**Academy and School News Update February 19-March 18 2015**

***Documents mentioned below can be found on*** <http://tonystephens.org.uk>

* The DfE has given £5 million funding to:
* increase the number of education providers offering supported **internships**, resulting in more young people with complex SEND getting work placements and ultimately entering paid employment
* build relationships with employers to agree work placements for young people with SEND on supported internships and other study programmes
* support and challenge education providers to improve preparation for employment in study programmes for all young people with SEND

The DfE will distribute the money amongst all LAs, but top-slice £135,000 to divide between the 9 regional support leads (£15,000 each) to coordinate activities at a regional level.

* LA figures show that 90.2% of 16- and 17-year-olds were **in education or training** at the end of December 2014 - a rise of 0.4 percentage points. This is equivalent to around 4,000 people compared to the same period in 2013. This is up 2.3 percentage points since 2012. These figures support figures from last month showing the number of young people NEET from October to December had reached its lowest level since 2007. But the number of 16 to 17-year-old girls NEET has risen by 6,000 in the last three months of last year compared to the same period in 2013.
* The [25th report of the **School Teachers’ Review Body**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-review-body-25th-report-2015) (STRB) has been published. The report contains recommendations on how to apply the pay award for teachers that is due to be implemented from September 2015. The STRB has recommended an increase from September 2015 of 1% to the minima of all the pay ranges and allowances in the national pay framework, including the:
* unqualified teachers’ pay range
* main pay range
* upper pay range
* leading practitioner pay range
* leadership pay range
* headteacher groups
* teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) payments
* special educational needs (SEN) allowances

It has also recommended an increase of 1% to the maxima of all the pay ranges and allowances, except the main pay range, the leadership pay range and the 8 headteacher group pay ranges. It has proposed an uplift of 2% to the maxima of the main pay range and no uplift to the maxima of the leadership pay range or the maxima of the 8 headteacher group pay ranges.

***A copy of the report is available on the above website, Documents –Latest documents***

* Outcomes of an initial evaluation of the first year of the **traineeship** programme, carried out by the government, found that 50% of trainees went on to apprenticeships or employment, and a further 17% undertook further learning. The report also highlights high levels of satisfaction in the programme among employers and trainees

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* A-level **maths and science** students will be given up to £15,000 if they agree to become teachers after graduating from university. Under new government plans, high-performing teenagers will be given grants towards their university costs if they agree to spend at least three years as a teacher once they have graduated. The move is part of a £67 million package of measures designed to bring an extra 17,500 maths and physics teachers into the classroom. Other measures include new “fast-track” programmes to enable “skilled professionals” in engineering and medicine to switch careers to teaching, and “tailored support” for former maths and science teachers to re-enter the profession. A statement from Downing Street says the government wants to bring an extra 17,500 maths and physics teachers into classrooms. Of these, 15,000 will be existing teachers not currently specialising in maths and physics, who will be retrained to teach the subjects. The remaining 2,500 will be a combination of new graduates, career-changers and former teachers returning to the classroom.  In addition, the government will make £20,000 available to school partnerships to set up pilot training programmes for career-switchers, the statement adds. The first trainees under these programmes will enter classrooms in September 2016. Universities will pilot new physics degrees giving students a teaching qualification alongside their three-year degree course. The government will also offer salaries of up to £40,000 to more than 100 university fellows to teach in schools and train teachers, the statement says. Three new schools specialising in engineering, mathematics and computing, and led by leading industry experts and universities, will also be announced based in Guildford, Stroud and Portsmouth
* A new website has been launched to help **primary schools** recruit and develop **sports coaches** The [Coaching in Schools Portal](http://www.sportscoachuk.org/site-tools/about-uk-coaching/coaching-schools-portal) - unveiled by Sports Coach UK - will provide advice for headteachers on how to recruit, develop and use coaches effectively using the government funding.
* The government has announced funding of £2.2 million for local authorities to implement their ‘**integrated review’**, bringing together assessments given by the DfE and the Department of Health. Currently, health and early years reviews of young children are carried out separately. By integrating them, parents will get a more complete picture of their child, drawing on the expertise of health visitors and early years practitioners. It has also been announced that reviews will also be available for 2-year-olds not in settings for the first time. There is also a guide for parents on development during the first 5 years. Parents will be able to check their children’s physical, social and language development against these milestones and learn how best to support them in their development using the [‘What to expect when’ handbook](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2015/03/what-to-expect-when-a-parents-guide/) produced by the DfE

***A copy of the handbook is available on the above website, Documents –Latest documents***

* The DfE has now established the membership of the commission on **assessment without levels**. The commission will support primary and secondary schools to implement new assessment systems following the removal of levels. The commission will identify and share best practice in assessment with schools across the country and ensure they have information to make informed choices about effective assessment systems. The commission will highlight the best work that is already being done in many schools and will help to foster innovation and success in assessment practice more widely.

