



Autumn 1/2 TERM UPDATE 2018

Ofsted Updates

Speech from the Chief Inspector

In a recent speech by Ofsted's Chief Inspector, Ms Spielman acknowledged that the current inspection model has contributed to excessive workload in some schools, much of which falls on classroom teachers. When it comes to assessing a school, Ofsted should complement, rather than intensify, performance data. Ofsted should reward school leaders who are ambitious for their pupils, rather than those who jump through hoops. Therefore, the new framework for September 2019 will place greater emphasis on the substance of education, and actively discourage unnecessary data collection. Key points from the Chief Inspector's speech include:

- Too much emphasis has, for a long time, been placed on outcomes, placing too much weight on test and exam results when Ofsted considers the overall effectiveness of schools. The cumulative impact of performance tables and inspections, and the consequences that are hung on them, has increased the pressure on school leaders, teachers and indirectly on pupils to deliver perfect data above all else.
- Ofsted's curriculum research, and a vast amount of sector feedback, have told Ofsted that a focus on performance data is coming at the expense of what is taught in schools. Ofsted's new focus will change that, bringing the inspection conversation back to the substance of young people's learning and treating teachers as experts in their field, not just data managers.
- The Chief Inspector announced a proposed change to the judgements that will be awarded under the new 2019 framework, all of which will be subject to consultation:
 - A new judgement for '**quality of education**'. This will replace the current 'outcomes for pupils' and 'teaching, learning and assessment' judgements with a broader, single judgement.

This new judgement will allow Ofsted to recognise primary schools that, for example, prioritise phonics and the transition into early reading, and which encourage older pupils to read widely and deeply. It is also argued that the new judgement will make it easier for secondary schools to offer children a broad range of subjects and encourage the take up of core EBacc subjects at GCSE, such as the humanities and languages, alongside the arts and creative subjects.

At the same time, Ofsted will challenge those schools where too much time is spent on preparation for tests at the expense of teaching, where pupils' choices are narrowed, or where children are pushed into less rigorous qualifications purely to boost league table positions.

- **personal development**
- **behaviour and attitudes**
- **schools' leadership and management**

The 'personal development, welfare and behaviour' judgement in the current framework will be split into 2 distinct areas. This change recognises the difference between behaviour and discipline in schools, and pupils' wider personal development and their opportunities to grow as active, healthy and engaged citizens.

An overall effectiveness judgement will continue to be awarded, and all judgements will be made using the current 4 point grading scale – outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate.

- Ms Spielman emphasised that these proposed changes would not be postponed for a year, as some had argued.
- There would no 'Ofsted preferred' approach to the curriculum. Instead, Ofsted would be looking for an approach that left plenty of space for diversity, but nevertheless makes it possible to recognise and discourage things that just aren't good enough.
- Ms Spielman was of the view that a focus on substance will help to tackle excessive workload within schools, moving inspection more towards being a conversation about what actually happens in schools.
- By shifting the focus away from outcomes, Ofsted hopes to reverse the incentive for schools to put overall results ahead of individual children's needs. These changes will empower schools to always put the child first and make teaching in high disadvantage schools even more rewarding. In turn, this will encourage the best teachers to work in the schools that need them most, rather than those where their career may feel safest.
- Ofsted will launch its consultation on the new inspection framework in January 2019 and unlike previous consultations, views will also be sought on each individual inspection handbook. Further details of the consultation and how to respond will be published early next year.

A Report by the Public Accounts Committee

A recently published report by the Public Accounts Committee looked at the effectiveness of Ofsted in commenting on the quality of education provision, particularly within the framework for one day inspections for good schools. Whilst recognising that Ofsted's budget has been cut significantly in recent years, and the amount it spent on inspecting the schools sector fell by 52% in real terms between 1999/2000 and 2017/18–18, the Public Accounts Committee expressed a number of concerns:

- **It is unacceptable that so many schools are exempt from re-inspection and so have not been inspected for six or more years.**

Schools graded by Ofsted as outstanding are exempt from routine re-inspection, unless Ofsted identifies a particular risk. At August 2017, 1,620 schools had not been inspected for six years or more, including 296 schools that had not been inspected for 10 years or more. It is reasonable to assume that not all of these schools remain at the same level of performance after so many years. In addition, grades awarded under Ofsted's previous inspection frameworks are not fully comparable to more recent grades because the previous frameworks paid less attention to pupil progress. This limits the extent to which parents can use Ofsted grades to compare schools on a like-for-like basis.

Recommendation: The DfE should re-examine the rationale for exempting schools graded outstanding from routine re-inspection, and report back to the PAC on its assessment in December 2018.

- **Ofsted's short inspections do not allow inspectors enough time to make a meaningful assessment of a school's performance or to help schools to improve.**

Ofsted inspects schools previously graded as good through a short, one-day inspection, on average every four years, rather than through a full two-day inspection. This has become the norm as two-thirds of schools are now graded as good. Short inspections inevitably provide less assurance about schools' effectiveness and allow inspectors less time to discuss with schools how they might improve. Ofsted has explained that short inspections involve discussing the school leadership's evaluation of the school's performance and triangulating that with data and some observation of, and discussion about, the school; it acknowledges that this is far short of a full review of all aspects of a school. Shorter inspections provide some assurance to Government and the responsible authorities, such as Governing Boards, that schools meet a certain standard, but they are less about providing advice to teachers and information for parents.

Recommendation: *Ofsted and the Department should review whether the short inspection model provides sufficient, meaningful assurance about schools' effectiveness, and evaluate the costs and benefits of alternative approaches, including carrying out more full inspections. They should report back to the PAC on the findings in December 2018.*

- **Ofsted does not give parents enough opportunity to contribute their views as part of school inspections.**

Ofsted's inspection reports are an important source of information for parents choosing schools for their children. Parents are therefore a crucial audience and they would like Ofsted's reports to reflect their views more. Whilst Ofsted appears to have good intentions to improve how it engages with parents and has held focus groups to explore parents' views about this, the PAC is not convinced that Ofsted yet has concrete plans to turn these intentions into actions.

Recommendation: *In the report to the PAC in December 2018, Ofsted should set out its plans, with specific actions and target dates, for collecting more and better evidence from parents about schools.*

- **Ofsted has struggled to employ enough school inspectors, meaning that it has failed to complete its inspection programme.**

Ofsted has carried out fewer inspections than planned, although performance has improved since 2015/16 when it completed only 65% of planned inspections. In 2017/18 Ofsted completed 94% of is planned inspections. Ofsted states that recruiting and retaining inspectors is one of its top priorities and that it has a programme of work to improve the position, for example by reducing inspectors' workload and improving their training. As only headteachers and deputies whose schools have been graded as good or outstanding can become contracted Ofsted inspectors, this training is not available to teachers in schools that need most improvement.

