



Pearson

Policy Watch

Your guide to what's happening in the world of education



The week in a nutshell

Political party conference season is upon us again and ahead of the Labour gathering in Brighton, leader **Sir Keir Starmer** set out his thoughts on education. In an essay entitled “The road ahead”, Starmer is critical of changes to the education system over the last ten years, warned of the need for the skill system to reflect the changing world of work, and described class sizes as a “disgrace”.

The **ONS** published a report into remote learning during the pandemic. Findings included disadvantaged pupil losing out more than others in terms of material covered online and that remote learning was a ‘partial substitute’ at best.

UCL Institute of Education has found that National Curriculum Key Stage 2 tests taken by 10- and 11-year-old children in England to assess progress in English and Mathematics do not seem to affect children’s wellbeing.

Finally, the new Secretary of State, **Nadhim Zawah** ‘broke ground’ on one of the first 100 schools to be rebuilt under the Prime Minister’s ten-year School Rebuilding Programme at West Coventry Academy.

Top stories

Ofsted launches reviews into tutoring and teacher development

- The first review will consider the [overall quality of tutoring offered by schools and 16 to 19 providers](#), irrespective of whether it is provided directly or through National Tutoring Programme (NTP) tuition partners.
- The evaluation will also consider how well schools and 16 to 19 providers are integrating tutoring into their curriculum planning and delivery, its effect on the overall quality of education, and the likelihood that it will help children catch up.
- The second review will look at the [quality of training and development received by all teachers](#), with a particular focus on the early career framework (ECF) and national professional qualifications (NPQs).
- The regulator will be collecting evidence throughout academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23 to establish the main features of effective teacher development in schools. This data will also help to determine whether the reforms are having an impact on education recovery priorities.

Keir Starmer sets out his vision for schools

- Ahead of their party conference this weekend, the Labour leader published a long-read essay setting out what he stood for, and what he wanted to see for Britain.
- In the essay, Starmer said that by the time they are ten, all children should also have the chance to visit the countryside or city, go to cultural institutions, ride a bike and “learn how to debate their ideas”.
- Starmer warned that changes to education over the past decade had “left us lagging other parts of the world”, with young people’s life chances “severely impacted”.

- He said the education system should be “working with employers” to make education and training “ready for a world of work that will look very different”. That “cannot mean a narrow focus on university”, he warned.
- Starmer also warned that one of the “key drivers” of people choosing to send their children to independent schools was the smaller class sizes. He said it was a “disgrace that secondary school class sizes are now at their highest for 20 years”.
- He also said he wanted to make vocational routes “far more exciting, accessible and rewarding options – designing a system for those young people that is just as ambitious as they are”.

ONS publishes analysis of remote learning over the coronavirus pandemic period

- Remote learning was, at best, a partial substitute for in-class teaching during the pandemic, as pupils covered substantially less material when working from home than their peers in the classroom.
- The difference between the materials covered by remote and in-class pupils was larger for primary schools than for secondary schools.
- The proportion of instruction dependent on parents was much higher for primary schools than for secondary schools, and much higher for pupils in Key Stage 1 than pupils in Key Stage 2.
- The difference between remote and in-class learning was particularly acute at schools with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- Teachers at schools with lower proportions of pupils eligible for FSM also reported pupils’ learning being less dependent on parental instruction than teachers at schools with a higher proportion of FSM pupils.
- Teachers reported a larger reduction in materials covered by remote learners relative to in-school learners for arts, including design and technology than for other subjects.
- Data show little evidence of large differences in materials covered or dependence on parental instruction in different English regions.

IFS publishes reports on the tuition fee system, and graduate earning and geographical mobility

- The [first of the two reports](#), funded by the Department for Education, finds that it would be “essentially impossible” for the Treasury to save money on university tuition fees in England without hurting graduates on average earnings in favour of their wealthy peers.
- Researchers at the IFS [have constructed a calculator](#), in partnership with the Nuffield Foundation, showing the options and costs available to the Treasury, ahead of the response to Augar and the Spending Review.
- Former prime minister Tony Blair said more students from disadvantaged backgrounds [would be encouraged to attend university](#) by restoring maintenance grants in place of loans.
- The [second report](#), in partnership with DfE, finds that higher education enables graduates to move to places with better career prospects, but that this also leads to ‘brain drain’ from the North and coastal areas.

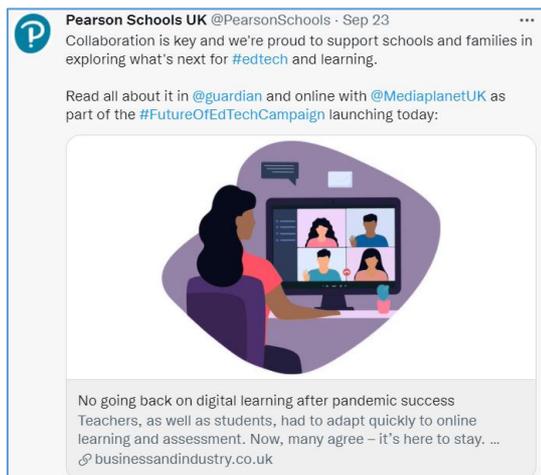
UCL Institute of Education find National Curriculum Key Stage 2 tests taken by 10- and 11-year-old children in England to assess progress in English and Mathematics do not seem to affect children’s wellbeing.

