

Governance News

**A Termly Newsletter for Liverpool Governors and
Trustees**



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Changes to School Inspections



Ofsted has [announced](#) changes to the inspection processes:

Safeguarding

1.3% of all state schools are currently judged ineffective for safeguarding, and in the last 18 months 12 state schools have been judged good or better in every area apart from safeguarding. This figure has remained broadly the same pre-and post-Covid.

Ofsted and the DfE say that they understand that schools in this situation will want to improve safeguarding quickly and parents will want to know this has been done. So, where a school that would otherwise be good or outstanding is graded inadequate due to ineffective safeguarding, inspectors will now return within three months of the report's publication to carry out a monitoring inspection.

If the school has successfully dealt with safeguarding concerns in that time, this will be recognised through a new inspection report and grading, meaning the school will only have an overall judgement of inadequate for a short period.

The Secretary of State will then be able to decide whether to revoke any academy order applying to the school or withdraw any warning notice issued to an existing academy, and will not have taken any decision pre-empting the re-inspection.

Ofsted also recognises that there is desire among schools for greater clarity about the threshold for effective versus ineffective safeguarding, and the difference between minor weaknesses and more significant issues. This will be set out in the school inspection handbook from September and reflected in inspector training. Ofsted will also communicate directly with schools, through webinars and blogs, to make it very clear what constitutes ineffective safeguarding and the high threshold for reaching this judgement.

Complaints

Ofsted is launching a [formal consultation](#) on significant changes to the complaints system, aimed at resolving complaints more quickly through improved dialogue between Ofsted and providers, reducing the administrative burden on those making a complaint, and increasing transparency in the process.

Information for schools

As set out in another Ofsted [blog post](#), the inspectorate is giving schools more information about the broad timing of their next inspection. Schools will still get one day's notice of an inspection, but the blog gives more clarity about the year they are likely to be inspected. Ofsted is also continuing to engage with all outstanding schools that were last inspected before September 2015 through face-to-face seminars with inspectors.

Inspectors will be clear that it is up to a headteacher to decide which colleagues, or others, they share their inspection outcome with - being aware that judgements are provisional until the report is finalised. Provisional outcomes can sometimes change and shouldn't be published or shared with parents until finalised. This will also now be set out in the covering letter that accompanies draft inspection reports.

From September, when discussing areas of weakness, inspection reports will refer to 'the school' by default, rather than individuals. The contextual information at the end of reports will also be amended to list all those with responsibility for the school.

When will my school be inspected?





The Department for Education has published the results of the [National Behaviour Survey](#) for the academic year 2021-22.

National behaviour survey

Findings from Academic Year 2021/22

June 2023



Summary

School behaviour culture and policy

- In June 2022, **82%** of school leaders and teachers agreed that there was a shared understanding amongst staff in their school of what “good behaviour” means and the majority of pupils (**91%**) agreed that they knew how their school expected them to behave.
- **100%** of school leaders and **98%** of teachers reported that rules were applied fairly to all pupils at least some of the time. However, only **42%** of school leaders and **23%** of teachers reported this happened ‘all of the time’. Overall, **91%** of pupils reported rules were applied fairly to all pupils at least some of the time, with **19%** reporting this happened ‘all of the time’.
- The majority (**90%**) of schools reported systematically recording data on pupil behaviour and **83%** of schools reported using data to inform their approach to managing pupil behaviour.
- Overall, **66%** of school leaders and teachers agreed that parents are supportive of schools’ behaviour rules. However, school leaders were more likely than teachers to agree parents are supportive of the school’s behaviour rules (**79%** vs. **65%**). When asked directly, **89%** of parents agreed that “I am supportive of the school’s behaviour rules”.

School environment and experience

- **92%** of school leaders reported that their school had been calm and orderly ‘every day’ or ‘most days’ in the past week (versus **70%** of teachers). For pupils, **55%** reported that their school had been calm and orderly ‘every day’ or ‘most days’ in the past week.
- Secondary school leaders (**46%**) were more likely to say the school had been calm and orderly ‘every day’ in the past week than secondary teachers (**23%**) or pupils (**16%**).
- When asked how often they felt safe at school, **41%** of pupils said that they had felt safe at school ‘every day’ in the past week.
- Just under half of pupils (**49%**) said they enjoyed coming to school ‘every day’ or ‘most days’ in the past week, with this being lowest for Year 9 pupils at **41%**.

Prevalence and impact of misbehaviour

- In June 2022, **90%** of school leaders said that behaviour was either 'very good' or 'good' in the past week (versus **64%** of teachers). For pupils, **47%** said that behaviour had been 'very good' or 'good'.
- **62%** of school leaders and teachers reported that misbehaviour interrupted teaching in at least some lessons in the past week. Similarly, **67%** of pupils reported that misbehaviour had interrupted their work in at least some lessons.
- On average, teachers reported that for every 30 minutes of lesson time, 6.3 minutes were lost due to misbehaviour. The majority of teachers (**69%**) reported that between one and ten minutes were lost per 30 minutes of lesson time. This was similar between primary and secondary school teachers.
- Overall, **22%** of pupils said that they had been a victim of bullying for any reason in the past 12 months. Among pupils who reported that they had been bullied, the most common perceived reason reported for being bullied was the way they looked (**45%** for those bullied in person; **52%** for those bullied online).

