

# Primary Perspectives

Edition 7. Autumn 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 Xmas!*

## Key headlines

- The UK is ranked 14<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> for reading, science and maths respectively in the latest PISA test results
- University teacher educators urge teaching to become an 'all Masters profession' to boost recruitment, retention and performance.
- All main parties have produced manifestos covering education in the run up to the Election

## Policy

This newsletter was written ahead of General Election day voting and has no allegiance to any one party. Brexit aside, all parties have a core interest in education and have statements to that effect in their manifestos. Labour will put a National Education Service (to replace OFSTED) at the heart of plans for change. Plans include an end to high stakes testing; scrapping KS2 SATS and baseline assessment; returning to a broader curriculum and introducing an Arts Pupil Premium to fund arts education for every primary school child. The Conservatives continue the drive for improving standards and schools; boost OFSTED; raise teachers' starting salaries ; build 100 Free schools each year and create 250,000 extra childcare places during the holidays for primary age children. Lib Dems want to introduce a 'curriculum for life' in state funded schools; replace SATS with moderated teacher assessments; recruit 20,000 teachers; provide free childcare from 9 months for working parents and invest in Children's Centres to support families.

We await more changes to the landscape ahead!

## Manifestos

- [Headteachers' manifesto](#). The Headteachers' Roundtable published its election manifesto, listing five asks covering teacher recruitment and retention, long-term financial investment, support for high needs, reform of the accountability system and the need for increased trust.

- [Chartered College manifesto](#). The Chartered College of Teaching launched its election manifesto, highlighting four goals including improved teacher CPD and job satisfaction, clearer career paths and greater use of research evidence
- [Teach First manifesto](#). Teach First added its election manifesto, calling for increased five-year funding plans, starting salaries for teachers of £30,000 and fair access to schools

## Teacher workforce

The Teacher Wellbeing Index 2019 is a published report which benchmarks educational professionals' mental health and wellbeing. Its findings are quite alarming:

72% of all educational professionals described themselves as stressed in teaching. 84% for senior leaders.

74% consider the inability to switch off and relax to be the major contributing factor to a negative work/life balance

34% of education professionals have experienced a mental health issue in the past year

78% of all education professionals have experienced behavioural, psychological or physical symptoms due to their work

71% of education professionals cited workload as the main reason for considering leaving their jobs

57% of all education professionals have considered leaving the sector over the past two years due to pressures on their health and wellbeing.

Read the full publication at

[https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/sites/default/files/teacher\\_wellbeing\\_index\\_2019.pdf](https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/sites/default/files/teacher_wellbeing_index_2019.pdf)

## School Exclusions

There has been a substantial rise in the number of school exclusions over the last five years. A new report by JUSTICE called Challenging School Exclusion has been published and reports on this. Read the full report at: <https://justice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Challenging-Report.pdf>

## Curriculum

A new non-statutory guidance to schools on character education and development for pupils was published last month by the DfE. It is intended for use by school leaders and teachers when considering the rationale for character education and some wider aspects of personal development, and the practicalities of provision and delivery. Six character benchmarks summarise the most important features of good provision for character education in it and are intended to assist schools in evaluating their own work and planning for development. Access this at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/849654/Character\\_Education\\_Framework\\_Guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/849654/Character_Education_Framework_Guidance.pdf)

## Research

### Digital feedback in Primary Maths

The Education Endowment Foundation has published an evaluation of Digital Feedback in Primary Maths, a programme that aims to improve primary teachers' feedback to pupils using a tablet application called Explain Everything. The app allows teachers to provide pupils with digitally recorded feedback on a tablet, rather than written feedback. Pupils have the opportunity to review their feedback and develop their work further. By improving teachers' diagnostic and feedback skills when teaching maths in primary schools, the intervention aims to ultimately improve pupils' outcomes in maths.

To estimate the impact of Digital Feedback on maths achievement, the evaluation used a randomised controlled trial involving 2,564 pupils in 108 classes across 34 English primary schools. While the intervention took place in each school, classrooms were randomly assigned to the treatment or control group, which carried on with business-as-usual teaching. The results of the evaluation found no evidence that pupils taking part in the programme made more progress in maths, on average (effect size = -0.04), than the control group.

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

383,777. The number of children in the UK who do not own a book of their own. Figures from the Children's Literacy Trust.

1 million. The number of pupils in England in class sizes of 31 or more. National Education Union.

£186 million. The amount spent so far on Free Schools which have subsequently closed.

33% of teachers work more than 51 hours a week on average. 68% for senior leaders.

**May I take this opportunity to wish the Committee and all our NaPTEC friends a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year!**



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