

Primary Perspectives

Edition 11. Spring 2021. Covid-19 edition 3.

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

This is the third special Covid-19 edition. I hope you enjoy it.

Lessons from Covid-19

Covid-19 crisis has tested education systems in unprecedented ways. In a report from the Education Development Trust, Tony McAleavy and colleagues summarise lessons from the pandemic. These lessons are drawn from a global review of evidence and policy throughout school closures and plans for reopening around the world, with a particular emphasis on examples of good practice. There are lessons to be drawn from the experiences of countries around the world: lessons to ensure that 'building back better' is an effective, evidence-informed undertaking. They identify ten lessons to inform planning for education recovery:

1. The crisis has reinforced the need for adaptive, agile policymaking.
2. Meeting the equity challenge depends on data, detail and deliberate action.
3. The best external support for teachers comes from other teachers.
4. School leadership matters.
5. Without effective assessment for learning, it is impossible to meet the needs of individual students.
6. Great teaching and learning are not enough: schools need to address the wellbeing of students and teachers.
7. Access to technology is necessary but not sufficient: many teachers urgently need training in digital pedagogy.
8. Technology solutions must be accessible – and include a no-tech safety net.
9. Parental and community resources must be harnessed to support learning.
10. Effective support for girls must be prioritised in plans for reopening and learning recovery.

Read the report at: [Learning Renewed: ten lessons from the pandemic - Education Development Trust](#)

Early Years

The DfE have confirmed that the reforms to the EYFS will be rolled out nationally from September 2021. The new EYFS statutory framework has been published and legislation laid in Parliament. This is the revised and final EYFS framework that all registered nurseries, childminders, schools and pre-schools in England must follow from 1 September 2021.

Non-statutory guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage developed by the Early Years Coalition has been published. Available at: [Birth To 5 Matters – Guidance by the sector, for the sector](#)

SEND

The Council for Disabled Children and Whole School SEND have published a new guide aimed at SENCOs, leaders, class teachers and practitioners to support their work in preparing children and young people with SEN and disabilities for the next stage of their learning and development and into adulthood.

The Government have announced children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or requiring alternative provision in England will benefit from a £280 million investment. Councils will receive the funding to create new places in schools, academies, colleges and early years settings. The funding will improve existing provision to create modern, fit-for-purpose spaces suited to a wider range of pupil needs.

Reading and Maths attainment

The Education Endowment Foundation has published interim findings from a study assessing the extent to which Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment in reading and maths were impacted by partial school closures during the first national Covid-19 lockdown, and particularly the effect on disadvantaged pupils. Findings suggest that primary-age pupils have significantly lower achievement in both reading and maths as a likely result of missed learning. In addition, there is a large and concerning attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils.

This study is one of the first to provide robust insights into the extent of learning loss that might have occurred as a result of partial school closures. Overall performance in both reading and mathematics in autumn 2020 was found to be significantly lower compared to the 2017 cohort, with pupils, on average, making two months less progress in both subject areas compared to the standardisation sample. Worryingly, the study finds that "a very large number of pupils were unable to engage effectively with the tests". The study also found a large gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils. For both reading and maths this gap is estimated to be the equivalent of seven months'

learning. While both calculations indicate a large gap, the results, expressed in terms of months of learning, should be interpreted with caution.

Read the full report at [EEF Publishes Interim Assessment Results on Primary-Age Pupils in Reading and Maths - NFER](#)

Teachers' wellness

A new report published by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), showed that the first lockdown in March 2020 led to a decrease in the well-being of teachers – with a rise in distress, anxiety and lower levels of happiness and life satisfaction, compared to pre-pandemic levels. However, the new data highlights that the lower level of well-being among teachers was also experienced by similar individuals in other professions.

The Teacher Labour Market Annual Report 2021, authored by Jack Worth and Henry Faulkner-Ellis also highlighted how the relative 'recession-proof' feature of teaching has led to a surge in the number of people applying to enter the profession. The report found that the teaching profession, having relatively high job security compared to an uncertain wider labour market, led to increase in applications to ITT in 2020 and 2021.