Responding to behaviour

- **94%** of school leaders and teachers felt at least fairly confident in personally managing misbehaviour in their school, with **46%** feeling 'very confident'.
- When school teachers were asked whether the support they receive from senior leaders helps them to manage pupils with persistently disruptive behaviour effectively, **52%** agreed this was the case compared to **29%** that disagreed.
- The interventions most commonly used by schools to manage behaviour were referrals to specialist services (**92%**) and targeted interventions such as mentoring and social/emotional learning (**92%**). These were followed by the involvement of specialised pastoral support staff (**79%**) and removal as a restorative measure (**77%**).



DfE: Data Reports on Schools, Pupils, and Their Characteristics



Department
for Education



Below are some facts and figures from data reports published by the DfE in June:

The number of pupils in schools in England has increased: There has been an increase of 73,800 pupils across all school types from the previous year, to nearly 9.1 million pupils. Increases are seen in the number of pupils in state-funded secondary, AP schools, special schools and also in independent schools, however, decreases are seen in primary schools and nursery schools. This is primarily driven by demographic changes, following a peak of births in 2013, with higher numbers of children reaching secondary age and lower numbers of pupils moving into primary school. The primary population is projected to continue to drop to the end of the projection period in 2030, whilst the secondary population is projected to increase until 2024 then slowly begin to drop (see the Department's [pupil projections release](#)).

Free school meal eligibility continues to increase: 23.8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, up from 22.5% in 2022. This represents over 2 million pupils. 1.6 million infant pupils were recorded as taking a free school meal on census day.

SEND and Education, health and care plans: Just under 1.5 million pupils in England have special educational needs. An increase of 77,000 from 2021. Both the number of pupils with an EHC plan and the number of pupils with SEN support have increased:

- The percentage of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has increased to **4.0%**. The number of children and young people with EHC plans increased to 517,000, as at census day in January 2023, up by **9%** from 2022. This has increased each year since 2010. The most common type of need for those with an EHC plan is autistic spectrum disorder and for those with SEN support is speech, language and communication needs.
- The percentage of pupils with SEN but no EHC plan (SEN support) has increased to **12.6%**.

The number of pupils attending academies (including free schools) has continued to grow, along with the number of academies. While **41.6%** of all schools were academies, over half of all pupils (**54.4%**) were attending an academy. This is due to higher proportions of secondary schools being academies than primary, with typically much higher numbers of pupils. As of January 2023:

- **40.4%** of primary schools are now academies or free schools, accounting for **42.1%** of the primary school population.
- **80.4%** of secondary schools are academies or free schools, accounting for **80.2%** of secondary school pupils.
- **44.4%** of special schools (excluding non-maintained special schools) are academies or free schools, accounting for **41.5%** of special school pupils.

The size of the school workforce has increased but so has the number of pupils and indeed, teacher vacancies:

- There are 468,400 FTE teachers, which is an increase of 2,800 since last year and an increase of 27,000 since 2010 when the school workforce census began.
- There are 281,100 FTE teaching assistants, which is an increase of 5,300 since last year and an increase of 59,600 since 2011 when the census began collecting support staff information.
- The number of entrants to teaching continues to be higher than that of teachers leaving, meaning an overall increase to the number of teachers in England.
- However, the number of teacher vacancies has increased from 1,600 in November 2021 to 2,300 in November 2022. Temporarily filled posts have also increased; from 2,200 to 3,300.



Role of Governing Body In School Food



The governing board are responsible for the provision of school food. It is the statutory responsibility of governors and trustees to ensure the [School Food Standards](#) are being met and [Ofsted](#) are putting a much greater focus on how schools are creating a culture and ethos of healthy eating.

A great school food culture improves children's health and academic performance. Increasing the take-up of school meals is also better for your school's finances. A half-empty dining hall – like a half-empty restaurant – is certain to lose money.

Getting more families to choose school meals may require a cultural change within your school. It means:

- Providing tasty food that looks good and is nutritious
- Creating a positive dining experience
- Getting the price right
- Allowing children to eat with their friends
- And instilling a love of cooking and growing

The headteacher can lead this transformation but they also need support from their governors and leadership team.

The Department for Education recommends that all governors “work with the senior leadership team to develop a whole school food policy that sets out the school's approach to its provision of food, food education (including practical cooking), the role of the catering team as part of the wider school team and the school's strategy to increase the take-up of school lunches.

Food is a great way for your school to engage with and support your local community. You might:

- Reach out to community members to help your school set up cooking and gardening clubs
- Share an allotment with local families
- Invite community members in for lunch or to sell produce at school events.

There are also many national and local authority initiatives which schools can access, including:

- [Change4Life](#)
- [National School Meals Week](#)
- [British Nutrition Foundation Healthy Eating Week](#)

Other initiatives and programmes, to help schools transform food culture and promote healthy lifestyles, are showcased at [What Works Well](#). Your school has a unique role to help children learn and develop good healthy eating habits for life, creating happier, healthier adults of the future.

Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

You should:

- Ensure that school food is included within the remit of one of the governing body's committees as part of the school's wider health and wellbeing strategy
- Ask the senior leadership team to develop and review a whole school food policy which includes a healthy packed lunch, vending and drinks policy
- Check what continuing professional development training is in place for all teachers and support staff to support their knowledge of health and wellbeing
- See how the lunchtime experience contributes to the culture and ethos of the school when making a school visit
- Have a member of the governing body attend school council and School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) meetings
- Ask the SNAG and school council to provide feedback on the quality and enjoyment of school food and overall lunchtime experience

Hold the headteacher to account and support leadership

You should:

- Work through the questions in the School Food Plan's practical guidance with your school leaders, creating a culture and ethos of healthy eating
- Check with the headteacher and catering manager that standards are being met across the whole school day
- Ask how your catering staff are supported and integrated into school life
- Ensure there is enough timetabling, space and practical resources (equipment, ingredients)
- Find out how the school budget and charging policy makes provision so all pupils can access ingredients and resources for cooking

Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure money is well spent

You should:

- Obtain and review meal take up data each term
- Work with your senior leadership team to identify trends and issues and create a plan for increasing take up
- Establish what action you could take to improve the quality and take up of meals
- Ask the senior leadership team and business manager to review the current pupil premium sign-up system and look at good practice to help maximise registrations - you can read the [free school meals guidance](#)
- Ask the senior leadership team and business manager to conduct a review of the current catering contract and ensure the specification is appropriate and that the terms are being met – where they are not being met, establish what improvement action will be taken

The contract specification should include the School Food Standards, Professional Standards, food quality and lunchtime experience.