Teachers will no longer be expected to tell parents whether their child is working at a similar level to others at the same age, according to schools minister Nick Gibb. Mr Gibb said assessments will only need to show how a child is performing against that school’s curriculum – not whether that performance is similar to others around the country. Instead schools have been told to create their own ways of assessing children, which will be evaluated by Ofsted. The commission will be responsible for identifying and disseminating best practice, but Mr Gibb said that these models will not be imposed. “This is information that’s going to be available,” he said. “Ofsted are not going to say we expect you to use this approach.” National tests and teacher assessments at ages 7 and 11 and GCSEs at age 16 will remain in place to show how students compare to others nationally at those points. “We have these national benchmarks, and it’s for a school to decide how it wants to go from where they are today to reaching those benchmarks… and that journey may vary depending on the cohort of pupils, the school, their curriculum and their pedagogy. “We’ve got to trust the profession to know how they are going to bring that child up to the level they need to be by the time they leave primary school and by the time they leave compulsory education."

* The Government has announced 49 new **free schools**. In total more than 400 free schools have been approved since 2010, creating more than 230,000 school places across the country.

David Cameron also announced that a Conservative government would set up 500 free schools during the next Parliament, creating 270,000 new school places.

* The DfE has launched**, ‘Reading: the next steps’** which outlines new measures, including:
  + a new programme to support up to 200 primary schools, where reading attainment at key stage 2 is currently low, to set up book clubs and promote library membership, to inspire thousands more pupils to develop a love of literature
  + urging all primary schools to arrange library membership for all their year 3 pupils (age 7 to 8)
  + boosting the promotion of poetry in schools by funding new resources to help primary teachers to introduce poetry recitation to their pupils at an early age, as well as funding a further year’s extension of the national poetry recitation competition, Poetry by Heart

***A copy of the supporting document with the same name can be found on the above website, Documents-Latest documents***

* Schools across England are being invited to bid for funding to help boost **diversity in their senior leadership teams** Groups of schools are being invited to bid for grants of up to £30,000 from the government’s Leadership, Equality and Diversity Fund to support local, school-led initiatives that will help boost the diversity of their senior leadership teams.
* **Succeeding in school** puts an average of £140,000 in a young person’s back pocket, new in-depth analysis of the economic benefit of education involving more than 400,000 people reveals. It shows achieving 5 A\* to C GCSE grades, including the vital English and maths subjects, adds £80,000 to a student’s earnings over their lifetime. A further £60,000 is added to their wages if they go on to achieve at least 2 A- levels
* The DfE has announced a secondment programme which will invite up to 100 ‘**outstanding’ middle leaders** - such as heads of department, subject or year group heads - to apply to spend a year in underperforming schools, including those in deprived, coastal and rural areas. For more details about the programme, eligibility criteria, and how to apply visit the Future Leaders website. The Future Leaders Trust runs the [Talented Leaders programme](http://www.future-leaders.org.uk/programmes/talented-leaders/) on behalf of the National College for Teaching and Leadership.
* A second group of **Shanghai’s** top teachers has arrived in England this week to share their approach to maths teaching. The visiting teachers are the second group to come to England. In November last year, 29 maths teachers spent a month working closely with teachers in primary schools across England.

* In March 2014, the DfE announced that it was developing detailed performance **descriptors for key subjects** (Reading, Writing, Maths and Science) to inform teacher assessment at the end of **Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2**. They stated that the performance descriptors would be available for use from the 2015/16 academic year onwards. They also confirmed that the performance descriptors would be directly linked to the content of the new national curriculum. The DfE has now published its response to this consultation

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents***

* The DfE has published, **“Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE)** education: a review of impact and effective practice”

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents***

* Nicky Morgan has written to Ofqual asking them to think again about how **science practical work** is assessed in the new GCSEs

Ofqual has announced the adoption of a new approach for GCSE science practical assessment. The new approach to assessing practical work will use written exam questions in place of controlled assessment. Each exam board will have to specify a minimum number of practical activities that students must complete, set no lower than 8 in each individual science and 16 for combined science. Each school will be required to confirm that they have enabled their students to do the full range of practical work. Each student is required to have kept a record of their work.