Other key findings highlighted in the report include:

- The number of teachers leaving the profession is likely to remain lower than previous years in 2021, further bolstering short-term teacher supply.
- Anxiety among both teachers and similar professionals began to rise in the late summer and autumn as Covid-19 case numbers began to rise.
- During the autumn term, in which schools were fully open to pupils, full-time teachers' working hours rose to around 46 hours per week, significantly more hours than the 41 reported by full-time similar professionals during the same period.
- The pandemic has led to a reduction in capacity for school-based training placements, just as more trainees enter ITT. There are more trainees in the ITT system in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20.
- Teacher pay freezes are unlikely to be sustainable in the medium term as the wider labour market recovers. While the immediate threat of a teacher supply crisis appears to have declined due to the Covid-19 impact of increased recruitment and retention, this is likely to be short-lived.

Read at [teacher labour market in england annual report 2021.pdf \(nfer.ac.uk\)](#)

Behaviour Hubs

School leaders with outstanding records on behaviour were selected to support other schools as part of £10 million Behaviour Hubs programme. Designed to support schools struggling with poor discipline, training through the Behaviour Hubs for the first group of participating schools will commence from the start of the summer term, at a time when pupils may need extra support from their schools to re-engage with education following the pandemic.

Lead schools and MATs will work closely with the schools they are supporting to diagnose what could be improved, develop and launch new behaviour approaches and policies and provide ongoing mentoring and support. These lead schools selected have shown that good discipline overwhelmingly results in the best Ofsted ratings and overall outcomes for their students, and have demonstrated their capacity to support other schools. The programme will run on a termly basis, with lead schools and MATs forming hubs with a different two supported schools each term. The programme will expand next year, with further lead schools and MATs appointed to support more schools to help reach the target of 500 supported schools over the three-year programme.

Read at [Behaviour experts to support schools with poor discipline - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/behaviour-experts-to-support-schools-with-poor-discipline)

Pupil Premium

According to the NAHT, the £6,000 average funding allocated to primary schools, through the government's "recovery premium", has been wiped out for many schools due changes in how the government calculate the number of children eligible for the premium. Given the financial pressures which schools face as a result of the pandemic, anything which reduces the potential funds available to schools, particularly funds which schools had been expecting to receive, will make their jobs even tougher.

While schools normally report the number of eligible pupils to the government in January, for the 2020/21 academic year this information was collected in October. This means any children who became eligible for the pupil premium between October and January will not receive any extra funding until next year.

10 years on for Free Schools

A report examining the impact free schools have had since the introduction of the programme in 2010 has been published today by NFER. The report provides an insight into the performance of free schools, parental choices and the demographics and supply dynamics of the teacher workforce. While the first 24 free schools opened their doors in

September 2011, the number of free schools today stands at over 550. By January 2019, the number of pupils being educated in a free school had reached the 100,000 mark. Key findings from the report include:

- The proportion of free schools judged outstanding by Ofsted was much higher than in other schools.
- Free school pupils were not typical of the wider pupil population.
- Attainment outcomes were mixed in the primary phase.
- Free schools continued to attract interest from parents.
- Popularity increased relative to nearest neighbouring schools.
- Teachers were not representative of the wider teacher workforce.
- Teacher retention in free schools was lower than in other schools.

Read the full report at [Free Schools: The Formative First Ten Years - An Analysis of the Impact of Free Schools Since 2010 - NFER](#)

Safeguarding

Ofsted has published plans for a review into safeguarding policies and practices relating to sexual abuse in state and independent schools and colleges.

The review was announced after anonymous testimonials of sexual abuse were published on the website 'Everyone's Invited'. It will seek to find out whether schools and colleges have appropriate safeguarding processes in place. It will also consider whether current guidance is understood by schools and colleges, and whether it is sufficient to help them respond effectively to allegations. The review will look at whether schools need further support in teaching about sex and relationships, and whether current inspection regimes in state and private schools are robust enough around the issue of sexual abuse. It will also consider how well schools are working with local multi-agency safeguarding partners.

See [Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has published guidance for early years education and childcare settings, offering practitioners top tips on how to protect their devices and data from cyber incidents. The guidance, which has been produced in consultation with stakeholders, covers topics including setting up strong passwords on devices and accounts, how to communicate with families safely and dealing with suspicious messages.

Access the guidance at [Early Years practitioners: using cyber security to protect... - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)

I hope you and your family remain safe and well in these unprecedented times and a sincere thanks to all teachers, parents and carers

**Jonathan Doherty
(Chair of NaPTEC)**