

Issue 185 30 Aug - 06 Sept 24

Weekly Education News and Insight

A round up of national education news and DfE insight.



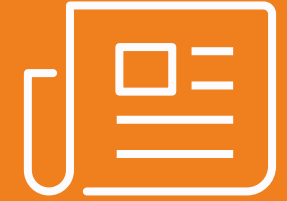
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National Education News

A round up of national education news



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Pledge for 6,500 new teachers may not be delivered for years

Special unit assembled in DfE to work on Labour's manifesto commitment, but concern grows over speediness of plan.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE

<https://schoolsworld.co.uk/pledge-for-6500-new-teachers-may-not-be-delivered-for-years/>



What is Ofsted and how will the new school ratings work?

One or two-word Ofsted judgements for schools in England have been scrapped.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-65013919>



Region's high exclusion rate linked to deprivation

A new study says north-east England will continue to have the highest rate of children being excluded and suspended from schools in England.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1k31jd88glo>



What's behind the rapid rise of school suspensions in England?

Record numbers of pupils are being removed from class, with dire consequences for their attainment levels in later life. But is the pandemic solely to blame for this increase in bad behaviour?

READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/sep/06/first-edition-school-exclusions>

Department for Education

A round up of DfE insight, guidance, research and key educational information



Department
for Education

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Education recovery support

A list of resources to help early years settings, schools and 16 to 19 education providers support children and young people's wellbeing and education recovery.

READ MORE [HERE](#)



Targeted retention incentive payments for school teachers

Eligible chemistry, computing, mathematics and physics teachers can apply for targeted retention incentive payments between October and March.

READ MORE [HERE](#)



Local skills improvement plans and employer representative bodies

Local skills improvement plans and annual progress reports for each area of the country, and the designated employer representative bodies leading the plans.

READ MORE [HERE](#)



16 to 19 study programmes: guide for providers

Information for education and training providers on the planning and delivery of study programmes.

READ MORE [HERE](#)



Monitor your school attendance: user guide

Guidance for schools, academy trusts and local authorities using the monitor your school attendance tool.

READ MORE [HERE](#)



Keeping children safe in education

Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment.

READ MORE [HERE](#)

Education Insight

Useful education information



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A new Ofsted?

The announcement on Monday 2nd September that the single word Ofsted judgement is to be immediately removed maybe welcomed by much of the teaching profession, perhaps not universally, 28% of providers in Ofsted's 'Big listen' supported the one-word judgement. Those schools who have just turned a judgement round or reached the dizzy heights of outstanding might be feeling a little aggrieved at the short-lived nature of their recent success.

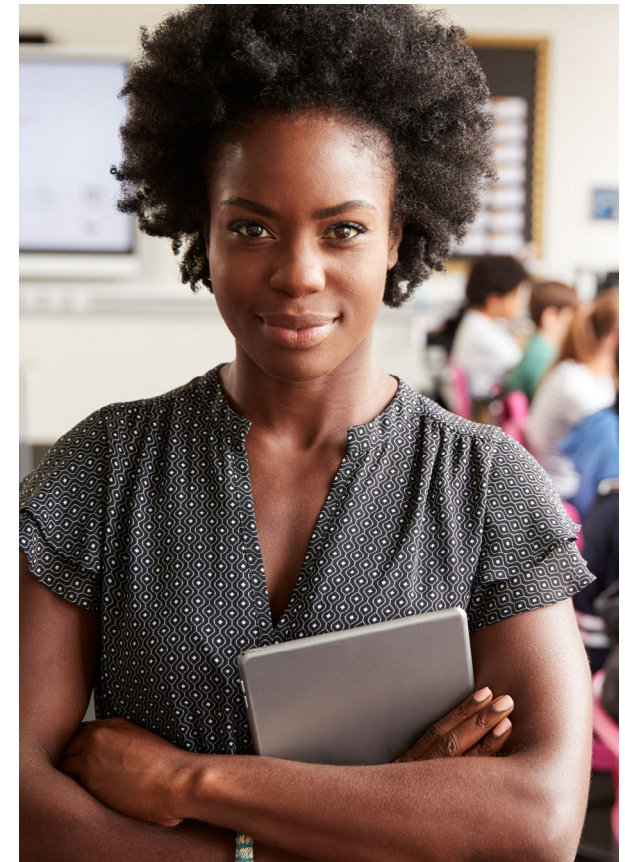
Certainly, the decision to announce the eye-catching measure when teachers were dragging themselves bleary-eyed into assembly halls up and down the country to listen to their leaders set the path for the new academic year was smart politics.