* The DfE has produced an updated guide to **Progress 8**.  This contains important information for all schools. Schools with a three-year Key Stage 3, a year 10/11 one-year course entry policy and/or doing extra maths qualifications, will also find this particularly important. The document also contains information regarding new point scores for legacy qualifications in the transition years and for vocational qualifications.

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents***

Schools adding value around the bottom of the ability range during the transition from legacy GCSEs to the new 1 to 9 grading system will get “significantly less recognition” within the new Progress 8 headline score, it is claimed and “schools will be rewarded for working with the more able”. In 2016, there will be one point score allocated to each grade. But in 2017, when the new grading scale kicks in, a student moving up a grade from A to A\* receives a point score increment three times that of someone moving from a G to an F grade . Crucially, there is a 1.5 point gain for a student who gets an A\* rather than an A, while a less able student moving from a G to an F grade would gain only half a point. In 2018 most GCSEs taken at 16 will be in reformed subjects and the issue “won’t exist by 2019 because the weighting will have shifted – but there is a big problem in the interim phase and it looks unfixable”.

* Ofsted has updated, “**Ofsted inspections, clarifications for schools”**

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents***

* Ofsted has published **“ HMI, pen portraits”**

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents***

* Ofsted has published, ”**The most able students** An update on progress since June 2013”

Schools are still not doing enough to ensure the most able children fulfil their potential, this survey has found; many of the most able children who attend non-selective secondary schools are failing to achieve their potential, compared with students who attend selective and independent schools. The report follows up on an earlier survey carried out in 2013 – and concludes that very few improvements have been made over the intervening two years.

In the most successful non-selective schools, the most able students thrive because school leaders provide a challenging curriculum and are tenacious in making sure that teaching is consistently good or better for all students. Successful leaders use the information they receive from primary schools to make sure that students are doing work that stretches them as soon as they join Year 7. This continues throughout the students’ time at the school and culminates in their successful applications to the best universities, training providers and employers.

“Ofsted will make sure that inspections keep focusing sharply on the progress made by the most able students, particularly those from poorer backgrounds. Inspectors will also report more sharply about how well schools promote the needs of the most able through the quality of the curriculum and the information, advice and guidance they offer to their most able students.

Inspectors found that the needs of many of the most able students – defined as those who achieved the highest national curriculum level at the end of key stage 2 – were not being prioritised by schools. Too many were receiving teaching within a curriculum that did not sufficiently challenge them and around a quarter of those who showed very strong potential in English and maths at age 11 did not go on to achieve a B grade at GCSE.

Inspectors also saw complacency in many of the schools they visited; aspirations of what students could achieve were simply not high enough. Moreover, the report concludes that:

* the most able students’ achievement suffers even more when they are from poorer backgrounds
* the most able girls continue to outperform the most able boys significantly, and where there is a reasonable proportion of most able students, they do far better than when they are in a small minority in a school
* many secondary schools are still not giving demanding work to the most able students in their opening years in secondary schools
* information, advice and guidance to students about accessing the most appropriate courses at universities, or in preparation for demanding apprenticeship and other training opportunities are not good enough
* students’ classes in key stage 3 are often affected by low-level disruption
* school leaders are not properly evaluating how to help prepare the most able for universities

As a matter of urgency, Ofsted recommends that school leaders must:

* develop a culture of high expectations for students and teachers in secondary school
* make sure that teachers use information provided by primary schools about the most able students to help manage their transition to secondary school
* appoint staff and governors with responsibilities specifically to champion the needs of the most able students from poorer backgrounds
* involve universities in training school staff to provide advice to the most able
* provide training for all teachers so that their teaching challenges the most able students

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents***

* Ofsted has published the second edition of its **School Inspection Update**, which contains useful information and also stresses the following:

Inspectors should place greater emphasis on the following:

* **The impact of assessment and the school’s curriculum**: the strongest reporting focuses on evaluation and not description, making clear why the contribution of the curriculum and assessment to pupils’ achievement is effective or not.
* While it is good that **careers guidance** is achieving greater prominence in reporting, inspectors need to evaluate and comment on this crucial area where it is weak, not just where it is effective.
* **How well the school promotes pupils’ behaviour and safety**: please think about the breadth of evidence needed to report in a rounded way on this important area, taking account of the contribution of the school’s ethos to good behaviour. This is particularly important when these aspects are graded more highly than the school’s overall effectiveness. The best reporting also gets underneath the culture of safeguarding at the school, reporting the impact of the school’s approach to safeguarding in the widest sense, portraying the provision convincingly in ways that extend beyond a sense of compliance to requirements
* The effectiveness of provision in the **sixth form**: when this is judged to be better/worse than the overall effectiveness of the school, please be clear as to why this is the case. Inspectors should also ensure they consider vocational provision where it is offered, not just academic courses.
* **Marking**. We recognise that marking and feedback to pupils, both written and oral, are important aspects of assessment. However, as inspectors we should not expect to see any specific frequency, type or volume of marking and feedback; these are for the school to decide through its assessment policy. Marking and feedback should be consistent with that policy, which may cater for different subjects and different age groups of pupils in different ways, in order to promote learning effectively. These activities need to be useful for pupils and sustainable for teachers. If it is necessary to identify marking/feedback as an area for improvement for a school, inspectors must pay careful attention to the way recommendations are written to ensure that these do not drive unnecessary workload for teachers

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents***

* From the beginning of the academic year 2015/16, the government is reducing the threshold for **persistent absence** from 15% to 10%. For the 2014/15 academic year, the DfE will publish persistent absence levels at both 15% and 10%.
* The EEF has issued guidance on the best use of **teaching assistants**

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents***

* For 2014 performance, a **primary** school is deemed to be below the **floor standards** when all of these criteria apply:
  + fewer than 65% of pupils achieve Level 4 or above in all of reading, writing and mathematics

fewer than the median percentage (94%) make expected progress in reading

* + fewer than the median percentage (96%) make expected progress in writing
  + fewer than the median percentage (93%) make expected progress in mathematics
* For 2014 performance, a **secondary** school is deemed to be below the floor standards when all of these criteria apply:
  + fewer than 40% of pupils achieve five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics GCSEs
  + fewer than the median percentage (74%) make expected progress in English
  + fewer than the median percentage (67%) make expected progress in mathematics. It is not possible to compare last year’s figures with this year’s due to the substantial
* In February 2015, the DfE sent every secondary school data indicating how it would have performed against **Progress 8 for its 2014 results** (‘shadow Progress 8 data’). This information is intended to help each school plan for the new performance measures and decide whether to opt in to the new accountability system based on Progress 8 one year early, in 2015. The window for schools to opt in closes at the end of June 2015. Schools must obtain the agreement of their governing bodies before opting in.
* The **Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill** has completed its passage through Parliament and was granted Royal Assent on 21 February 2015. The Act places a statutory duty on named organisations, including schools, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Monitoring and enforcement primarily will be through existing inspection mechanisms. Ofsted already inspects how well schools carry out their safeguarding and other duties. In particular, inspectors consider the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements to ensure that there is safe recruitment and that all pupils are safe. This includes the approach to keeping pupils safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and what is done when it is suspected that pupils are vulnerable to these. Inspectors also consider how well leadership and management in schools ensure that the curriculum: prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life in modern Britain; actively promotes fundamental British values; and promotes tolerance of and respect for all groups of people through the effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