The [get help buying for schools](#) service is made up of various resources to help you buy goods and services efficiently and compliantly. This is a free advice and guidance service for [state schools](#) which could help to save you money on your existing contracts.

Useful resources

- [The School Food Plan What Works Well](#)
- [DfE's Guidance on School Food for Governors](#)
- [The School Food Plan's Headteacher checklist](#)
- [School Food Standards Guidance document](#)



Preventing Hair Discrimination In Schools



About this guidance

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has released this guidance as part of a package of resources designed to help school leaders foster an inclusive environment by ensuring their policies are not unlawfully discriminatory.

Other resources include:

- [A decision-making tool](#)
- [A video explainer and a case study](#)

The guidance applies to all forms of hair discrimination, although its focus is on race because of the disproportionate impact upon pupils from specific racial groups.

Background

Engagement with key stakeholders, [research](#) and court cases indicate discrimination related to hair or hairstyles disproportionately affects pupils with Afro-textured hair or hairstyles. This is often because of the way some schools' rules relating to hair or hairstyles are designed and implemented. Such rules might be embedded in school uniform or behaviour policies or be stand-alone policies related to hair or hairstyles.

It has also been recognised in [Inclusive Britain: government response to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities](#) that some Black pupils are being discriminated against because of their hair. Discriminating against pupils in relation to or because of their hair may have a negative effect on pupils' mental health and wellbeing. As schools have a safeguarding obligation to protect pupils from race discrimination and bullying, it is good practice for schools to invest in professional development and training for staff in this area.

How can school policies cause discrimination based on hair?

One of the ways in which schools can prevent discrimination is by reviewing their policies and practices to ensure they comply with the Equality Act 2010. For instance, schools may have particular policies or rules related to hair or hairstyles that could result in unlawful [indirect](#) discrimination against pupils with certain protected characteristics, for example:

- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment.

Indirect discrimination can happen when a school applies an apparently neutral policy or practice that puts pupils sharing a protected characteristic (for example, race) at a disadvantage compared with pupils who don't share that characteristic. Such policies are likely to be indirectly discriminatory unless the school can show the policy is [objectively justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim](#). (For more detailed information about what indirect discrimination is, see para 5.20 – 5.39 of EHRC's [Technical Guidance for Schools in England](#).)

Examples of unlawful indirect discrimination related to hair

The following case law examples are real legal cases related to discrimination based on hair. 'Good practice examples' are examples that show how schools can improve their policies and practices to avoid indirect discrimination. Hairstyles worn because of cultural, family and social customs can be part of a pupil's ethnic origin and therefore fall under the protected characteristic of race.

A school policy that bans certain hairstyles adopted by specific racial or religious groups, without the possibility of any exceptions on racial or religious grounds, is likely to constitute unlawful indirect race or religion or belief discrimination. This includes hairstyles such as (but not limited to): head coverings, including religious based head coverings and African heritage head wraps, braids, locks, twists, cornrows, plaits, skin fades and natural Afro hairstyles.

Case law example – race

A school had a policy banning boys from wearing certain hairstyles, including cornrows. A pupil challenged the ban, arguing that exceptions should be made when cornrows were worn for cultural and family reasons. The [court found that the policy was indirectly discriminatory](#).

Family and social customs can be part of ethnic origin and therefore fall under the protected characteristic of race. The school would need to change the policy to avoid being in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

Case law example – race

A school banned 'voluminous' hairstyles as part of its rules related to hair and hairstyles. A student with a natural Afro hairstyle [challenged the school's uniform policy in court](#) as being indirectly discriminatory because of race.

The EHRC secured a legally binding agreement with the school to review and ensure the school's policy was not discriminatory on grounds of race. The school would need to change the policy to avoid being in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

Case law example – race and religion or belief

A school had a uniform policy that banned locks. As locks were a fundamental tenet of a student's Rastafarian beliefs, the student challenged the policy in court as discriminatory on the basis of race and religion or belief. Further to an agreement between the school and the student's family, it was agreed that the school's uniform policy was indirectly discriminatory and the school agreed to review it. The school would need to change the policy to avoid being in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

Good practice example – disability, race and religion or belief

A school has a general (blanket) rule of no headgear on school premises. This could indirectly discriminate against pupils on a number of different grounds, such as:

- Disability (for example, pupils undergoing cancer treatment who wear wigs, scarves or hats)
- Religion or belief (for example, for Muslim pupils who cover their hair or Sikh pupils who wear a turban)
- Race (for example, for Black pupils or pupils with a mixed ethnic background who wear African heritage head wraps).

The school amended its policy to include exceptions on the grounds of disability, race or religion or belief.

Good practice example – sex

A school allows girls to wear their hair long and tied back but boys must keep their hair cut to above the collar. This could constitute indirect sex discrimination because it is unlikely to be objectively justified as ‘a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim’.

The school amended its policy so that there is no difference in hair rules for boys and girls.