Recommendations:

Ofsted should write to the PAC in April 2019 with an update on the gap between the numbers of HM inspectors employed and budgeted for, and the turnover rate.

Ofsted should also consider opening up its training to headteachers and deputies working in schools graded as requires improvement and inadequate so that these schools can benefit in the same way as schools that are performing well.

- **Ofsted does not make the most of its unique position to use intelligence from inspections to lead change and be a force for school improvement.**

HM's Chief Inspector has a statutory role to advise the Secretary of State for Education on the quality of schools. Her independence and status as the head of a non-ministerial government

department puts her in an ideal position to speak freely, without fear or favour. Inspectors are on the ground in schools every day, witnessing the challenges that schools are facing and the underlying causes of poor performance. Ofsted should be sharing these insights with the DfE and more widely. The PAC asked the Chief Inspector for her views on the wider issues affecting the school system, including the impact of funding pressures, for example on the breadth of the curriculum, and concerns about pupils' mental health and wellbeing. The PAC expressed its disappointment that she did not provide clearer and more direct answers.

Ofsted has also reduced its school improvement activity in recent years, publishing only two research and analysis reports in 2017, compared with 13 in 2013. Ofsted tells us that it is now expanding its research programme again. For example, it has undertaken research into the curriculum taught in schools, including the subjects which are being dropped, and it has published a report about what schools are doing to combat child obesity.

Recommendation: *The Chief Inspector should write to the PAC by October 2018 with her reflections on the main risks to schools' effectiveness and the systemic causes of poor performance, including the impact of funding pressures.*

- **The system for school accountability and improvement is muddled, leading to confusion for schools and parents, and inefficiency where roles overlap.**

Whilst Ofsted aims to be a force for improvement, it is not responsible for school improvement; that responsibility rests with a school's Governing Board, the MAT or the Local Authority, and ultimately with the DfE. When schools are failing, the Department, through the Regional Schools Commissioners, is responsible for helping them to improve. The PAC asked about the 78 schools previously graded as inadequate where Ofsted did not meet its target to re-inspect within either 18 or 24 months between 2012/13 and 2016/17. Neither Ofsted or the DfE could explain clearly what is in place to improve the quality of education in these schools and who is responsible for making that urgently needed improvement. Given this lack of clarity, the PAC are unclear about the basis for the DfE's decisions about funding for school improvement—the eight RSCs spent £32M in 2017/18 compared with the £44M spent by Ofsted on school inspections.

Recommendation: *As part of its review of accountability, the DfE should make clear where responsibility for school improvement lies. The Department, working with Ofsted, should also assess whether the balance of spending is right between different parts of the system for school accountability and improvement, including between Ofsted and the RSCs.*

- **Ofsted incorrectly reported to Parliament that it had met the statutory target for re-inspecting schools every five years.**

Ofsted has a statutory target to re-inspect non-exempt schools within five academic years of the end of the academic year in which the last inspection took place (primary and secondary schools are exempt from routine re-inspection if Ofsted previously graded them as outstanding). Ofsted stated in its annual report and accounts for 2016/17 that it had met this target in 2015/16 and was on track for 2016/17. However, Ofsted had in fact failed to meet the statutory timescale for 43 schools (0.2%) between 2012/13 and 2016/17. Providing Parliament with incorrect information is a serious matter. The Chief Inspector has apologised for the control weakness that led to the misreporting and committed to correcting the position in Ofsted's annual report and accounts for 2017/18. In 32 cases, the school had expanded or merged with another, and Ofsted had erroneously classified the schools as new; in the 11 other cases, there were exceptional circumstances such as schools which were due to close. Ofsted said that it had put new procedures

in place to make sure that any decision to defer an inspection beyond the statutory target is reported to the Chief Inspector or Ofsted's Chief Operating Officer. If a school provided inaccurate information, Ofsted would be critical. It needs to show that it can meet the same standards as it demands of schools.

Recommendation: *Ofsted should report annually to Parliament, through its annual report and accounts, on how many schools have not been inspected within the statutory target and the reasons why.*

Whilst Ofsted and the Chief Inspector have not yet formally responded to the relevant recommendations within the PAC's report, Ms Spielman has acknowledged that the amount spent by Ofsted on inspecting the school sector fell by 52% in real terms between 1999/2000 and 2017/18 and that as with all of the public sector, Ofsted has had to do more with less. She remained confident that Ofsted inspections provide parents, schools and the Government with the assurance they need about school standards and that this is done in a way that compares very favourably in terms of quality and value for money with school inspection regimes internationally. However, Ofsted has reached the limit in terms of being able to provide that level of assurance within Ofsted's our current funding envelope.

Watch this space for Ofsted's formal response to the PAC report! The full report from the Public Accounts Committee can be read [here](#)

Improving school accountability

Hot on the heels of the Public Accounts Committee report, the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) Accountability Commission has also published a report on [Improving School Accountability](#), which focuses on school performance measures and the role of Ofsted.

The nine key recommendation made by the NAHT Accountability Commission are:

Pupil Performance Data

- Comparative performance data, based on a three-year *average*, is the most reliable data indicator currently available and should be used by Ofsted to inform judgements of school effectiveness.
- The DfE should use a 'Requires Improvement' judgement as the trigger for funded support and as a replacement for floor and coasting standards.

Inspection

- The Commission proposes a new role for Ofsted, focused on identifying failure and providing stronger diagnostic insight for schools that are identified as struggling.
- The DfE should end the exemption from inspection rule for schools previously judged as 'Outstanding' and commit Ofsted to inspect all schools on a transparent cycle of inspection.
- The 'Outstanding' judgement should be replaced with a more robust system for identifying specific excellence within the sector, to increase the take-up of highly effective, evidence-based practice.
- Ofsted should commission research to determine the format and nature of inspection required, in order to provide reliable judgements and reciprocal benefits for schools.

School Improvement

- Existing peer review programmes should be evaluated to identify characteristics of effective practice in order to develop national accreditation arrangements.
- An invitation should be extended to the Chartered College of Teaching, through the Leadership Development Advisory Group, to produce alternative national standards for head teachers that

better reflect the professional behaviours, practice and knowledge required for achieving excellence.