## **Schools will be expected to be:**

## **Assessing the risk of students being drawn into terrorism**

## Working in partnership with the local authority

## Training staff to identify at-risk children

## Keeping students safe online

## Managing prayer and faith facilities

* **PE and sport in primary schools**. Inspectors are required to report upon how effectively the school uses the primary school PE and Sport Premium to improve the quality and breadth of PE and sport provision. This includes increasing participation in PE and sport so that all pupils develop healthy lifestyles and reach the performance levels they are capable of. Reports must include a clear judgement about how effectively school leaders are spending their funding including the reasons why, and what they are aiming to achieve. Inspectors must also comment on the impact this funding is having since its introduction in 2013, on improving the quality of PE teaching, raising pupils’ participation and performance in sport, and promoting their physical health. This judgement should be based on firm evidence gained from observing pupils in PE lessons or after school clubs, in discussions with school leaders and governors, and with pupils. Inspectors are reminded to check details of a school’s PE and sport provision on their website prior to an inspection.
* The EFA has set up a **financial benchmarking website for academies**, see <http://www.education.gov.uk/afb/login.aspx>
* The **Care to learn** scheme is designed to help young parents under the age of 20 return to work. For details see [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn)
* For **Y7 catch** up in 2014-2015 there is £500 for each pupil in a state-funded school who did not achieve at least level 4 in reading and/or mathematics at key stage 2. The final figures have been calculated using the 2014 key stage 2 data and the autumn 2014 school census data.
* Significant cuts were announced last month to the **adult education budget**. If you exclude the funding of apprenticeships, these cuts are in the region of 24 per cent. This obviously has a major impact on those that benefit from adult education (including employment skills training)
* The DfE has set up a dedicated telephone helpline for schools and colleges to report any concerns about **radicalisation or extremism** directly to the DfE’s Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Group (DDCEG). The helpline is now operational and the telephone number is 020 7340 7264. Please note that the helpline is not for emergencies, such as a child at immediate risk or a security incident. In these situations, normal procedures should be followed. If there is any doubt, please contact the DDCEG for advice using the hotline number or email [**counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk**](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk)
* **Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 - statutory guidance for schools.** The [new guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006) has now been published and replaces the advice published in October 2014.

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents***

* The UK Safer internet centre gives useful advice for guiding students about the **dangers of the internet**. See, <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>
* The only **English** qualifications that will count in the Key Stage 4 2017 performance tables will be the new reformed GCSEs in English language and English literature, and appropriate AS courses. There will be no English GCSE available. Where students take, for example, legacy, GCSE or iGCSE English literature in Year 10 and new reformed GCSE English language in Year 11 (or vice versa), only the new reformed GCSE taken in Year 11 will count and will not be double counted in progress measures or count in EBacc. The only **maths** qualifications that will count in the Key Stage 4 2017 performance tables will be the new reformed GCSE in maths, and appropriate AS course. The first entry rules for English and maths will be lifted for 2017 so that schools can enter students for the current ‘legacy’ GCSEs if they wish but they will not count in any way in the 2017 tables. They must enter the new GCSEs to have an English or maths result counted in performance tables.
* **Academy** principals have warned that their **freedoms** are “under threat”, and have demanded reassurances from the main political parties that the next government will not clip their wings. The headteachers are concerned that their schools could face greater intervention from regional school commissioners (RSCs) Academy groups have also criticised proposals from both Labour and the Lib Dems that would prevent them from hiring unqualified teachers. Last month, it wasrevealed that academies could be [forced to sign over land](https://news.tes.co.uk/b/news/2015/02/12/academy-land-at-risk-in-pupil-places-crisis.aspx) to the government so that new schools can be built to tackle the shortage of pupil places.  It has emerged that principals of schools converting to academy status will no longer automatically become directors of the academy trust that runs the schools, which could severely reduce their influence. This campaign is led by The Freedom and Autonomy for Schools National Association (Fasna)
* The National Children’s Bureau (NCB) has published a new document intended to help schools ensure **the emotional well-being** of pupils and staff. The guidance document states: “Well-being and health are everyone’s business.” It calls on schools to “develop a culture in which talking about emotions and feelings, mental health and well-being is the norm, where it is acceptable to acknowledge difficulties and ask for help, where extra input to those with more serious problems can be provided in a coherent and non-stigmatising way, and where the whole school population has the skills and attitudes to support those with greater needs.”

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents***

* **Nursery schools** could soon "disappear" because of funding cuts, a new report has warned. Dozens of the schools that cater for three- to five-year-olds have closed over the last decade, and more could follow as cash-strapped local authorities are forced to make savings, according to early years campaigning group and charity Early Education.
* An[**early years toolkit**](http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/) published today by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) reveals that a child's progress can be boosted by five months over a year if their parents get involved in their education – by reading and talking with them at home, for example. The toolkit analyses evidence about methods of boosting achievement among young children in a bid to help nurseries and preschools improve the learning of disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds.

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents or go to http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/early-years/***