How your school can prevent discrimination based on hair

Schools are required to have due regard to the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#). As part of that, it is good practice for schools to provide training for staff on the need to foster good relations and eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment related to hair in order for staff to understand and support compliance with the duty.

Schools can foster equality throughout the year by organising a range of activities – for example, activities that include Black role models and that celebrate Afro-textured hair.

When drafting or reviewing your school’s policy, you can also use the EHRC [decision-making tool](#) to help eliminate any potential discrimination related to hair.

Additional Department for Education resources

- [The Equality Act 2010 and schools: departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities](#)
- [School uniforms: guidance for schools](#)





Cracks In Our Foundations



The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) has published its report [Cracks in our Foundations: Addressing the longstanding attainment gap in England's primary schools](#) setting out an ambitious plan to create an education system which allows all children to secure the foundational skills they need to thrive.

Executive Summary

England's primary school system has a long-standing problem: each academic year thousands of pupils leave primary school without reaching expected standards in foundational skills. These children go on to secondary school ill-equipped to engage in further learning and unable to reach their true potential.

In 2022, two in five pupils (41% completed year 6 without meeting the expected standards in reading, writing and maths (combined). In total, over 275,000 children left year 6 without a secure grasp of foundational skills.

The odds are even worse for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Last year, the majority (57%) of children from disadvantaged backgrounds left primary school without reaching the expected standard in these subjects.

The attainment gap for primary school children now stands at its widest level in a decade. The roots of the attainment gap start in the early years. If we want to improve educational outcomes, we have to start in the first 1,001 days. Many more babies, young children and their families could and should be getting a better start in life. However, we know that inequalities open up early, poverty can scar deeply, and life chances are cut short. The Centre for Social Justice helped to lead the Early Years Commission which set out a radical plan to improve early years provision. This report centres on changes that should be made to improve the life chances of children in primary school.

Unquestionably, outcomes from children have been made worse by the disruption to education following school shut-downs. However, while the pandemic poured fuel on the fire of education inequality, these gaps were evident even before Covid-19 struck. In 2019, a disadvantaged pupil aged 11 was, on average, nine months behind their non-disadvantaged peers. Children living in persistent poverty were a whole year behind.

While the government is ambitious about improving education and life chances for young people, teachers fear that they are not on course to achieve their aims. The idea that **90%** of all children in 2030 will leave primary school reaching these expected standards is a far cry from reality.

Our polling reveals that at the just **40%** of teachers said that they were confident that most of their pupils would meet expected standards in 2023. Even starker, just **17%** of teachers are confident that this will be true for most of their disadvantaged pupils.

Our education system needs to ensure every child leaves primary school with a strong grasp of foundational skills, at the very minimum. Foundational skills are essential for future education, work, and wellbeing.

Summary of Recommendations

Seeing parents as partners in education

Teachers and schools can transform children's lives, but they cannot do so if they work in isolation. Children spend **much** more time at home, with their families, than they do at school and, therefore, how parents support their children's learning at home often shapes their academic success. The report provides a blueprint for greater parental engagement where parents are seen as equals in helping to develop children's foundational skills.

Recommendation 1: The Department for Education should outline a National Parental Participation Strategy

The strategy should create a new duty for multi-academy trusts (MATs) to focus on parental participation and publish parental participation plans. The Department for Education should also set out a structure for parental engagement that targets support towards those who need it most and make clear the responsibilities of other local agencies in achieving this vision.

Recommendation 2: The national strategy on parental engagement should create a duty for all multi-academy trusts and schools to establish parental engagement policies

Trusts and schools should design these policies in consultation with parents and guardians to reflect the needs of local families. There should be an explicit focus on reaching families from more disadvantaged areas and using parental participation to reduce the attainment gap.

Recommendation 3: Introduce a mandatory position of a Pupil Premium governor for all schools

This role is currently recommended to schools, making it mandatory would allow all schools to benefit. This role should also be expanded to include holding the school to account on the extent to which they engage with parents from a disadvantaged background.

Recommendation 4: Pilot scheme of family support practitioners focused on schools in Education Investment Areas

Family support practitioners should be trialled and evaluated. These practitioners would play a key role in supporting families with additional needs which act as a barrier to learning at home.

Recommendation 5: The National Parental Participation Strategy should outline the expectation for schools and Family Hubs to collaborate to provide better support to parents.

The government should commission research on the best ways for Family Hubs to integrate with existing school services and examine the benefits of Family Hubs being colocated on primary school sites. The review of Family Hubs and schools should look at the flexibility in funding models and should make more funding available to support parents and families beyond the early years.

Recommendation 6: The Government should seek to boost the number of parents on family learning courses.

Family learning should become a core part of the Department for Education's plans to tackle the attainment gap and improve literacy and numeracy. Primary schools should partner with Adult Community Education providers to deliver accessible family learning courses colocated on primary school sites.

Fixing the damage of Covid

The school climate and challenges facing 'Generation Covid' are significantly different to those that were being grappled with prior to school shut-downs. Children's grasp of foundational skills has been damaged by the impact of lockdowns and disruption to learning.

The report explores some of the key mechanisms for supporting children to catch up on lost learning over the pandemic and also to repair the damage caused by school shut-downs.

Recommendation 7: The Department for Education should appoint 2,000 school attendance practitioners to address the underlying causes of school absence and remove the barriers to engagement for severely absent pupils.

Funding for this proposal could be derived from the Supporting Families programme and the additional investment given to Education Investment Areas to tackle issues including severe absence.

Recommendation 8: The Department should refocus the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) to focus on disadvantaged pupils who have been disproportionately affected by the disruption to schools over the pandemic.

