

# Primary Perspectives

Edition 6. Summer 2019.

*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. Have a great summer everyone!*

## Key headlines

- **Baseline assessment.** The Government has confirmed the arrangements for this September's pilot
- **Ofsted Chief Inspector repeats call for outstanding school exemption to be lifted as more schools lose top Ofsted grade.** Only 16% of outstanding primary and secondary schools inspected this academic year retained their top Ofsted rating
- **Requires improvement.** The Education Secretary confirmed that the government was simplifying the system for identifying schools in need of support, by scrapping measures such as 'floor' and 'coasting' standards from this September and using Ofsted's 'requires improvement' as the only measure
- **Ofsted have announced that the new Inspection framework will move away from headline data to look instead at how schools are achieving these results and whether they are offering a curriculum that is broad, rich and deep, or simply rich and deep, or simply teaching to the test"**

## Policy

### Timpson Review of School Exclusion

Former Education Edward Timpson has published his landmark school exclusions review. The report identified excellent practice across the school system. However, it also found too much variation in exclusion practice and made 30 proposals for change. Chief among these included making schools responsible for the educational outcomes of the students they exclude, reducing the period of fixed-term exclusions and strengthening alternative provision and the role of local authorities.

Read the full report at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/807862/Timpson\\_review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf)

## Early Years

### **Calls for more men to work in the early years**

More men are to be encouraged into careers in nurseries and early years settings in a new project to provide more diverse role models for children before they start school. With men making up just 3% of early years staff in England, the project aims to break down the barriers that prevent men entering careers in children's early education, Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi announced a £30,000 grant to support the scheme to help provide more male role models for children in the early years. The grant will also help fund a national conference to further promote early years careers to fathers, other men with experience of looking after children and those with an existing interest in improving children's early education. The Fatherhood Institute's project forms part of the government's wider efforts to give children the best start in life by strengthening the early years workforce, including the Department's £20 million Professional Development Programme targeted at better training for early years staff working in more deprived areas. This contributes to the Education Secretary Damian Hinds' ambition to halve the percentage of children who leave reception without early communication or reading skills, through supporting the early years sector and building on the national mission to support children's learning at home.

## Curriculum

### **Relationships Education**

Final guidance on Relationship Education has now been published. It is alongside the creation of a new working group to support the formal introduction into schools from 2020. Reda the full report at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/805781/Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf)

### **Teaching online safety in school**

The government has published new non-statutory guidance to help schools teach pupils about the dangers of online activity through classroom activities.

Read this at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/811796/Teaching\\_online\\_safety\\_in\\_school.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/811796/Teaching_online_safety_in_school.pdf)

## Teacher workforce

### **New International research on teacher identity**

The research was undertaken by CUREE and commissioned by Education International. EI commissioned this project with the aim of examining how teachers' professional identities are constructed in seven contrasting education systems. CUREE, in partnership with EI, identified jurisdictions where local studies might reveal broader patterns in the way different education systems operate to construct teachers' professional identities. The jurisdictions - Berlin, Chile, Kenya, Ontario, Scotland, Singapore and Sweden were selected.

Teachers' professional identities are dynamic and vary across individuals and cultures. Key to this is the way teachers perceive themselves as individuals who carry out their role effectively and have the ability to influence the learning of students, other teachers and leaders. In this project, despite extensive social and cultural differences, CPD consistently featured as core to such perceptions and thus to teachers' professional identities. It emerged too as an important contributor to teacher recruitment, retention, perceived status and effectiveness.

Full report : [http://www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/%5Bsite-timestamp%5D/2019 EI Research Constructing Teachers Professional Identities final.pdf](http://www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/%5Bsite-timestamp%5D/2019%20EI%20Research%20Constructing%20Teachers%20Professional%20Identities%20final.pdf)

## Curriculum

### **Understanding maths anxiety**

Research conducted by the Centre for Neuroscience in Education at the University of Cambridge examined the maths performance of more than 2,700 primary and secondary pupils in the UK and Italy who were screened for maths anxiety and general anxiety. Researchers then worked one-to-one with the children in order to gain deeper understanding of their cognitive abilities and feelings towards maths using a series of cognitive tasks, questionnaires, and interviews.

