

education insight

**Education Insight:
for those working in the education sector**

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welcome

to the April edition of our newsletter for those working in the education sector. We hope you will find this a useful summary of latest developments in schools, further and higher education and the training and apprenticeships arena. If you have any comments on the format or want more detail about a particular subject, please do not hesitate to contact any of us.

second round of selective schools expansion fund launched to improve access for disadvantaged children

Disadvantaged pupils will have greater access to more good or outstanding schools as the Government has announced it will invest another £50 million in the Selective Schools Expansion Fund to ensure as many children benefit from a “world class” grammar school education as possible.

The second round of this funding will be available for grammar schools to create additional places, but only if they are able to demonstrate how they plan to attract more disadvantaged pupils and work with other schools in their area to locally raise standards.

The first round of funding was awarded to 16 schools all of which had an Ofsted rating of Outstanding. These schools had all committed to a range of measures to improve access for disadvantaged pupils and have since begun the implementation process of these.

At present, 98% of grammar schools in England are rated either Good or Outstanding, and Schools Standards Minister Nick Gibb explained that selective schools are some of the highest performing schools in the country meaning that it is right that they reach out to do more to provide this high standard of

education to disadvantaged pupils, to ensure this education is available to all.

Improving access

Schools that bid for the funding must submit a Fair Access and Partnership Plan to establish how they will improve access for disadvantaged pupils.

Bournemouth School for Girls, one of the schools selected for the first round of this funding made changes to its admission criteria, moving children eligible for the pupil premium from out of the catchment area up the ladder at the expense of those who scored top marks in the 11-plus. Elsewhere other schools have chosen to lower the pass-mark for children with a pupil-premium, but Alistair Brien principal of the school explained that the school wanted to ensure that wherever pupils come from, they can feel that they have earned their place, the school's policy has always been to allow the top 130 11-plus scorers regardless of where they live. Further, the principal explained that he hoped this would reduce the backlash from parents after 3,000 parents signed a petition when a Birmingham Academy announced plans to prioritise poorer pupils.

Across the 16 schools awarded the funding, most are using teachers and sixth-formers to help poorer primary school pupils



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prepare for the 11 plus and many plan to run outreach events such as summer schools. Common across all the schools was also the aim to encourage more parents who qualify for the pupil premium to apply to sit the 11-plus.



contracts awarded to deliver first t levels

In February, the Department for Education and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education awarded contracts to develop, deliver and award the first three T Levels. Awarding Organisation NCFE and Pearson were successful in the competitive bidding process to deliver these.

T levels will be the technical equivalent to A levels, combining classroom theory, practical learning and an industry placement. NCFE will be delivering the Education and Childcare T Level and Pearson has been awarded the contracts to deliver T Levels in Design, Surveying and Planning as well as Digital Production, Design and Development. The aim is to have seven T Levels being taught from 2021. More than 200 businesses, including Fujitsu and GlaxoSmithKline in addition to many small and medium sized firms have helped to design the course content to ensure that young people taking T Levels are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills.

One awarding body has exclusive rights to deliver each T Level subject to protect the 'gold standard' of the award. This was a key recommendation made by Lord Sainsbury in his review of technical education in 2016.

This contract award comes after the Department for Education's announcement in January that it would provide a £38 million funding boost to those that won the bid to teach T Levels. The fund will go towards building new classrooms and refurbishing buildings to deliver the new qualifications. This funding is designed to ensure that those who take the new technical courses have access to industry standard equipment and high quality facilities so they gain the skills and knowledge that employers want.



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Push for more technical education

This is all tied into the Department for Education's push to open up choices for people over 16, and to encourage those not as suited to academic education to consider technical options and apprenticeships. The apprenticeship scheme is also being pushed by the Government among employers to encourage them to think about taking on apprentices.

When explaining why the Department and the Government were pushing the scheme Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

"For too long young people have not had a genuine choice about their future aged 16... Technology and the world economy are fast-changing, and we need to make sure our young people have the skills they need to get the jobs of tomorrow."