The Department should review how schools are using the funding allocated via schools-led tutoring to ensure that it is being spent on additional tutoring. The Department should also reinstate targets for the number of children eligible for pupil premium accessing the NTP.

Recommendation 9: Schools should introduce an Enrichment Guarantee, offering weekly enrichment activities for all pupils.

The Enrichment Guarantee could be trialled in primary schools across one local authority before being scaled up. Given that capacity constraints are often a key barrier for schools who struggle to set up enrichment programmes, the government should look at the role of community groups and voluntary organisations in delivering the extra-curricular activities.

Strengthening the school system

Getting the right high-quality staff into schools is essential if we want to improve young people's foundational schools. At school-level, high-quality teaching is the most important factor in improving pupil's attainment followed by strong leadership.

The report makes the case for a stronger school system which delivers high-quality teaching for all pupils and delivers targeted support for those who need it.

Recommendation 10: The Department for Education should explore the feasibility of introducing an undergraduate level Degree Apprenticeship for primary school teachers.

Schools would be able to use existing Apprenticeship Levy funding to invest in existing staff members and to develop teaching support staff who may not have an undergraduate degree.

Recommendation 11: The Department for Education should introduce a ring-fenced fund for continuing professional development (CPD) focusing on improving teacher's understanding of how to develop foundational skills in the classroom.

Schools should be expected to publish details about how the fund is spent and how they use this funding to focus on improving outcomes for all pupils, including children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Recommendation 12: The Department for Education should review the free school meals eligibility threshold and the academic outcomes of children by the length of time that they have been eligible for free school meals.

The Department should consider an uplift in the threshold for free school meals eligibility and reweighting Pupil Premium to provide additional support for children living in persistent poverty.

Recommendation 13: The Department should outline plans to enable primary school teachers to better identify and provide support for SEND in the classroom.

The Department for Education should provide training for teachers identifying and supporting SEND in the classroom and should map cold spots of SEND support provision, such as the availability of speech and language therapists.

Recommendation 14: The Department for Education should introduce new National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) for Leading Numeracy and Leading Oracy.

Leading Numeracy and Leading Oracy NPQs would create a rung of strong middle leaders in foundational skills who are equipped to run whole-school foundational skills strategies and develop the knowledge of other teachers.

Recommendation 15: The Department for Education should put oracy education on an equal footing with literacy and numeracy by introducing oracy in the National Curriculum and piloting new Oracy Hubs, in the style of English and Maths Hubs.

The introduction of oracy on the curriculum partnered with a new Oracy Hub network could increase confidence, consistency, and ultimately standards of oracy skills development on a national scale.

1970s Working Conditions In the 2020s



Teacher wellbeing charity Education Support has published the findings from its Commission on Teacher Retention which brought together some of the most experienced educationalists, sector experts and teachers.

Launched in December 2022, the Commission set out to examine the drivers behind why so many secondary school teachers (and leaders) in the state sector are leaving the profession, and what would encourage them to stay.

Combining qualitative, quantitative and immersive research with expert - and teacher - testimony, the resulting report sets out the state of the teaching profession in England's secondary schools in 2023.

Recommendations

Whilst acknowledging there is no single driver of teacher retention, nor one silver bullet to fix it, the Commission puts forward 10 recommendations for policymakers and schools that they think could go some way towards modernising working practices in teaching:

1. A serious, Government-commissioned, independent review of the current statutory guidance on pay and conditions for teachers in England is long overdue. The review should aim to ensure that (as a minimum) the framework and guidance governing teachers' pay and conditions accurately reflects the realities of the working day. It should better fulfil the intended function of the 1991 Act to protect teachers' right to work, at least in part, more flexibly. It is vital that this work is developed in consultation with teachers, classroom assistants, support staff, senior leaders and headteachers.

It should consider:

- a. The 1,265 hour rule and its relationship with 'undirected' hours.
- b. The development of a promotion pathway rooted in classroom teaching, and how the teaching pay scales should reflect that.
- c. The introduction of an incentive payment to retain teachers working in schools in Education

Investment Areas.

2. Codifying what "poor practice" around workload looks like. There should be a list of things that schools must stop doing, in clear terms on the DfE website. This would finally make it clear what is not required as part of an inspection, once and for all. This will help more school leaders to have the professional courage to change the way they've always done things.

3. School leaders should commit to reviewing their own workload practices on a yearly (or more regular) basis. They should be trusted to consult their teachers and individual subject departments to work out what they can scale back, given their local context, and without compromising high standards.
4. The Department for Education (DfE) should be set new retention targets for the school workforce in England – including teachers, leaders and support staff – published annually. In the same way that there is a target number of trainees to start postgraduate initial teacher training, estimated using the Teacher Workforce Model, so too should retention be a Key Performance Indicator of the DfE. In meeting those targets, the Department should re-double its efforts to properly consider the impact of policy changes on staff wellbeing, as part of the DfE's commitment to integrate wellbeing into the 'school workload policy test' through the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter. Any potential intensification of workload resulting from proposed policy changes that might hamper the DfE's efforts to meet its retention targets would be flagged during the policy-making process for consideration.
5. The profession needs clarity from the Government in defining what is schools' responsibility and what isn't. Should wraparound services for children and young people be co-located on the school site, or delivered in the community? Clarity is required, and whatever the decision, schools and public services need the right level of training, support and resources.
6. We need a national conversation and a recognition at a political level that the complexity of children and young people's needs and pupil behaviour is becoming more challenging in such a way that exceeds school and teachers' capacity to resolve alone.
7. A fully-funded, specialist Human Resources advisory service should be established for schools, tasked with promoting and supporting them specifically with the implementation of best practice flexible working policies and arrangements. Pretender, there should be a wide consultation with the profession to better understand what would be most useful to school leaders, MATs and staff, in terms of the advice and support the service should offer. The research undertaken for this Commission has highlighted the HR advisory body should work with schools to ensure:
 - a. Non-teaching time should be better organised to take account of modern working lives.
 - b. The policies around transitioning between full and part-time contracts must be clear, fair and reasonable, and communicated to staff at the recruitment stage.
8. The Government should commit to an urgent review of the deployment and content of the training elements of the Early Career Framework (ECF), and the content frameworks underpinning the suite of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). This work must be co-produced with a wide range of stakeholders working in the profession. The review should consider:
 - a. How the content and delivery of both the ECF and the NPQs should be re-framed so that they are truly grounded in the realities of teachers' working lives, with flexibilities built in to allow individuals to select the courses that are best suited to their own level of experience, and the local context.
 - b. Whether to expand the suite of specialist NPQs to ensure they are tailored and truly relevant to teachers' subject specialisms.