* **Free schools** lead to a decline in standards among nearby high-performing schools, but boost attainment among their poorest-performing neighbours, according to research by a right wing think tank. Critics say that “The samples on which the authors base their recommendations are tiny, as they admit in the report, and can in no way be considered statistically robust,”
* Maths teachers are calling for the introduction of a tough new **GCSE to be delayed** for a year, so they can properly prepare their pupils. The reformed maths exam – dubbed the “big fat GCSE” because of its extra content – is supposed to be taught from September. But schools have not been given the sample material they need because exam boards have been told not to release any more until a row over standards has been resolved by Ofqual. A decision by the regulator is not expected until the end of April at the earliest, prompting teachers to demand that the new GCSE be put back to give their students a fair chance.
* The founder and former principal of a flagship **free school in Bradford** has been charged with fraud and other offences. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said Sajid Hussain Raza had been charged with offences that related to his involvement with the Kings Science Academy.
* **Creative subjects** are being squeezed out as schools are urging students to “double up” on academic GCSEs in response to Progress 8, it has been claimed. Headteachers “nervous” about their performance on the measure are requesting that students take more GCSEs in English Baccalaureate subjects, according to subject associations.
* More than half of **primary** teachers believe **science** is being squeezed out, with a third revealing their school provides less than the recommended two hours a week, research has shown.  One in three teachers also lack confidence when it comes to teaching the sciences
* Teachers are awarding **girls** higher marks than boys who have the same ability, partly because they “hold stereotypical views” about pupils’ academic strengths, a new report on the gender gap in global education has found. The study, published today by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), analysed students’ marks in reading and maths.
* Parents and pupils are facing “increasing disruption” when **applying for school** **places**, especially when they move during the school year, a research review has found. The report says that the removal of councils’ duty to coordinate in-year admissions has made it more difficult for children to get school places. The report says that, because academies set their own admissions policies, they had “more opportunities to reject in-year applications and delay alerting the local authority”. The review highlights research that found schools acting as their own admissions authority, such as academies, were less likely to comply with the government’s admissions codes.
* Pupils who scrape into **grammar schools** end up with poorer GCSE results than their primary classmates who just miss out and attend secondary moderns, a new report shows. Researchers say their findings illustrate problems with the 11-plus grammar school entrance test, and show that key stage 2 national curriculum tests are better predictors of GCSE success. They conclude that 11-plus results are likely to have been skewed by private coaching. As a result, poorer children do not win grammar school places even though they have more academic potential than many classmates who do get in.
* Teachers could face up to five years in prison for failing to protect children from **sexual exploitation** under new reforms being considered by the government. David Cameron announced plans to consult on extending the criminal offence of “wilful neglect” of patients to children’s social care, education and elected officials in response to the “institutional failings” found following the Rotherham child abuse scandals and elsewhere.  The move will mean teachers could face strong criminal sanctions if they fail to report suspicions of child abuse being suffered by their pupils.
* Every school should have a “high quality” trained **careers leader** to oversee careers advice, introduce employability into the curriculum and build links with employers, further and higher education, according to a new report by the Educational charity Teach First in its report, [***Careers Education in the Classroom***](http://www.teachfirst.org.uk/news/important-role-teachers-providing-quality-careers-learning)

***A copy can be found on the above website, Documents-latest documents***

But schools cannot be trusted to give careers advice in the best interest of young people, says a report released today by the education select committee. The committee said schools favoured the academic route, which was also the cultural preference, and were led by “incentives” to fill sixth form places rather than offering alternatives to young people. The cross-party group of MPs said schools could not be trusted to give careers advice which was aligned to its pupils’ interests.