Emma Carey and colleagues found that a general feeling that maths was more difficult than other subjects often contributed to feelings of anxiety about the subject, and that teachers and parents may inadvertently play a role. Girls in both primary and secondary school were found to have higher levels of both maths anxiety and general anxiety.

Pupils indicated poor test results, or negative comparisons to peers or siblings, as reasons for feeling anxious. Secondary school pupils also indicated that the transition from primary to secondary school was a cause of maths anxiety, as the work seemed harder and there was greater pressure on tests and increased homework.

The report sets out a series of recommendations, including:

- *Teachers should be aware that maths anxiety can affect pupils' maths performance.*
- *Teachers and parents need to be aware that their own maths anxiety might influence pupils' math anxiety.*
- *Teachers and parents also need to be aware that gendered stereotypes about maths ability might contribute to the gender gap in maths performance.*
- *Reducing classroom pressure and using methods like free writing about emotions before a test could help to alleviate maths anxiety.*

Full report is at:

<https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1810/290514/Szucs%2041179%20-%20Main%20Public%20Output%208%20March%202019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

## Research

### How engaged are teachers with research?

A research briefing published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) looked at what progress has been made in embedding evidence-informed practice within teaching in England. As part of the brief, researchers from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) summarised findings from a nationally representative survey of 1,670 schools and teachers. The results of the survey suggest that:

1. ***Research evidence continues to play a relatively small role in influencing teachers' decision-making.*** Eighty-four percent of those surveyed said that their continuing professional development was based on information other than academic research.
2. ***Most teachers report that their schools offer supporting environments, which enables evidence-informed practice to flourish.*** Seventy-three percent 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that their school provided a positive culture for professional development and evidence use.
3. ***Teachers report generally positive attitudes towards research evidence, despite the fact that research evidence had only a small influence on their decision-making.***

Read the report is at:

[https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Evaluation/Teachers\\_engagement\\_with\\_research\\_Research\\_Brief\\_JK.pdf?dm\\_i=4R3K,5SPO,10I06Y,KYT2,1](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Evaluation/Teachers_engagement_with_research_Research_Brief_JK.pdf?dm_i=4R3K,5SPO,10I06Y,KYT2,1)

## Does school entry age matter?

Children in the UK usually start primary school in the academic year in which they turn 5. However, because entry rules vary across local authorities, some schools may defer entry for children born later in the year until the second or third term. A study by the Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration at University College London looked at what impact an earlier versus later entry into Reception has on pupils' cognitive and non-cognitive skills up until age 11. Christian Dustmann and Thomas Cornelissen analysed information on more than 400,000 children born in 2000-01 who attended state schools in England and whose records are included in the National Pupil Database.

The researchers found that receiving an extra month of schooling before age 5 increases test scores in language and numeracy at ages five and seven by about 6–11%. But by age 11, the effects on test scores have largely disappeared. For boys from low socioeconomic backgrounds, the benefits of an earlier school entry are even greater. An additional term of schooling before age five reduces the achievement gap between boys from low and high socioeconomic backgrounds at age seven by 60-80%.

## Quote of the month

“Just because a number is written on a spreadsheet doesn't make it gospel” – Ofsted Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman on the dangers of spreadsheet fixations

## And let's finish with some numbers.....

**78%** How many pupils excluded from mainstream schools in recent years either have special needs or qualify for free school meals

**19%** The number of pupils in state funded schools in England at the start of last year who had English as an additional language

**21%** How many children aged 7-16 and with a higher proportion of girls, thought they weren't clever, according to new research from GL Assessment

**32% and 70%** How many primary and how many secondary pupils fail to get their recommended nine hours a night of sleep

**Jonathan Doherty  
(Chair of NaPTEC).**