Sir Gerry Berragan, Chief executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships also heralded the decision:

"T levels signal real change in the qualifications landscape – offering school leavers an alternative to a purely academic route."



government announces creation of new special free schools

The Government has announced that 39 areas are set to benefit from their ambition to create new special or alternative provision free schools for children who face additional challenges in mainstream education. Thousands of new schools places are being created for children with special educational needs to ensure all children get the tailored support they need to help them develop and thrive.

This announcement follows the commitment made by Education Secretary Damian Hinds in December last year to provide an additional £250 million for local authorities for their high needs budgets and to give the green light to all high-quality special free school bids.

Every region in the country will benefit from a new school which includes 37 special free schools and two alternative provision free schools. Competitions will be held in the 39 local authorities to find providers for the schools including community groups, teachers, charities, existing education providers and other organisations.

The 39 schools will be divided as follows:

- The South West and North West will get six new special schools each;
- London and Yorkshire and the Humber will get five each;
- The East of England and West Midlands will get four special schools each;



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The announcement has been welcomed across different groups, particularly during a time which has been described as a “SEND funding crisis” and when the Government is facing a potential High Court showdown over the legality of cuts to high needs budgets.

Director of the Council for Disabled Children, Dame Christine Lenegan said:

“We are pleased to welcome the new wave of special free schools and the extra choice they will bring to the system for children with special educational needs. We look forward to seeing them working in partnership with parents, children and local agencies to deliver the best outcomes for children”

Further, Leora Cruddas, Chief Executive of the Confederation of Schools Trusts, said:

“These additional school places will enable children with special needs and those facing difficulties to have access to high quality education provision... Today’s announcement of a range of specialist provision in every region of the country is hugely welcome.”

- The South East and the North East will get three;
- The East Midlands will get one; and
- The two alternative provision schools will be established in the West Midlands.

The full range of SEN provisions will be accommodated across the 39 new schools to ensure children of all abilities can get a place at a school.

children's commissioners warn brexit 'could risk children's safety'

The UK's four children's commissioners have warned that if the UK leaves the EU without proper plans for child protection, children's safety could be at risk. An area of particular concern for the commissioners is child abuse, exploitation, abduction and how family law matters are dealt with if a child has one parent from the EU are all "immediate issues".

Commissioners Anne Longfield for England, Sally Holland for Wales, Bruce Adamson for Scotland and Koulla Yiasouma for Northern Ireland reported their reservations about the degree of focus and consideration that has been given to children during the Brexit negotiation process. They have written to Stephen Barclay, the minister for exiting the EU to ask for reassurance on the consideration that has been given to these issues.

The Commissioners highlighted the following areas which they felt had not been adequately addressed:

- **Co-operation on child protection**
The Commissioners highlighted that prevention of child abuse and exploitation often involves international collaboration. The viewing and sharing of illegal images relating to children nearly always involves an international network. Further, offenders who present a threat to children in the UK may be discovered in another EU country.
- **Information sharing**
To permit law enforcement to work effectively and catch these criminals that often operate in a pan-EU way there are co-operation protocols to enable information to be shared swiftly. At present there are no assurances that

information can continue to be shared after we leave the EU.

- **Trafficking**

Concerns have also been expressed over children who are trafficked into the UK. When children arrive into the UK co-operation takes place to identify and track them, to ensure they are given aid and protected as well as closing down the networks to prevent future children being harmed.

- **European Arrest Warrant**

Another aspect of police co-operation which is used to ensure children from the UK are kept safe whilst abroad in the EU. This could be a particular issue if a child from the UK is abducted and taken to a European country. If this happens, states need to be able both to arrest and extradite the perpetrator and ensure immediate steps are taken to protect the child.

- **Family law**

At present we have ongoing co-operation between jurisdictions in relation to family law matters which includes child protection cases.

The Commissioners also went on and raised their concerns about the vetting procedures for EU nationals working in childcare positions across the UK. Current information-sharing arrangements enable criminal record checks include information gathering in other countries.

The Government responded by saying that their first responsibility is still "Protecting citizens, including children". Further, they explained:

"The UK has proposed a comprehensive agreement on internal security that would ensure ongoing co-operation in this area, so that both the UK and the EU can continue to tackle fast-evolving threats.