* Headteachers are not being given sufficient training to spot students who are being **radicalised by Islamic extremists**, according to experts.
* Schools will face fresh Ofsted scrutiny under new plans to inspect how well **local agencies work together on child protection issue**s. The watchdog will carry out a round of [“short, sharp, targeted” inspections](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-inspections-of-services-for-children-in-need-of-help-and-protection-children-looked-after-care-leavers-joint-inspection-of-the-local-s) in which it will work with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Her Majesty’s Inspectorates of Constabulary (HMIC) and Probation. The new checks will examine how well schools, councils, police forces, probation services and the NHS work together to protect children. It was announced that Ofsted and other inspectorates would inspect six local areas between autumn 2015 and March 2016. Decisions about the areas to target would be made by the inspectorates, she said, adding that a consultation would begin “shortly” about the criteria by which these decisions would be made.
* Teachers are more likely to work **unpaid overtime** than staff in any other industry, with some working almost 13 extra hours per week, according to research.
* More than 100 schools have **not had a full inspection** for almost a decade, *TES* can reveal, prompting fears that too much time is being allowed to pass between inspectors’ visits. According to official data from the inspectorate, 115 schools last underwent a full inspection in 2006. And more than 600 outstanding schools have not been visited by inspectors for seven years or more.
* Top universities have been told to significantly increase their intake of pupils from **disadvantaged backgrounds** and to work more closely with schools to improve access for students from poor homes. Admissions watchdog the Office for Fair Access (Offa) said the proportion of 18-year-olds from the most disadvantaged 20 per cent of homes who reached the most selective universities should rise from 3.2 per cent in 2014-15 to 5 per cent by 2019-20. It added that the proportion from the second most disadvantaged group should also increase, from 5.1 per cent in 2014-15 to 7 per cent in 2019-20.
* There are **fewer teenage pregnancies** now than there have been since 1969, new figures show. There were 24.5 conceptions per thousand girls aged between 15 and 17 during 2013, the latest date for which figures are available. This is equivalent to an estimated 24,306 conceptions during 2013. The data, released today by the Office of National Statistics, shows that there has been a 13 per cent decrease in teenage pregnancies since 2012. That year, there were 27.9 conceptions per 1,000 girls between the ages of 15 and 17 - equivalent to an estimated 27,834 conceptions. The figures, which apply only to England and Wales, also show that an estimated 4,648 girls under the age of 16 fell pregnant in 2013. This is a drop of 14 per cent since 2012, when an estimated 5,432 under-16s conceived.
* All schoolchildren must be taught a “**curriculum for life**” that helps them deal with modern issues such as sexting and revenge porn, [Nicky Morgan](http://www.theguardian.com/politics/nicky-morgan), the education secretary, has said; schools need to do more to help youngsters “manage their lives” and “stay safe”. Personal, social, health, and economic education (PSHE) was key to creating successful adults.
* The number of teachers training in **personal, social, health and economics (PSHE)** education has fallen 90 per cent, according to figures released by the education select committee. After the coalition stopped funding free access to accredited PSHE courses, the numbers in the scheme fell from 1,937 in 2010 to just 175 last year. Only 141 of that number completed the course, run by the University of Roehampton, which now costs £700.
* **Sixth Form students** will get little more than a part-time education as a result of funding cuts that will bite next year, according to a new report. Sixth form colleges will be forced to cut direct tuition from 18 hours to 15, which is half what their peers in high-performing education systems such as those in Shanghai and Singapore receive, the report claims. The report by the Sixth Form Colleges Association warns that English sixth formers risk being left behind by international competitors as a result of a “low hours, short duration” sixth form model.
* The government’s plans to introduce school lessons on **consensual sexual** **relationships** for children as young as 11 do not go far enough, it has been claimed. A series of lesson plans, under which children would be taught the meaning and importance of consent, were backed by the government for use in schools. But ministers stopped short of making them or all sex and relationships education, compulsory, leading to claims that many schools will simply ignore them.
* Tens of thousands of children have missed out on their first **choice of secondary** **school** this year as pressure on places mounts, with almost half failing to get into their top preference in some areas of London. Figures suggest that disappointment among children and their families will be most acute in larger cities, including Birmingham as well as the capital where demand for places is particularly intense as a result of the rising birth rate. Outside urban areas one in seven pupils have missed out on their first choice of school according to early estimates, though in some areas of the country, including Cornwall, East Riding and Cleveland, virtually every child has got into their top preference.
* A significant number of schools who **expel pupils are acting illegally**, using discriminatory practices that disproportionately affect the most vulnerable children, a charity has claimed.
* Software failures and a shortage of markers meant that[**last summer’s A-level results**](http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/aug/14/a-level-results-pupils-grades) came dangerously close to missing crucial publishing deadlines, which would have disrupted university admissions and clearing for hundreds of thousands of students. Officials began considering contingency plans to delay publication of results last August after the [OCR examination board](http://www.ocr.org.uk/) was reported to be far behind in its marking of papers in England. There were concerns that the OCR would be unable to pass results on to the university admissions service, Ucas, in time.
* **Portage visitors** work with pre-school children with special educational needs in their own homes, helping them develop learning techniques and improve communication, but a survey suggests that 1in 5 LAs have now withdrawn the funding for this and 1 in 3 have cut funding