The sector will want to know what the implications for Ofsted and teaching are in the long-term, and how this fits into the wider promised reset of the relationship between the Department for Education and the education workforce?

Immediate impact:

The immediate impact of this measure will be hard to assess. The framework within which Ofsted inspectors currently work will not change immediately. For inspections this academic year, parents will see four grades across the existing sub-categories: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership and management. The impact felt by schools and staff will possibly be noticed in a changed approach and that will be evident in reactions across the sector as this year's set of Inspections roll-out.

As significant as the one-word judgement is the reporting pause in relation to safeguarding concerns, as from this month inspection reports will be paused when safeguarding concerns are identified in an otherwise high-performing school, until inspectors revisit the school within three months. Allowing the school to address the issue in that period appears to be a sensible modification in approach.



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This change reflects key lessons learned from the Gilbert review of the inspection at Caversham and appears implicit in a move towards seeing the inspection process as a means of school improvement. Within the 2nd of September announcement it clearly states; where schools are identified as struggling, government will prioritize rapidly getting plans in place to improve the education and experience of children, rather than relying purely on changing schools' management.

A further tweak to the current system which will be welcome is Ofsted's response to the 'Big listen'; Ofsted will announce all routine inspections on a Monday, with inspections taking place over the following 2 days. This means leaders will know by Monday afternoon if they are being inspected that week, helping to reduce the stress of waiting. This new approach will be piloted over the autumn term. For those with experience of waiting for the Inspection call when in the window this will be a welcome relief and allow them to focus on the school after Monday rather than have one eye on whether the inspection is coming until late Wednesday for months on end.

Long-term changes

The plans for the future of Ofsted are the introduction of the school report card from September 2025 which promises to be focused on driving school improvement. Regional improvement teams will start work in 2025 to work with schools that are struggling and have areas of weakness.

Measures under consultation are:

- A new inspection framework for schools, early years, and further education, which will have greater focus on pupil outcomes to drive higher standards, alongside a range of measures to reduce anxiety for those being inspected.
- Increasing Ofsted's focus and scrutiny on how providers are meeting the needs of vulnerable or disadvantaged children and young people, by consulting on a specific focus on inclusion in report cards. The new measure comes at a time of widening outcome gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils since the pandemic.
- Working with the government to introduce new annual safeguarding, attendance, and off-rolling reviews for schools, to consider how they are meeting their requirements to keep children safe. Ofsted will also consult on a new, stand-alone assessment of safeguarding in its reports.

Other changes are:

- Developing an area insights service using Ofsted's unique position of oversight to share local data.
- Launching an Ofsted academy, aimed at supporting a positive learning culture and embedding Ofsted's values of professionalism, courtesy, empathy, and respect across the organisation.

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What does this mean for the sector?

If you are looking for meaning behind the message the impact will more likely be felt in how the reforms are led and implemented. The sentiments expressed by Martyn Gilbert and Bridgett Phillipson appear to indicate a markedly different tone from previous Chief Inspectors or Education Secretaries.

Martyn Gilbert in the response to the Big Listen talked of regaining the respect of the profession, and acknowledges that “The tragic death of Ruth Perry was a catalyst for this change, but the case for change has been building for years”.

Bridget Phillipson links the changes in Ofsted to her opportunity manifesto promises and change agenda “This government will make inspection a more powerful, more transparent tool for driving school improvement. We promised change, and now we are delivering”.

The key foci of the changes appear to be SEND, attendance, post pandemic widening attainment gaps, anxiety levels of staff and pupils, breaking the link between Ofsted and forced academisation.

Sector professionals should look to what is emphasized in the announcements for where to focus their improvement energies:

- Ofsted commits to putting vulnerable children, such as those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), at the heart of its reforms.
- Widening outcome gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils since the pandemic.
- New annual safeguarding, attendance, and off-rolling reviews for schools, to consider how they are meeting their requirements to keep children safe.
- Range of measures to reduce anxiety for those being inspected.
- The government also currently intervenes where a school receives two or more consecutive judgements of ‘requires improvement’ under the ‘2RI’ policy. Except for those schools already due to convert to academies this term, this policy will change. The government will now put in place support for these schools from a high performing school, helping to drive up standards quickly.

[Single headline Ofsted grades scrapped in landmark school reform - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/building-a-better-ofsted-the-response-to-the-big-listen)

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