9. The accountability system is unbalanced and the negative impact on the profession is troubling. The collection of accountability components, including the pressure experienced by heads and teachers as a result of Ofsted inspections, should be reviewed holistically. The aim of such a review should be to ensure that schools remain accountable to both the general taxpayer and the communities that they serve, but without driving up workload and encouraging short-term management decisions. In truth, is hard to plot a route to a substantive improvement in teacher retention without a reduction in accountability pressure.
10. Every five years, headteachers should be granted a month-long, paid sabbatical to complete a new qualification - 'the NPQH+' - expertly designed to develop the people management skills required of good leaders, and with a laser focus on the current context in schools.

Education Support's report 1970s working conditions in the 2020s: Modernising the professional lives of teachers for the 21st Century can be viewed or downloaded [here](#).



Teacher Labour Market Annual Report



Introduction

The teacher recruitment and retention challenge in England has significantly intensified since the pandemic. Recruitment to initial teacher training (ITT) was considerably below target last year across a range of subjects and as of February 2023, this year's ITT recruitment is likely to be little better than last year, while teacher vacancies are significantly higher than the year before the pandemic. The recent trends in recruitment and retention affirm that addressing recruitment and retention should be an urgent policy priority in order to ensure schools have sufficient staff to provide a high-quality education for pupils in England.

The National Foundation for Educational Research's (NFER) annual series of Teacher Labour Market reports monitor the progress the school system in England is making towards meeting the teacher supply challenge. Its 2023 report summarises the key trends in teacher recruitment, retention and working conditions. The findings also point towards areas where policy actions are likely to have the greatest impact on addressing the challenges.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Recruitment to ITT in 2023/24 is likely to be significantly below target, after historically low recruitment in 2022/23

Registrations to ITT courses last year fell by **20%** compared to the year before the pandemic. Both primary and secondary ITT registrations were below target, with 13 out of 17 secondary subjects under-recruiting relative to the estimated numbers of trainees needed to ensure sufficient staffing levels in schools.

Higher training bursaries in many subjects are leading to higher numbers of applicants this year in the subjects whose bursaries increased. Nonetheless, higher bursaries are unlikely to stimulate enough new recruitment this year to meet targets. Based on applications as of February 2023, primary and nine out of 17 secondary subjects are expected to be **20%** or more below target, while several other subjects are also at risk of not meeting their target.

The number of teacher vacancies posted by schools, an indicator of staff turnover, was **93%** higher in the academic year up to February 2023 than at the same point in the year before the pandemic.

Falling retention rates and historically low teacher recruitment figures point to the deteriorating competitiveness of teaching compared to other occupations, in both pay and working conditions, which requires urgent policy action across the sector to address

The gap in real earnings growth between teachers and similar graduates has widened significantly since the pandemic.

Median teacher pay in 2021/22 was **12%** lower in real terms than it was in 2010/11. This was **11%** lower for teachers than for graduates similar in age, gender and region, and **17%** lower than the real-terms growth in average earnings across all occupations.

In 2018/19, real earnings growth since 2010/11 was about **4%** lower for teachers than for similar graduates. However, the gap has widened significantly since the pandemic, particularly for experienced teachers, driven by the 2021 teacher pay freeze and strong earnings growth outside of teaching.

The DfE's proposed 2023 teacher pay award involves an overall increase to teacher pay of **3.5%**, funded by a £2.3 billion uplift in school funding announced as part of the 2022 Autumn Statement. Pay rises of **7.1%** for early-career teachers will bring starting salaries to £30,000, with a **3%** increase for experienced teachers. Targeting more resource at early-career teachers is likely to continue to improve the competitiveness of starting salaries relative to the wider labour market, but smaller increases for experienced teachers will likely lead to pay continuing to deteriorate relative to other occupations.

Overall, the proposed pay increase of **3.5%** is less than the forecast for 2023 earnings growth in the wider labour market, which was revised upwards to **4.1%** by the Office for Budget Responsibility in March 2023. This means that it is unlikely to substantively narrow the overall earnings gap between teachers and the wider labour market. The DfE's 2023 pay award is therefore likely to have minimal impacts on improving recruitment and retention, relative to the scale of the challenge.

Recommendation: Narrowing the gap between teacher pay and the wider labour market is key to supporting recruitment and retention. The 2023 pay award should therefore exceed the 4.1% forecasted rise in earnings in the wider labour market.

Recommendation: The government should develop a long-term strategy for improving the competitiveness of teacher pay relative to other occupations, while ensuring that schools have sufficient funding to enact these pay increases without making cuts elsewhere.