This includes taking any action required to keep our children safe from harm. This commitment remains, whether we leave with a deal or without one."



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yoga can ease exam stress

The exams regulator Ofqual has released new guidance entitled “Coping with Exam Pressure” to support pupils with test anxiety. The guidance explains that exam stress is “not necessarily a bad thing” if pupils can learn to deal with it effectively and has advocated yoga as a coping strategy.

Ofqual explained that although overwhelming, stress could be a “great motivator” if focused in the correct way. It urges pupils to “remember that stress is nothing to be scared of, anxiety is not inevitable [and] you can learn how to cope more effectively”.

The exam regulator has also explained that yoga and mindfulness classes could be introduced by schools to reduce stress.

The guidance is a six-page document produced in collaboration with Liverpool John Moores University. In conjunction with it, Ofqual has produced the first of its stress-busting blogs to provide further information for teachers supporting pupils experiencing stress and anxiety. Please [click here](#) for further information.

Coping with Exam Pressure, sets out the signs of stress that students should look for, including going blank in an exam, negative thoughts about performance or consequences of failure. It also identifies the physical signs of stress including faintness, a churning stomach or wobbly legs. To combat these, the guidance recommends students breathe slowly and deeply to control the anxiety. Further, for dealing with negative beliefs about performance, pupils should try to replace these with positive thoughts.

This guidance has come as a result of increasing numbers of comments from teachers and parents that the new GCSEs are having a negative impact on pupils’ mental health. A poll carried out by the Association of School and College Leaders found nine in ten head teachers said that the new exams have harmed pupils’ mental health even triggering panic attacks and self-harm. Although Education Secretary Damian Hinds has repeatedly rejected claims that the new GCSEs have a negative impact on pupils’ mental health, other surveys have found similar results. One carried out last year by Barnardo’s found exam and school stress was the greatest cause of concern among parents for their child’s welfare.

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policy – your need to know guide

Primary school accountability

This technical guidance from the Department for Education is for all primary schools and it explains how the Department calculates primary school accountability and measures for the schools' performance tables. It also includes a summary of primary progress measures and information about how Key Stage 2 progress measure bandings are calculated.

Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium: guide for schools

The Department for Education has released this guidance to provide information for schools on the literacy and numeracy catch-up premium which is additional funding to support Year 7 pupils who did not achieve the expected standards in reading or maths at the end of Key Stage 2.

Working together to safeguard children

This guidance provides information to schools and local authorities on the inter-agency working which is carried out to safeguard children and promote the welfare of children. The guidance is for all people who come into contact with children including teachers, education staff, voluntary community workers, children's services employees and social workers.

Buying for schools

The Department for Education has released a set of guides to help schools buy goods. These guides will help schools to find deals available, get value for money and comply with EU procurement law. They include detail on elements such as holding mini-competitions, using framework agreements and fraud.

EU exit: no deal preparations for schools in England

This guidance provides advice to all schools on how they should prepare in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal. It includes information relating to pupils who are EU/EEA nationals and how settled status will operate. It also includes information on dealing with treatment of EU/EEA employees of schools as well as a range of other information.

Curriculum planning and resources: reducing teacher workload

Materials have been provided by the Department for Education to help school leaders and teachers review tasks associated with curriculum planning and resources, so they can reduce workload. The aim of these materials is to help staff remove unnecessary workload related to lesson planning and creating resources for pupils.

meet the team

As the evolving educational landscape continues to open up new opportunities and present challenges, you need to be confident that you are getting the right legal advice, at the right time and, of course, at the right price. Ward Hadaway's Education Team is recognised as a leading national player. Our friendly, commercial and pragmatic approach allows you to be reassured that you are in safe hands.

Whether you are a maintained school, academy, multi academy trust, free school, studio school or UTC, our team have an in-depth, up-to-date knowledge of the sector, making us ideally placed to offer the best possible advice to all those involved in the delivery of educational excellence for pupils, students and their communities. [Click here](#) to read about how we can work with you.



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