* A controversial form of **testing for four- and five-year-olds** – to be trialled in September before being rolled out nationally next year – is designed to give teachers an indication of what their pupils can manage when they start compulsory schooling. They will also be used as a progress measure, charting how much individual schools have achieved for their pupils between starting school and taking the national curriculum tests in English and maths at the age of 11. Critics of the baseline tests have accused ministers of “dragooning” young children into formal schooling far too early, while others say it has been tried before and discredited. There are also deepening concerns that Ofsted may use the assessments as a back-door means of measuring teacher performance. It is understood that ministers will introduce the tests without making them compulsory. But as the tests will be used by Ofsted to measure school performances, the number of heads declining to use them is expected to be limited. The National Union of Teachers is so worried that it is expected to debate a motion calling for a boycott of the tests at its annual conference over Easter. Under the new system, children would be taken aside by their teachers and asked questions about their reading and maths.
* One in five **gay and bisexual** teenagers said they had been bullied or discriminated against by a teacher or another adult at school on the basis of their sexuality, in what was described as a “sad but accurate” picture of the reality faced by young gay people growing up in Britain.
* The Government has been accused of helping indoctrinate children with **pro-military values** through a new schools pack aimed at promoting the armed forces. The 58-page British Armed Forces Learning Pack appears to have been drawn up with to boost military recruitment, according to a report by the Quakers and human rights group Forces Watch.
* Secondary school pupils are being **“seriously under-challenged**” by the difficulty of the books they are given to **read** and teachers must do more to encourage students to read demanding literature, according to a study. A nationwide survey of more than 500,000 pupils at 2,200 schools found that children consistently choose texts beyond their reading age while in primary education but the trend is thrown into reverse as soon as they transfer to secondary school.
* One in four academies have seen their **headteachers depart** during the past year – prompting fears of a leadership recruitment crisis, according to finance experts.
* The DfE has been criticised for not doing enough to secure a better future for **children in care** – with the “shockingly poor” education attainment gap highlighted. A report released by the Committee of Public Accounts said the department needs a “step change in attitude and leadership” to prove it is serious about improving outcomes for children in care. Margaret Hodge MP, committee chair, said: “Since 2008-09 the gap in educational attainment has got worse, and in 2012-13 only 15 per cent of children in care achieved five or more GCSEs at A\*-C, compared with 58% for children not in care.”
* **Children born in August** are 90 per cent more likely to be put on the special educational needs (SEN) register
* **Education services at a county council** are set to be taken over by a ‘specialist social enterprise’ as part of a radical overhaul in which the local authority will outsource all of its services. Northamptonshire County Council announced the “Next Generation Council” plans yesterday in a bid to make £148m budget cuts over the next five years. It will include moving most of its 4,000 staff to four new bodies, which will be commissioned to run services by the remaining 150 staff who will form a core commission council. Teachers will also be included in the changes
* Lord Young is to launch a new **Government careers advice company** which will provide every headteacher with an enterprise adviser. The company will bring business mentors into schools and espouse 'enterprise passports' as an alternative to a CV. The document will track the extra-curricular activities of pupils and give them a proof of their experience. Neither teachers nor pupils will have to administer the programmes. The Government will support the new company with start-up funding in 2015-16, the cost of which will be met from the £20m announced in last year's Autumn Statement to improve careers advice and support for young people. In the longer term the company will be self-sustaining, Lord Young says.
* **Anti-drugs lessons** at schools across Britain may be inadvertently encouraging children to take up illicit substances, the government's advisory board on drugs has warned.
* Primary teachers have been giving seven-year-olds **artificially low assessment** **scores** to put their schools’ overall performance in a better light, research suggests. The tactic, uncovered by an analysis of government data, allows schools to improve their key stage 2 value-added scores by underplaying pupils’ achievements at the end of KS1, the report argues. Researchers compared assessments in primaries with those conducted by infant schools, which have no KS2 pupils and therefore no incentive to record low KS1 scores.
* Teachers who **report concerns** about child abuse or other welfare issues at their school will be granted special protection against disciplinary action. It has emerged that the NSPCC has been granted “whistle-blowing status”, meaning that school employees who are dismissed or treated unfairly after raising concerns with the children’s charity will be given legal protection.
* **Disadvantaged five- and six-year-olds** are catching up with their more affluent classmates when it comes to phonics skills, new data reveals. But on a broader range of measures, including social, emotional and physical development, poorer pupils are still lagging behind. The “good level of development” measure assesses literacy, numeracy, physical development, communication, language and personal, social and emotional development among five-year-olds. Based on this standard, the attainment gap between deprived children and their more affluent classmates fell by just 0.1 percentage points between 2012-13 and 2013-14.
* The BBC will be giving away **mini-computers** to 11-year-olds across the country as part of its push to make the UK more digital.One million Micro Bits - a stripped-down computer similar to a Raspberry Pi - will be given to all pupils starting secondary school in the autumn term. The BBC is also launching a season of coding-based programmes and activities.

**Tony Stephens**

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