however this is not essential as long as travel to these areas is possible.

For full details and JD, please visit the TKAT Vacancies page <https://tkat.livevacancies.co.uk/#/>

Completed applications to be sent to Matt Batchelor, Senior Director of Education matt.batchelor@tkat.org

Closing date: 4th October 2023
Start date: January 2024

TKAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Offers of employment will be subject to the full Safer Recruitment checks, including an enhanced DBS check.

DEPUTY HEADTEACHER



This is a unique and exciting opportunity for an inspirational and aspirational leader to join Blaise High School and further contribute to the life chances of our young people in the school and across the Trust. The school is on a rapid trajectory of improvement that will be sustained over many years and this role is a chance to be part of something very special. Blaise High School has made significant and rapid progress since becoming a part of Greenshaw Learning Trust. This role will support your career development and equip you for a further promotion within the Trust.

The staff at the school share a common purpose; that is the eradication of educational disadvantage in North Bristol. The staff at the school are committed to the school's values of Aspiration, Integrity and Pride.

The school's leadership are not only committed to developing a school grounded in academic success and the development of character but also want to build a school in which workload for teachers is sensible, manageable and well thought out. In our most recent staff survey 96% of staff said that they were proud to work at the school and planned to be here in two years' time. Blaise High School serves a diverse and vibrant community, with high levels of deprivation. It has a Resource Base within the school and this is something we are very proud of. We believe in evidence led approaches to teaching and we teach in a traditional manner built around explicit and direct instruction. The successful applicant for this post will play a key, strategic role, in the development of a strong and long lasting, school culture, taking Blaise High School into the top 1% of all schools in the country for progress made.

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