Teachers' working hours and perceived workload have fallen since 2015/16, but remain higher than for similar graduates.

Teacher workload has been a policy priority in recent years because high workload was the reason most-often cited for teachers wanting to leave the profession. Teachers' working hours fell in the years prior to the pandemic and in 2021/22 were lower than pre-pandemic. However, despite the improvement, working hours and perceived workload remained higher in 2021/22 than for similar graduates, and the 2019 Teacher Workload Survey showed that teachers still felt they spend too much time on administration, data input, marking and lesson planning.

Teacher autonomy, a measure related to how manageable workload feels, has also been consistently lower for teachers than for similar graduates since 2010/11. Research shows that higher autonomy is associated with higher job satisfaction and retention.

Recommendation: The Government should continue to remain focussed on reducing teacher workload by supporting schools in implementing the recommendations of the Teacher Workload Advisory Groups.

The pandemic has led to a widespread adoption of remote working in the graduate workforce, but teachers' opportunities to work from home remain very limited.

Pandemic-induced office closures led to a substantial increase in the proportion of graduates who reported that they worked mainly from home, while having no lasting effect on the prevalence of home working for teachers. In 2021/22, nearly half (**44%**) of similar graduates worked mainly from home, up from **15%** in 2018/19.

Working from home is only one example of flexible working, and others such as part-time work, job-sharing or ad-hoc days off remain available to some teachers to varying degrees. However, the continued high prevalence of home working in many jobs in the wake of the pandemic indicates that it is a particularly attractive arrangement. The lack of availability of home working may therefore represent a threat to the relative attractiveness of teaching, but further research is needed to fully understand teachers' working preferences and how to maintain the attractiveness of working in schools.

Recommendation: The Government should fund further research to better understand teachers' flexible working preferences and use the findings to revisit the 2019 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, ensuring it reflects the new post-pandemic realities of working life.

Recommendation: Given the demand for flexible working arrangements, school leaders should explore what options may work for their schools.

Conclusions

Over the last academic year, the post-pandemic resurgence in the wider labour market has had a significant impact on recruitment and retention. The overall number of teachers recruited into the profession was **20%** lower than in the last year before the pandemic and recruitment to secondary ITT courses reached only **59%** of the estimated number needed to ensure sufficient staffing levels in secondary schools.

An increase in training bursaries seems to be leading to slightly higher numbers of placed applicants to teacher training in some secondary courses this year compared to last year. However, overall recruitment this year is likely to be little better than last year. Based on application numbers to February 2023, primary and nine out of 17 secondary subjects are expected to be **20%** or more below target this year and other subjects are also at risk of not meeting their target.

Maths recruitment is likely to reach **89%** of its target this year, similar to last year.

Maths recruitment relative to target has improved since the pandemic, but this has been driven not by an increase in applicants but by a large fall in its target, despite persistent under-recruitment and a likely increased need for maths teachers to fulfil the Government's ambition to provide maths education to pupils up to the age of 18.

The number of teacher vacancies posted by schools, a proxy for teacher leaving rates, has also increased dramatically this year. This likely indicates that teachers who may have put off the decision to leave teaching during the pandemic are leaving now that the labour market is recovering. **Low teacher recruitment and rising leaving rates last year have contributed to significantly intensifying the teacher recruitment and retention challenge in England post-pandemic. This year's ITT recruitment numbers suggest that the scale of the recruitment challenge is likely to persist.**

A higher proportion of teachers than similar graduates generally report that they feel that what they do in life is worthwhile, indicative of teachers' pro-social motivations. Nonetheless, recruitment and retention challenges are likely to persist unless policy action addresses the falling competitiveness of pay and working conditions in the teaching profession compared to alternative jobs and careers. Teacher pay in 2021/22 was **12%** lower in real terms than it was in 2010/11, which was **11%** lower for teachers than for other graduates, and **17%** lower than average real earnings growth across all occupations.

The gap in earnings growth compared to other graduates was narrower before the pandemic. In 2018/19, real earnings growth since 2010/11 was about **4%** lower for teachers than for similar graduates. However, the gap has widened significantly since the pandemic, particularly for experienced teachers, driven by the 2021 teacher pay freeze and strong earnings growth outside of teaching.

The DfE's proposed 2023 teacher pay award involves an overall increase to teacher pay of **3.5%**, funded by a £2.3 billion uplift in school funding announced as part of the 2022 Autumn Statement. Pay rises of **7.1%** for early-career teachers will bring starting salaries to £30,000, with a **3%** increase for experienced teachers. Targeting more resource at early-career teachers is likely to continue to improve the competitiveness of starting salaries relative to the wider labour market, but smaller increases for experienced teachers will likely lead to pay continuing to deteriorate relative to other occupations.

Overall, the proposed pay increase of **3.5%** is less than the forecast for 2023 earnings growth in the wider labour market, which was revised upwards to **4.1%** by the Office for Budget Responsibility in March 2023. This means that it is unlikely to substantively narrow the overall earnings gap between teachers and the wider labour market. The DfE's 2023 pay award is therefore likely to have minimal impacts on improving recruitment and retention, relative to the scale of the challenge.

Recommendation: Narrowing the gap between teacher pay and the wider labour market is key to supporting recruitment and retention. The 2023 pay award should therefore exceed the 4.1% forecasted rise in earnings in the wider labour market.

Recommendation: The Government should also develop a long-term strategy for pay setting which reduces the gap in earnings with competing occupations, while ensuring that schools have sufficient funding to enact these pay increases without making cuts elsewhere.