- The DfE should extend the career progression strategy to support recently appointed head teachers in the critical first years of headship.

Both reports come at a time when Ofsted are planning the roll-out of their new inspection framework, due to be implemented from September 2019. With fears expressed that Ofsted are planning large-scale changes without giving teachers and system leaders' time to reflect on or embed the changes, the NAHT believes that Ofsted is at a "cross-road" and should carefully consider the findings of the accountability commission before launching a new system of inspection.

Ofsted's curriculum research

Recent commentary from the Chief Inspector outlined the findings of a second study into the school curriculum where inspectors visited 23 schools, between January and March 2018, rated good or outstanding. Ms Spielman acknowledges that whilst a sample of 23 schools does not provide Ofsted with a full representation of schools across the country or of every different type of school, the sample did allow Ofsted to gain some insight into different approaches to curriculum design and to find common themes amongst the high-performing schools.

Despite selecting the sample schools using the same criteria, most of them had a unique curriculum design which was often related to the school's local context and the range of pupil needs. It was also related to the curriculum approach to which leaders subscribed, and which Ofsted has categorised into three groups, although Ms Spielman emphasised that no value judgements have been made by Ofsted regarding these categories.

Knowledge-led approach

In around a third of the schools, the curriculum reflected leaders' thinking about a knowledge-led approach. The leaders saw the curriculum as the mastery of a body of subject-specific knowledge defined by the school. Skills were generally considered to be an outcome of the curriculum, not its purpose. For instance, one leader described that when children are 'fluent' in knowledge – such as number bonds or 10 times tables – they can then apply them as skills. Another suggested that "the skills are the by-product of the knowledge. The knowledge is the most important thing; that is what we assess against". Knowledge acquisition, therefore, is the aim of this type of curriculum.

Curriculum leaders in these schools were clear that it is for them to decide on the 'invaluable knowledge' that they want their pupils to know as the content of the curriculum, rather than deferring to what the GCSE syllabus or Key Stage 2 tests tend to assess. This often led leaders to focus on in-depth understanding of fewer topic areas rather than surface-level understanding of more content, as part of this mastery approach.

Knowledge-engaged approach

Leaders in half of the schools were what Ofsted have described as 'knowledge-engaged'. These schools were less reliant on curriculum theory than knowledge-led schools. However, knowledge was not absent; it remained a focus, albeit to varying degrees. For instance, some curriculum leaders described that "knowledge underpins and enables the application of skill". However, a few also explained that they wanted children to learn skills alongside knowledge, ensuring that both were explicitly developed. For example, they wanted pupils to learn how to construct arguments and balance evidence alongside a knowledge of historical chronology.

For these leaders, the curriculum was about how they could ensure that pupils can achieve both knowledge and skill. Within these schools, there was also a slightly stronger emphasis on cross-

curricular teaching than in the knowledge-led schools. Leaders described this as important for making the curriculum relevant and meaningful to pupils and for putting knowledge into context.

Skills-led curriculums

Finally, Ofsted categorised a small group of schools as having skills-led curriculums. In these schools, the curriculum was designed around skills, learning behaviours and 'generic knowledge'. Leaders placed an emphasis on developing the skills pupils would need for future learning, often referring to resilience, a growth mind-set and perseverance. These were explicit intentions rather than by-products of the curriculum or developed through extra-curricular activities. Leaders in these schools placed limited value on knowledge within the content of their curriculum. Knowledge was often seen as just disconnected facts. Delivering skills was the priority.

Ofsted observed and highlighted strengths and weaknesses in each of the three approaches. Across all three, Ofsted observed several weaknesses in some leaders' descriptions of their curriculum intent. For example, one headteacher advocating a knowledge-led approach had a clear idea for their curriculum design – knowledge and subjects are important – but this was only spoken about in general terms with no specifics. In a few of the knowledge-engaged and skills-led schools, the curriculum was being conflated with preparation for exams. It was disappointing, for example, to be told by leaders that 'reasoning skills' in a subject were the '5 things you need to know to answer an exam question' or that 'the teaching of facts was unnecessary'. This often led to a patchwork of curriculum fixes being supported that could be contradictory and lacking in coherence. This suggests that inspecting the 'how' as well as the 'what' of curriculum will be important in the new framework.

Nearly all the curriculum experts we spoke to considered their local context and pupil needs when building their curriculum. These were clearly expressed, particularly when schools were in competition with selective grammar schools, in areas with large refugee, asylum seeker or migrant populations and where high levels of deprivation existed. The experts tended to talk about giving their pupils the knowledge or skills that were lacking from their home environments as a core principle for their curriculum and tailored their approach accordingly.

Crucially, these schools did not put disadvantaged pupils onto a stripped-back curriculum. Instead, most of them made strong links between reading and curriculum access. Two secondary school leaders in areas of high deprivation had included Latin and philosophy as subjects at Key Stage 3, of which one had made them compulsory. Primary school leaders also enriched their schools' quality of education with well-planned regular trips to the local area and beyond that were tightly linked to their curriculums. Several headteachers commented in similar terms: "If children have never visited a castle or dug their toes in the sand at the beach, how can they write about these experiences?"

However, in a few schools, the local context appeared to lead to low expectations about what leaders believed their pupils were capable of achieving. For instance, in one school with a large cohort of pupils from deprived areas, leaders were more concerned with 'pupil engagement' than curriculum content. This had led to decisions in the selection of English texts that were more about catering to pupils' interests than enabling progression through the curriculum and deepening and widening their knowledge.

The next phase of Ofsted's research will look into curriculum implementation; the findings from all of its curriculum studies will feed into the upcoming consultation on the new framework, due in September 2019. You can read the Chief Inspector's curriculum commentary in full [here](#).

Governor Vacancies

Discussions with Governance colleagues in different boroughs have highlighted a number of instances where Ofsted Inspectors have made reference, either in the final formal report or at the verbal feedback

stage, of the length of time it has taken/is taking the Governing Board to fill its Governor vacancies. Long term vacancies will only serve to increase the commitment required from and the demands placed on the existing pool of governors, a situation which cannot be effective in the long-term.

Academy Updates

Letter from the Education and Skills Funding Agency Chief Executive

This half term saw the ESFA's Chief Executive write to all Academy Trust Accounting Officers, a letter which was also to be shared with their Trust's Chair. In this letter, the ESFA Chief Executive highlighted four key areas in the 2018 Academies Financial Handbook, which came into effect on the 1st September 2018:

- **Controlling Executive Pay**

Ms Milner highlights that in recent months she has written to a number of trusts challenging them on high pay, in particular those paying a salary over £150K, or paying two or more salaries over £100K, so that the ESFA can see clear evidence underpinning the trust's decisions. The names of those trusts paying at least one member of staff over £150K have also been published in the Academies Sector Annual Report and Accounts.