- Children were asked a series of questions on how they felt about themselves and their lives in the lead up to and weeks following the Key Stage 2 tests. For example, **24% of school children in England said they felt unhappy about their schoolwork** prior to the tests and this figure was 28% for children in the rest of the UK. This figure did not significantly increase or decrease in the weeks prior to and after testing.

Pearson news

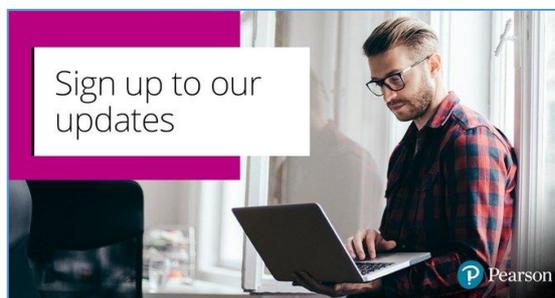
Edexcel newsletter Join our Pearson Edexcel newsletter to keep up with the latest developments in your subject. Plus, we'll let you know about our support for teachers too. [Sign up here](#)

Pearson tweet of the week



Pearson Schools UK @PearsonSchools · Sep 23
Collaboration is key and we're proud to support schools and families in exploring what's next for #edtech and learning.
Read all about it in @guardian and online with @MediaplanetUK as part of the #FutureOfEdTechCampaign launching today:

No going back on digital learning after pandemic success
Teachers, as well as students, had to adapt quickly to online learning and assessment. Now, many agree – it's here to stay. ...
[businessandindustry.co.uk](#)



Other news

Parliamentary

- Ministerial appointments: September 2021
- Department for Education: Major rebuilds begin at schools across England
- Education Select Committee: The state of teaching in England's prisons – Education Committee to question Ofsted and teaching providers
- Department for Education: Free glasses to tackle poor eyesight and boost literacy
- Department for Education: Training launched for mental health leads in schools and colleges
- Department for Education: Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak: 23 March 2020 to 16 September 2021

Regulatory and funding bodies

- Ofqual: New Chief Regulator at Ofqual
- Ofqual: National Reference Test 2022 - information for schools
- Student Loan Company: Early-in-Year Student Withdrawal Notifications Academic Year 2018/19 to 2020/21
- ESFA Update: 22 September 2021

Schools

- UCL: National primary school tests have little effect on children's happiness and wellbeing
- ONS: Remote schooling through the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, England: April 2020 to June 2021
- Children's Commissioner: The Big Answer
- NAHT comments on the results of Children's Commissioner's Big Ask survey
- Local Government Association responds to Children Commissioner's Big Ask survey

Policy Watch

Week ending Friday 24 September 2021

- Barnardo's responds to mental health findings by Children's Commissioner
- NAHT comments on formal testing of primary school children
- Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years: Will Quince appointed children and families minister

Further Education & Skills

- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development: As vacancies surge past one million, new research shows 2 in 5 employers hire ad hoc and are failing to plan for future staff needs

Higher Education

- Institute for Fiscal Studies: London calling? Higher education, geographical mobility and early-career earnings
- Institute for Fiscal Studies: The impact of living costs on the returns to higher education
- Social Market Foundation: The education divide is about disrespect: why it matters and what graduates should do about it
- Social Market Foundation: UK must respect non-graduates or face turmoil – former Cabinet minister
- U-Multirank creates new 'Higher Education Cooperation Index', showing the key to strategic success is cooperation

Scotland

- Scottish Government: Milestone for equality in schools
- Scottish Government: COVID-19 Education Recovery Group minutes: 12 August 2021
- Scottish Government: COVID-19 Education Recovery Group minutes: 19 August 2021

Wales

- Minister for Education and Welsh Language confirms appointments to the Qualifications Wales Board
- Welsh Government: Mapping and review of enterprise and employer engagement (EEE) activity across schools in Wales: final report
- Welsh Government: Written Statement - Journey to Curriculum Rollout

Consultation Watch

Ongoing Consultations

- Assessment arrangements: Welsh Government Closes: 31 October
- Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula Closes: 30 September
- Reforms to Further Education funding and accountability Closes: 7 October
- Prioritising schools for the School Rebuilding Programme Closes: 8 October
- Teacher misconduct: the prohibition of teachers advice Closes 19 October

Parliament is now in recess for the party conference season. The House of Lords will return on 11 October, and the House of Commons will return on 18 October.