Reducing teacher workload has been a significant policy objective in recent years and teachers' working hours and perceived workload has fallen over time. However, in 2021/22, working hours and perceived workload remained significantly higher than in other occupations. Workload remains a key reason why teachers consider leaving the profession, and teacher autonomy, one facet of workload related to how manageable workload feels, has consistently remained lower for teachers compared to similar graduates.

Recommendation: The Government should continue to remain focussed on reducing teacher workload by supporting schools in implementing the recommendations of the Teacher Workload Advisory Groups.

The pandemic has led to widespread changes in work routines. Nearly half of graduates in 2021/22 reported that they mainly worked from home, while the prevalence of home working arrangements for teachers remained very limited. While teachers did report the availability of other flexible working options, the lack of availability of working from home may constitute a further competitive threat against teaching. This is particularly the case given that teachers' earnings have fallen significantly behind similar graduates in real terms, meaning that teachers are not being compensated for the higher inflexibility over working arrangements compared to other occupations since the pandemic.

Recommendation: The Government should fund further research to better understand teachers' flexible working preferences and use the findings to revisit the 2019 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, ensuring it reflects the new post-pandemic realities of working life.

Recommendation: Given the demand for flexible working arrangements, school leaders should explore what options may work for their schools.

NFER's Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report 2023 can be viewed or downloaded [here](#).



Overview of the 2023 LGF Conference

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide governors, trustees, and our stakeholders with a succinct overview of the outcomes from the recent conference. The information is primarily based on the LGF feedback forms completed by governors and trustees attending the event.

This was our 10th half-day conference we have organised for Liverpool school governors and trustees. The focus and topic on this occasion was: **Building children's resilience and improving their educational outcomes through attachment and trauma-informed friendly practices.**

We were delighted to welcome Rohit Naik, Headteacher of Hope School (SEMH) to deliver and facilitate the presentation for us. Rohit was supported by two Hope School governors Sarah Goldman and Katie Atkinson who were able to provide testimonies from their personal experiences.

Aims of the conference

The key aim of part one of the conference was to provide attendees with an overview of the attachment and trauma framework and importantly highlight the real difference it can make in building children's resilience and improving their self-esteem and supporting them to reach their potential coupled with an improvement in their educational outcomes.

Rohit Naik, an inspirational speaker who has extensive experience and knowledge, highlighted how unmet needs and trauma affects pupils' ability to learn and how introducing an attachment and trauma-informed strategy provides support and ensures every pupil has a positive experience of school life.

The key aim of the second part of the conference was to give delegates an introduction to the Hearts programme, which is being led by Virtual School Liverpool. There is considerable interest, both nationally and locally, to implement and develop an attachment and trauma-informed strategy and framework within schools. The Hearts programme currently supports and facilitates 32 Liverpool schools to build capacity and progress toward being recognised as a committed and effective attachment and trauma-informed school. Rohit provided delegates with an overview of this important Liverpool schools project.

Summary and overall outcomes

An analysis of evaluation forms showed that delegates undoubtedly felt Rohit Naik was an engaging speaker with a comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of attachment and trauma-informed principles.

There was also a very strong view that the key objectives were fully met and that they had benefitted from their attendance at the conference. Furthermore, it was another opportunity for governors/trustees from across the Liverpool educational sectors to learn together.

We had a total of 50 governors and trustees attending this 10th LGF conference who represented 44 Liverpool schools across the city with an overall average of 41 attendance for the 10 LGF conferences we have delivered to date.

Furthermore, several days before the actual event we did have the courtesy of four apologies. We also had a cohort of nine governors/trustees who booked-in, but unfortunately did not attend on the day nor offer any apology for their non-attendance. It will be appreciated that it does have unnecessary cost implications for us not cancelling in advance.

It was also interesting to note that on this occasion a high number of females to men were present; 39 (78%) female and 11 (22%) male. Normally, we have a much more balanced group.

We were also rather surprised at the small number of governors/trustees attending from those schools engaged in the Hearts project, although we are conscious special arrangements had been made early in the project for the Chairs of the schools involved.

For information, a summary of all 10 conferences arranged over the years to date by the LGF is set out below.





We would like to take the opportunity to record our thanks to our speakers, Rohit Naik, Sarah Goldman, and Katie Atkinson for making this another successful LGF conference and for ensuring that our members found it a well-worth and enjoyable event from which they fully benefited.

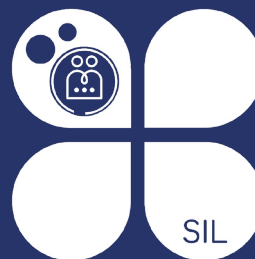
Finally, we would also like to thank all the delegates who supported and attended the conference and for their important contribution in raising appropriate questions which helped to making this 10th conference another successful LGF event.

Summary of LGF conferences

Conference Number	Conference Date	Number Attended	Conference Subjects / topics
1	October 2015	46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher Wellbeing
2	October 2016	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher Appraisals • Philosophy for Children
3	March 2017	41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Reductions, • LLP Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Project • Improving Children's Wellbeing through Yoga
4	October 2017	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The touch that matters - Attachment Friendly Principles
5	April 2018	41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Safety • Liverpool Promise
6	November 2018	64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing Body Self-Assessment • Liverpool's Education Vision
7	May 2019	51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effective governance of SEND • SEND provision in Liverpool
8	November 2019	47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher and Staff Wellbeing: how can Governing Bodies ease the pressure?
9	July 2022	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep and its Importance in Education
10	May 2023	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment & Trauma- Informed Friendly Practices
Average attendance		41	

We did not hold any conferences during the years 2020 and 2021 due to the worldwide Covid 19 pandemic.

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