The 2018 Academies Financial Handbook highlights stronger ESFA expectations about the process for setting executive pay, making it clear that trusts' approach must be transparent, proportionate and justifiable.

Additionally, from this year a trust's Accounts Return will need to report which post holders have annualised full time equivalent pay over £100K. This will include the job role and job description of each individual and whether their role is predominantly curriculum and education leadership, or school business management leadership.

- **Related Party Transactions**

To counteract growing concerns about the level of robust accountability within the academies sector, the ESFA are introducing more robust arrangements to ensure that transactions with related parties remain transparent, receive sufficient oversight and are well managed. From the 1st April 2019 trusts will be required to declare all related party transactions to the ESFA in advance and to seek ESFA approval for those that exceed £20K, either individually or cumulatively.

The Chief Executive also highlighted that it was the role of the Accounting Officer to ensure adequate controls and oversight so that everyone in the trust follows the rules for related party transactions and can be seen to do so. This means having a competitive purchasing procedure that complies with the ESFA's 'at cost' policy, a clear record of the reason for selecting a particular supplier and no involvement by anyone at the trust with a personal interest in the transaction. Trustees have a statutory duty to ensure such conflicts of interest are avoided - breaches are a serious issue.

- **Scrutinising the Budget**

Whilst the AFH has always required trusts to set a balanced budget and prepare monthly financial management reports, the ESFA highlights that the Board also has an important oversight role to play. This year's AFH makes clear that **all** trustees need to see the trust's financial reports six times a year and, in the case of the Chair, this must be every month.

- **Acting on Audit Findings**

Where external auditors make recommendations about a trust's financial systems, it must take appropriate action to put right any shortcomings in the trust's procedures. The ESFA is encouraging trusts to draw maximum benefit from the advice auditors provide as it will help trusts identify areas of financial management and governance that require improvement and may highlight where you are not fully compliant with the handbook

In the ESFA's reviews of trusts' accounts for the period ended 31 August 2017, the main areas of non-compliance raised by auditors continue to be related party transactions, procurement and tendering, financial reporting to managers and trustees and weak independent checks within the trust. The AFH requires that trusts implement a sound internal control framework and, integral to this, carry out regular checks overseen by an audit committee or equivalent, to give assurance to the Board that financial controls are fit for purpose and being complied with. The new handbook requires that you provide the findings from this 'internal audit' work to the trust Board and you may also be asked to supply them to ESFA.

MAT Development

The DfE have published a resource from its 2018 MAT Development Programme so that MATs who have not participated in this year's programme can still benefit and learn from shared practice.

It is intended as a resource that senior leadership teams of Multi-Academy Trusts, including Trust Boards, of any size or stage of development, can use as a tool to help them further develop and improve. The resource consists of a number of developmental questions that executive leaders can consider in relation to the key aspects of a MAT's operations:

- School Improvement and Developing People.
- Governance and risk management
 - Structures and leadership
 - Accountability & compliance
 - Evaluation and challenge
 - Financial governance
 - People
- Finance and School Resource Management
 - Strategy, vision and planning
 - Oversight
 - Skills
 - Curriculum and staffing
 - Allocation of funding across trust schools
 - Budget autonomy/devolution
 - Procurement strategy
 - Managing change
 - Financial accountability and auditing

The resource can be accessed in full [here](#)

Academy Complaints

The ESFA have highlighted that the agency is experiencing an increasing number of complaints regarding an academy's complaints procedure not being compliant with the appropriate standards. These standards are set out in [Education \(Independent School Standards \(England\) Regulations 2014](#)

Schedule 1, Part 7, and set out how a school should draw up its complaints procedure and use it effectively to handle parental complaints.

The ESFA cannot change an academy's decision about a complaint; its role is to make sure the academy handles the complaint properly by following a published procedure.

If a complaint does come through to the ESFA, the agency will check whether the academy has dealt with it properly. The agency will consider complaints about academies that fall into any of the following three areas:

1. Where there is undue delay or the academy did not follow its own complaints procedure when considering a complaint;
2. Where the academy is in breach of its funding agreement with the Secretary of State; and
3. Where an academy has failed to comply with any other legal obligation.

Where the ESFA finds an academy did not deal with a complaint properly, it will ask the academy to look at the complaint again. The ESFA will also make sure the academy's complaints procedure meets the requirements set out in the regulations. If the complaints procedure does not comply, the ESFA will ask the academy to put this right and the agency may seek to enforce its decision under the terms of the Funding Agreement on behalf of the Secretary of State.

The full guidance from the ESFA can be accessed [here](#) and clearly highlights when the ESFA can, and cannot, get involved in complaints about academies.

Submission of Returns

The ESFA continues to highlight its new policy of publishing the names of academy trusts that are late, or do not submit two or more financial returns in each academic year. Trusts are strongly advised to factor in sufficient time for checks and sign off by the deadline for each financial return that needs to be submitted to the ESFA.

Academy Trusts have until the 5th November 2018 to submit, online, their Land and Buildings Collection Tool.

Assessment

Understanding your School's Data

The end of the summer term saw the ESFA publish a guide for Trustees and Governors to support their use of data, both educational and financial, when reviewing school performance, supporting Governors and Trustees to engage and challenge their executive teams to:

- set the right strategic direction;
- improve outcomes for the communities it serves;
- discharge its duties responsibly;
- take proper account of effective use of the tax payer's money;
- ensure probity;
- manage risks and mitigating actions; and
- strengthen decision making, by bringing together information to better understand educational performance and financial stability.

As emphasised by the ESFA's Chief Executive, the guide is not about collecting more information, but about collecting the right information, understanding it, discussing it and using it to inform the Board's actions. This resource can be used alongside the Board's existing approaches to data or help to create a new one.

In bringing together this guide, the ESFA, supported by a group of non-executive directors, have identified a set of key themes (Annex A to the guide) for Boards to use as an evidence base and basis for discussions with the executive team:

- Pupil numbers/attendance and exclusions;
- Attainment and progress;
- Curriculum planning - staffing and class sizes;
- Financial management and governance;
- Quality assurance;
- Safeguarding and well-being; and
- The school community – staff, pupils and parents.

