**Primary Perspectives**

**Edition 2. Spring 2018.**

This short newsletter is published once a term bringing you recent policy news, reports, research updates and the latest developments in Primary education. I hope you enjoy it!

**Key headlines**

* SEND. The Education Committee launches a new Inquiry
* Primary places. Places for those starting primary school in September are confirmed
* Changes to the Professional Skills Tests for QTS now mean the limit of 3 test attempts is being removed. As of February 2018 applicants will have unlimited attempts to achieve a test pass.
* School Standards Minister Nick Gibb announced that a number of primary schools will start trialling the short, online multiplication tables check for eight and nine year olds prior to a voluntary rollout later this year and compulsory use in 2019/20

**Policy**

**Consultation document from DFE on proposals to strengthen QTS**

Key points in the consultation include:

1.The strength of current ITE provision is explicitly recognised. 2.  QTS will be awarded after two years in the classroom, during which time new teachers will have access to an early career content framework for QTS and stronger mentoring support. 3.   Teachers successfully completing ITE will be awarded ‘QTS (provisional)’, and will have the same employment rates as current NQTs. 4.  The statutory induction period will be extended to two years, with views invited on whether the 10% reduction in the teaching timetable should extend into the second year. 5.  The structured early career content framework will be designed with the profession, including ITE providers. 6.  The early career content might include: subject & curriculum knowledge; evidence based pedagogy; use of and engagement  with evidence; behaviour management; use and understanding of assessment; and SEND. 7.   Whether ITE providers should be able to act as appropriate bodies for the award of QTS. 8.   Encourage teachers to build on Master’s level credits to complete a full Masters award. 9.      Consideration to be given to an explicit CPD entitlement for teachers, and to a personal CPD record. 10.   Options to remove barriers to teachers taking sabbaticals will be investigated, including the benefits of setting up a sabbatical fund.

**Schools**

**The OECD International Early Learning and Child-Well-being Study in England**

The OECD’s International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study (IELS) is a new and innovative study that aims to gather evidence about how to enrich a child’s first experiences of learning. This study will help understanding of how a good early education and home learning environment can boost a child’s development. The ultimate goal of the study is to provide evidence that can improve children’s early learning and overall well-being.

It will tell us more about what helps children learn, the range of things children can do at age five and how their cognitive development, language and numeracy relate to social skills and other aspects of well-being. It will collect information from teachers and parents/carers. The full study is at: <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/iels/about-iels/>

**Curriculum**

The PSHE Association marked the end of the government’s consultation on the status of PSHE by calling on behalf of its various member organisations for the subject to be built around three themes (health and wellbeing, relationships and living in the wider world) and to become a statutory part of the curriculum. It comes at a crunch time for PSHE, with the government considering its status on the school curriculum and ways to raise standards. With statutory relationships and sex education (RSE) due to be introduced from 2019, this briefing outlines why RSE should form part of broader statutory PSHE education for reasons of effectiveness and ease of implementation for schools

**Teacher workforce**

Figures from the Initial teacher training: trainee number census 2017 to 2018 are now published. They show-

         27,895 postgraduate trainees recruited, compared to 26,750 in 2016/17, and 4,815 undergraduates compared to 5,145 in 29016.

         Overall recruitment against TSM target is 90% (80% secondary, 106% primary)

         HEI recruitment up from 44% to 47%, with ‘school-led’ down from 56% to 53%

The full census data giving provider level detail is available via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/initial-teacher-training-trainee-number-census-2017-to-2018>

**Research snippets**

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| [**Conversation is more important than word exposure for language development**](http://instituteforeffectiveeducation.cmail20.com/t/d-l-otktkhk-plrajtiy-h/) |

N[ew research](http://instituteforeffectiveeducation.cmail20.com/t/d-l-otktkhk-plrajtiy-k/) published in *Psychological Science* shows that children gain greater language development and pre-literacy benefits, the more that caregivers engage them in conversational turn-taking-like exchanges. In other words, talking with children is more beneficial than talking to children.

In the first study to link children’s language exposure to neural functioning, functional MRIs showed that children who experienced more frequent conversational turn-taking with caregivers while listening to stories demonstrated greater activity within the part of the brain in charge of language processing than children who didn’t interact in as many conversational exchanges. These same children also scored higher than their counterparts on standardised language assessments measuring vocabulary, grammar, and verbal reasoning. This was true regardless of children’s socioeconomic status or parental education. Audio recordings of 36 four- to six-year-olds from various socioeconomic backgrounds measured the number of words children said, the number of words they heard and the number of conversational exchanges in which they engaged for two days. All children were native English speakers who did not significantly differ by behaviour, language exposure, or neural measures on standardised tests. When these measures were compared to the brain scans, researchers found a positive correlation between conversational turns and brain physiology.

Full text is available at <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0956797617742725>

**Speeches**

The Prime Minister’s [17th April Commonwealth Heads speech](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speaks-at-the-commonwealth-joint-forum-plenary-17-april-2018) pledged Government support for quality education and apprenticeships for young people

**Quote of the month**

“There is no research evidence that four year olds can be reliably tested” – the Coalition of parents and teachers rounds on the new baseline assessments for Reception

**Jonathan Doherty (Chair of NaPTEC)**