The full guide can be accessed via: [Understanding your data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees](#)

Analyse School Performance: Data Management

The DfE has recently released a data management functionality within the Analyse School Performance (ASP) service. As a reminder, ASP provides school leaders with a detailed breakdown of how schools, and different pupil groups (with a particular emphasis on disadvantaged pupils), have performed in Key Stage 1 and 2 (for primary schools), Key Stage 4 (for secondary schools) and Key Stage 5 (for 16-19 providers).

The functionality within ASP has been amended to allow school named users to create a customised view by removing one or more pupils from their phonics, KS1, KS2 or KS4 data to carry out different "what if" scenarios. This ability to interrogate the data will assist school leaders, including the Governing Board, to better understand underlying trends and any one-offs affecting reported data.

This data management functionality is available for the most recent year's data held in ASP (2017) and will be updated as and when new data becomes available.

Provisional Data on Key Stage 1 Assessments and Phonics

Phonics

More than 4 in 5 pupils (82%) met the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of year 1, a 1 percentage point increase from 2017, and up 25 percentage points since the introduction of the check in 2012. 1,268 schools had at least 95% of pupils achieving the phonics standard in year 1 in 2018, up from 1,076 in 2017.

By the end of year 2, 92% of pupils met the expected standard in phonics, the same proportion as in 2017.

Key Stage 1 (teacher assessments)

At the end of Key Stage 1:

- Attainment in maths at the expected standards increased by 1 percentage point to 76%;
- 75% of pupils met the expected standard in reading, down 1% compared to last year;
- 83% of pupils met the expected standard in science, down 1% compared to last year; and

- In writing, 70% of pupils reached the expected standard with 16% of pupils working at greater depth. However, changes made within the 2017/18 writing teacher assessment frameworks means that 2018 judgements are not directly comparable to those made using the previous interim frameworks in 2016 and 2017. In 2017, 68% of pupils met the expected standard in writing; in 2016, this figure was 65%. Governing Boards will instead want to look at writing attainment in comparison to school targets and expectations.

The full KS1 and Phonics statistical release, showing the breakdown of attainment according to different pupil groups, can be accessed [here](#)

Provisional GCSE results for 2017/18

In 2018, an additional 20 reformed GCSEs graded on a 9-1 numerical scale were sat by pupils for the first time, along with the English language, English literature and mathematics GCSEs which were reformed in 2017. Further reformed GCSEs in other subjects will be phased in over the next 3 years. To ensure all pupils benefit from the reformed qualifications, only the new GCSEs will be included in secondary school performance measures as they are introduced for each subject (for example, only reformed GCSEs in these additional 20 subjects, including sciences and French, German and Spanish will be included in 2018 measures).

The 2018 headline accountability measures for secondary schools are: Attainment 8; Progress 8; attainment in English and mathematics at grade 5 or above; English Baccalaureate (EBacc) entry; and EBacc average point score per pupil – a new measure for this year. Destinations of pupils after Key Stage 4 are also included in the accountability measures.

Key headlines from the statistical release were:

- **The average Attainment 8 score per pupil remained relatively stable in comparison to 2017.**
 - The maximum Attainment 8 score for a pupil taking only GCSE qualifications was 90 in 2018 (87 in 2017). A pupil who achieved two grade 9s in the English and maths slots and six grade 9s across the EBacc and open slots in qualifying subjects, would have a point score of 90.
 - In comparison to 2017, the average Attainment 8 score per pupil for all schools increased by 0.1 points to 44.3 and increased slightly for state-funded schools by 0.4 points to 46.4 in 2018.
- **EBacc entry increased slightly since 2017.**
 - The proportion of pupils entering the EBacc increased by 0.3 percentage points from 2017, with 38.4% of pupils in state-funded schools entering the EBacc in 2018.
 - There was also an increase in the percentage of pupils entering four pillars of the EBacc. In 2018, 46.5% pupils entered four pillars compared to 43.7% in 2017, an increase of 2.8 percentage points, resulting largely from the rise in science and humanities entries.
 - Of those pupils who entered four of the five EBacc pillars, the majority (83.9%) were missing the languages pillar in 2018. Entries to EBacc languages dropped by 1.2 percentage points in 2018 to 46.1%, continuing a falling trend since 2014.
 - Entries to EBacc English and maths were relatively stable in comparison to 2017.
 - Entries to EBacc science and humanities were up in comparison to 2017, increasing by 4.2 percentage points (to 95.4%) and 1.7 percentage points (to 78.3%) respectively.
 - The EBacc average point score (APS) is a new headline measure introduced in 2018. The EBacc APS for all schools was 3.83. For state-funded schools the EBacc APS was 4.03.

- **The percentage achieving the threshold of a grade 5 or above in English and maths increased compared to 2017.**
 - The proportion of pupils achieving the headline measure of grades 5 or above in English and maths was 39.9% for all schools in 2018, increasing by 0.8 percentage points from 2017. In state-funded schools this also increased by 0.8 percentage points to 43.0% in 2018.

The full Key Stage 4 statistical release can be accessed [here](#).

Funding Updates

Teachers' pay grant and school funding

The leaders of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) and the National Education Union (NEU) have written to the Chancellor and the Prime Minister to express their disappointment with the teachers' pay settlement announced in July 2018 (the 3.5% was not universal across all staff), and with the fact that, despite additional funding being allocated through a grant, schools will be required to fund the first 1% of the pay award from their existing, tight budgets.

In the current financial climate, with many schools struggling to balance their budgets, implementing the pay award may be challenging and Governing Boards need to ensure, as soon as possible, that they and their schools fully understand the impact of the cost of the pay award on their budgets and the amount they will receive from the grant.

The DfE will be distributing £187M in additional funds to schools to allow them to meet the cost of the pay award, above 1%, in 2018/19. The funding will be allocated according to the number of pupils in a mainstream setting or number of places for a high needs setting, with some protection for very small schools. There is the risk that some schools may receive more or less than they are expecting depending on how many teachers they have on each pay scale. Details of how the pay award will be calculated has now been published by the DfE and allocations are expected to be published by the end of October, with payments made to schools later on in the Autumn term.

Teacher's Pension Payments

As part of the wider Government review of its public sector pension schemes, schools have been contacted suggesting that contributions will rise to 23.6% from September 2019. This is a significant 7.12 percentage points increase from the 16.48% contribution for the 2018/19 academic year. Whilst the DfE has confirmed that there "will be funding from the DfE for the financial year 2019-20", the General Secretary of ASCL has expressed concern about the lack of concrete proposals for the future, at a time when schools are already facing considerable financial pressures.

Educational Spending in England

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has recently published its first report in an annual series of reports on education spending in England. The analysis looks at different areas of state spending on education, from early years through to schools, further education and skills and finally higher education. Key report findings include:

Early Years

- Government spending on early years education was around £3,200 per a 3 or 4 year old child in 2017/18, equating to £3Bn. In the early 1990s, early years spending was less than £100M in 2018/19 prices. This large increase was the result of the introduction, and subsequent extension,

of the entitlement to free part-time pre-school education for this age group. Spending on the free entitlement for disadvantaged 2-year-olds was about £500M.

- Large spending increases in the past year were driven both by offering more funded hours and by increasing the per-hour rate of funding. Spending on 3- and 4 year-old early education rose by 22% in 2017/18. Much of this increase was the direct result of additional funded hours for working parents under the new 30-hour entitlement. The Government also increased spending per hour by 9% in an effort to incentivise providers to offer the new extended entitlement.
- Including Sure Start and childcare subsidies, total early years spending was c.£5.8Bn in 2017/18. Whilst spending on the free entitlement more than doubled in real terms between 2009/10 and 2017/18, spending on childcare subsidies fell by 13% and Sure Start spending by 67%. As a result, spending on the free entitlement represented a much larger share of early years spending in 2017/18 (60%) than in 2009/10 (29%).

Schools

- Total spending on schools in England represented just under £42Bn in 2017/18 (in 2018–19 prices). This represents £4,700 per primary pupil and £6,200 per secondary pupil. This excludes spending by Local Authorities on central services, as well as spending by special schools.
- Primary and secondary school spending per pupil rose by over 50% in real terms between 2000/01 and 2010/11 and was largely protected in real terms after 2010. The average level of spending per pupil by primary and secondary schools rose by around 5% per year in real terms during the 2000s and was then largely protected in real terms under the coalition government. Spending per pupil fell 4% in real terms between 2015/16 and 2017/18 but will be held constant in real terms up to 2019/20. Spending per pupil remains more than 60% higher in real terms than in 2000/01.
- Total school spending per pupil fell by 8% in real terms between 2009/10 and 2017/18 and will only be about 14% higher in real terms in 2017/18 than in 2003/04. This adds on the additional effect of a 55% real-terms cut in local authority service spending and a real-terms cut of more than 20% to school sixth-form spending per student between 2009/10 and 2017/18. **This total measure is probably the most comprehensive measure of public spending on schools over time.**
- Schools' costs increased more slowly than inflation between 2010/11 and 2015/16 but grew faster than inflation afterwards. Squeezes on public sector pay between 2010/11 and 2015/16 meant that public sector pay per head grew more slowly (6%) than overall inflation (8%). Between 2015/16 and 2019/20 additional employer costs and the ending of the 1% public sector pay cap mean that the IFS expects public sector pay per head to grow faster (11%) than inflation (7%). This will place further pressure on already tight financial budgets.

Further education and skills

- Participation in full-time 16–18 education has more than doubled since the 1980s. The proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds in full-time education rose from 40% in the mid-1980s to 82% in 2017. As a result, the proportion in paid employment without training went down from 21% to 2% and the proportion in other forms of education or training fell from 29% to 12%.
- Total spending on 16–18 education in England was just under £5.8Bn in 2017/18. Spending per student in further education and sixth-form colleges was about £5,700 in 2017/18 while that in school sixth forms was about £5,000. This lower level of spending per student in school sixth forms is a dramatic reversal: in the mid-2000s, spending per student was about £600 higher than in FE and sixth-form colleges.

- 16–18 education has been a big loser from education spending changes over the last 25 years. In 1990/91, spending per student in FE was 50% higher than spending per student in secondary schools, but it is now about 8% lower. Spending on further education fell faster during the 1990s, grew more slowly in the 2000s, and has been one of the few areas of education spending to see cuts since 2010.
- Spending per student aged 16–18 has fallen faster in school sixth forms than in further education since 2010. Spending per student in 16–18 further education fell by 8% in real terms between 2010/11 and 2017/18 and by over 20% in school sixth forms.

The full report from the Institute can be accessed [here](#)

Maintained Nursery Schools

The Government's Children and Families Minister recently spoke to the [speech](#) National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), in which he emphasised the important contribution maintained nursery schools make in relation to closing the attainment gap in early years. Mr Zahawi urged "all councils, all local authorities, not to make premature decisions on the future of these schools at this stage." He also expressed his plans to bring the case to the Government's comprehensive spending review. Research carried out by the London Council in 2017 highlighted that maintained nursery schools in a third of London boroughs face closure within the next two years unless the Government continues to provide financial support. While the Government has previously allocated £60M worth of financial support to maintained nursery schools, such financial support is due to cease in 2019/20.

The Minister's comments come amidst new figures from Early Education which highlight that more than a third of maintained nursery schools have seen a reduction in funding for SEND pupils this year compared to the year before. Four in ten report that SEND funding has decreased since the introduction of the Early Years National Funding Formula. One in six received no additional funding for children with SEND, despite having children eligible for SEND support, and holding or working towards securing Education and Health Care (EHC) plans. On average survey respondents were spending £17,000 more than they received in high needs funding. Other key findings from the Early Education's research report include:

- The 128 schools responding were supporting 2467 children with SEND, representing approximately 15% of children on roll including a mix of those with EHC plans in place (148 children), those for whom the school was helping with the process of securing an EHC (603 children) and those eligible for SEN support (1716 children).
- A quarter of respondents offered specialist SEND provision (411 places across 31 schools, and a further 138 reserved places at 13 schools for children with SEND). This allowed nursery schools to budget from year to year to retain expert and experienced members of staff. However, such funding was being eroded, putting this specialist provision and staff expertise at risk.
- Staff at all levels within the nursery schools had a wide range of specialist qualifications, as well as providing their teams with extensive CPD on supporting children with SEND. They also bought in specialist external expertise such as educational psychologists and speech and language therapists.
- There were reports that increasing numbers of children with SEND were transferring to maintained nursery schools from other providers which could not meet their needs, including both private and voluntary (PVI) providers and primary schools, and demand resulting from a lack of places in special schools.
- Some schools reported that the funding received was no longer sufficient to pay the necessary rates for specialist staff.
- Few Local Authorities were making use of the staff expertise in maintained nursery schools to support the rest of the sector, although many were keen to do more of this work. Where they were providing such assistance, it was usually being done for little or no charge.

- There was little consistency across England as to the amount of funding available to support children with SEND in the early years, the eligibility criteria in place and the complexity of the processes for obtaining it.
- One in six of the schools responding received no additional funding for children with SEND, despite having children eligible for SEND support and others working towards EHCs, or with EHCs already in place.
- Regardless of the availability of funding, maintained nursery schools prioritised the admission of children with SEND.
- At a conservative estimate, schools spent an average of £17,000 more on SEND support than they received in funding in order to meet children's needs but were concerned that the scope for cross-subsidy was reducing significantly.
- The Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) was reported as improving availability of SEND funding by only 4% of respondents; 41% reported that less funding was available and/or administrative processes had become more onerous. Some reported that funding had already been reducing prior to the EYNFF. Issues were raised in relation to lack of SEND funding for 2-year-olds in some areas, and insufficiency of SEND funding for children on the 30 hour entitlement.

The full report can be accessed [here](#)

Music lessons under threat

The Local Government Association (LGA) has warned that the Government's decision not to fund the teacher pay award for centrally employed teachers could leave schools without access to music lessons. Whilst schools will receive a grant to (partially) cover the teachers' pay award later in the autumn term, teachers who are directly employed by councils or other non-school organisations will not be covered by the grant. The LGA reports that there are currently 4,900 centrally employed teachers, the majority of whom are music teachers but also including teachers supporting particular groups of children or teaching within secure units, and that councils will struggle to meet the cost without affecting provision.

The impact on music lessons is particularly concerning given that the subject is already at risk. Recent research published from the University of Sussex, who surveyed almost 500 schools in summer 2018, found that:

- An increasing number of schools were reducing or completely removing music in the curriculum for year 7, 8 and 9 students, resulting in some schools now not offering music as a curriculum subject and in others taught only on an 'enrichment day' once a year.
- The EBacc specifically had a negative impact on the provision and uptake of music in schools (within and beyond the curriculum) with some schools discouraging top set students from taking music at Key Stage 4 because of the EBacc, whilst in others lower ability students were prevented from taking music so they could concentrate on core subjects.
- There was a decline in the number of schools offering GCSE music and other KS4 qualifications with some schools only offering it outside of school hours if at all.
- 15.4% fewer centres offered A Level music in 2018 compared to 2016, and a reduction of 31.7% in A Level music technology.
- There was an increase in the number of music teachers teaching outside their subject area – over 70% cited often doing so since 2016, and a potential rise in redundancies for music teachers in the next academic year, with some responses noting that music teachers were not being replaced when leaving or retiring.

This research further adds weight to Ofsted's concerns about the narrowing of the school curriculum from Key Stage 3 onwards with the focus increasingly on the core subjects,

Sports England to invest in PE teacher workforce skills

Following a successful pilot, Sports England has introduced £13.5M of funding for a teacher training programme, offering free training for 7,000 secondary school PE teachers to help foster a more positive attitude to physical education. The funding for these training programmes will be administered by teaching schools across the country and Sports England is encouraging all schools interested in accessing the funding to contact their local teaching schools alliance (TSA). Sports England states that the aim is to give all schools in England the opportunity to take part by 2021.

News in Brief

Updated Careers Guidance

October 2018 has seen the DfE update its statutory guidance on the provision of careers guidance and access for education and training providers. The Government's careers strategy states that every school and academy providing secondary education should use the Gatsby Charitable Foundation's Benchmarks to develop and improve their careers provision. The updated statutory guidance has been restructured around these Benchmarks with information on what schools need to do to meet each one. Whilst the Gatsby Benchmarks are not a statutory framework, by adopting them, schools can be confident that they are fulfilling their legal duties.

The October 2018 guidance replaces the statutory document published in January 2018. Whilst the updated guidance can be accessed [here](#) key points that the Governing Board should be aware of, include:

- It is an expectation that schools begin to work towards the Benchmarks now and meet them by the end of 2020. An online self-evaluation tool, Compass, is available for schools to assess how their careers support compares against the Gatsby Benchmarks and the national average. Schools should baseline themselves using this tool, consider the opportunities to improve their careers programme based on their results, and track their progress against the Benchmarks over time.
- The Governing Board must ensure that the independent careers guidance provided:
 - is presented in an impartial manner, showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or work option;
 - includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education routes;
 - is guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given.
- The Governing Board should provide clear advice and guidance to the Head on which he/she can base a strategy for careers education and guidance which meets the school's legal requirements, is developed in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks and informed by statutory requirements.
- Every school should have a member of their Governing Board who takes a strategic interest in careers education and guidance and encourages employer engagement.
- The Board must make sure that arrangements are in place to allow a range of education and training providers to access all pupils in years 8-13 to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships, and that a policy statement setting out these arrangements is published.
- From September 2018 every school should appoint a named person to the role of Careers Leader to lead the school's careers programme.
- From September 2018 every school must publish details of their careers programme for young people and their parents:

- The name, email address and telephone number of the school's Careers Leader;
- A summary of the careers programme, including details of how pupils, parents, teachers and employers may access information about the careers programme;
- How the school measures and assesses the impact of the careers programme on pupils; and
- The date of the school's next review of the information published.
- For the above four mandatory requirements of the published information, it is good practice to:
 - Make sure the contact details of the Careers Leader are in a prominent position;
 - Prepare a summary of the careers programme that gives a sense of what the school provides for each year group in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks. It should set out the aims and objectives of your careers programme, a summary of activities and the partners that you work with to deliver them;
 - Consider using destination data and regular feedback from pupils, parents, teachers and employers to demonstrate how you measure the impact of your careers programme;
 - Review the published information on an annual basis, inviting feedback from key audiences.

Safer Recruitment Practices

Governors may have seen some headlines recently about a commercial airline pilot who provided a reference from Jabba the Hut! The applicant in question had lied about his previous experience and provided Desilijic Tiure as his referee. It was only after he had started flying that it became apparent that there was a problem and that Desilijic Tiure has an alias: Jabba the Hut from Star Wars.

Whilst there were no serious consequences, with the issue coming to light before anything tragic happened, it does serve to illustrate the importance of thorough recruitment checks.

In schools the importance of a range of recruitment processes and checks have been identified as having a vital part to play as part of the wider framework to safeguard children. Thorough reference checking is just one aspect. It is a statutory requirement that one member of every recruitment panel has participated in current safer recruitment training, and it is important that those who carry out the follow up recruitment checks fully understand their role.

Safer recruitment training for both governors (9th February 2019, Bernard Weatherill House) as well as for Heads, SLT, SBMs, HR and those involved in recruitment checks (31st January 2019 at the Octavo training suite) is available through Octavo Partnership's Training and Development Programme.

Female Genital Mutilation

Multi-Agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation was updated in October 2018 and can be accessed [here](#). The guidance is directed at, amongst other stakeholders, to the Governing Boards of maintained schools, colleges and academies as well as the management committees of Pupil Referral Units.

The updated guidance has three key functions:

- to provide information on FGM, including on the law on FGM in England and Wales;
- to provide strategic guidance on FGM for, amongst other stakeholders, Governing Boards and PRU Management Committees; and
- to provide advice and support to front-line professionals who have responsibilities to safeguard and support women and girls affected by FGM.

Disqualification by Association

Legislative changes to Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 came into effect on the 31st August 2018. Until then, there had been a requirement for additional checks on whether staff were disqualified from working with children because people who lived in the same house as them, were disqualified from working with children - 'disqualification by association'.

Post the 31st August 2018, the Childcare Act continues to apply to all early years settings (up to and including reception classes in education settings) and to childcare settings for under 8s (this doesn't include education but does include breakfast clubs and after school clubs for the purposes of childcare). However, the disqualification by association provision has now been removed where childcare is provided in non-domestic settings and where safeguarding measures are well observed and followed.

Therefore, schools and academies are no longer required to establish whether a member of staff providing, or employed to work in, childcare is disqualified by association.

Thus, it is very important that schools must not ask their staff questions about cautions or convictions of someone living or working in their household.

Education at the Political Party Conferences

Addressing the Conservative Party Conference, Damian Hinds, the Secretary of State for Education, highlighted the following key policy measures in his speech:

- In acknowledgement of the fact that one third of young people do not achieve a standard GCSE pass in maths, 21 new **centres for excellence in maths** will be established across the country. The aim will be to improve the quality of maths teaching in post-16 institutions, focusing on improving basic maths knowledge and skills for those aged 16 and over. These new centres will form part of the £40M announced in the 2017 Autumn Budget to improve the quality of basic maths provision for low attaining young people over the age of 16 over the next five years.
- 32 schools across England will take a leading role in supporting schools that struggle to teach children to read by **improving the teaching of early language and reading**. The hub schools all have a background of excellent phonics teaching and are distributed to benefit the areas that need it most. Each hub will identify specialist literacy teachers who will get additional training to act as experts in teaching in early language and reading from reception to Key Stage 1. The hub schools will be backed by £26.3M funding.
- The Government will reform training so every teacher is equipped to **manage behaviour**, backed by a £10M investment to support schools to share best practice and back heads who choose to ban mobile phones. The training reforms will mean that all teachers will be shown how to effectively manage behaviour in their first two years in the profession.
- The government will expand the network of schools and colleges across the country that is sharing and developing the best **careers advice** so young people get the guidance and support they need. The number of areas served by these networks, supported by the Careers & Enterprise Company, will double from 20 to 40. The government will also expand the training places available to support new careers leaders in schools and colleges from 500 to 1300.
- £38M is being made available to the first providers of **T Levels** to make sure pupils taking the new technical qualifications from 2020 have access to the equipment and facilities they need.
- A cross-government school **sport and activity action plan** will consider ways to ensure that all children have access to quality, protected PE and sport sessions during the school week and opportunities to be physically active throughout the school day. The action plan will be launched in spring 2019, informed by the first publication of data from the Active Lives Children Survey and will link to the Government's Sporting Future strategy and Childhood Obesity Plan.

It was interesting to note that the Secretary of State's speech did not address the most common issues facing schools, that of balancing the budget and attracting and retaining high quality teaching staff.

Education was also a prominent theme at the Labour Party Conference with the party's educational priorities including:

- ending the forced academisation of schools;
- compelling existing academies to expand in areas of demand;
- allowing Local Authorities to take back failing academies;
- establishing Local Authorities as the Admissions Authorities for all schools;
- banning all related-party transactions – currently permitted, at cost only, under the 2018 Academies Financial Handbook;
- setting out national pay rules, including a cap on CEO salaries;
- ending the free school programme and creating a new wave of co-operative schools for parents or communities wishing to launch or lead a school.

The Labour party has also promised to create a new public service offering free early education for all two to four year olds and reinventing state nurseries as well as announcing plans for a state-funded teacher supply service.

NEU Workload Survey

The National Education Union (NEU) recently published its results of a survey of 11,341 teachers focusing on teacher workload. The NEU argue that their findings clearly demonstrate that the DfE is "still a long way off resolving the issue of workload and unnecessary monitoring in schools."

- 69% of primary school respondents stated that the volume of **marking** they were required to undertake was unmanageable.
- 78% of respondents from secondary schools held the same opinion.
- 66% of primary school respondents and 63% of secondary school respondents felt that the volume of **data collection** which they were required to undertake was again unmanageable.
- The survey also considered **planning** and found that 60% of primary school respondents and 46% of secondary school respondents felt that the volume they were required to undertake was unmanageable.

The triple burden of marking, data collection and planning combined to highlight the continuing heavy teacher workload.

Literacy and Children's Wellbeing

A new report by the National Literacy Trust has considered the link between mental wellbeing, reading and writing enjoyment, attitudes and behaviours. The report is based on the findings from the eighth Annual Literacy Survey of over 49,000 young people aged 8 to 18.

Whilst the report can be read in full [here](#), the key findings include:

- children who are the most engaged with literacy are three times more likely to have higher levels of mental wellbeing than children who are the least engaged - 39.4% vs 11.8%.
- children who are the least engaged with literacy are twice as likely to have low levels of mental wellbeing than their peers who are the most engaged - 37.4% vs 15%.
- children with above expected reading skills are three times more likely to have high levels of mental wellbeing than their peers with below expected reading skills - 40.3% vs 13.1%.
- as children transition from primary to secondary school, their levels of literacy engagement and mental wellbeing both begin and continue to decline.

School Complaints Procedures

It is understood that the DfE is currently producing new statutory guidance for maintained schools, including maintained nursery schools, on School Complaints Procedures. This will replace the *Best Practice Advice for School Complaints Procedures 2016*. The DfE plans to publish the updated statutory guidance later in the Autumn Term, becoming effective from January 2019.

This statutory guidance will support schools and Governing Boards through the provision of clarification around their legal duties when establishing complaints procedures. It will also offer practical advice on issues that can arise during the handling of complaints, and will include model policies, which Governing Boards can tailor for their individual schools.
