

## In the News (30 August 2016)

**Featured news: GCSE and A-level results and performance unclear to schools until autumn under new accountability measures, councils call for LAs to oversee academy budgets, Chairman of Ofsted resigns and Pre-school Alliance warns of possible charges to parents for free childcare**

[According to the Independent Schools' Council, the private school sector has seen a drop in top A-level grades, with 48.7% gaining A or above, down from 49.3% last year \(BBC News, 27 August 2016\).](#) This is still nearly twice the national average. Overall, grades at both state and private schools have remained fairly stable. [The Daily Mail is also reporting the story. The picture for GCSE results is somewhat different, where stories suggest a dramatic decline in GCSE grades \(The Guardian, 25 August 2016\).](#) [The Independent is also reporting on GCSE results.](#)

[Schools will not have a clear understanding of their performance in this year's GCSEs under new accountability measures until new data from the Department for Education is released this autumn \(The TES, 25 August 2016\).](#)

[Council leaders are saying that LAs should oversee academy budgets following a number of financial frauds, and that current scrutiny is ineffective, leaving the media and whistle-blowers to uncover fraud \(BBC News, 26 August 2016\).](#) The government has said that academy schools are subject to more scrutiny than LA schools. [The Daily Mail is also reporting the story. The TES is also reporting the story.](#)

[The Chairman of Ofsted David Hoare has now resigned following pressure to do so after a number of remarks he made about residents in the Isle of Wight, suggesting that there had been 'inbreeding' on the island, and that parts were a 'ghetto' \(The Daily Mail, 23 August 2016\).](#) [The TES is also reporting on the potential impact to Ofsted following the resignation.](#)

[The government scheme offering 30 hours of childcare a week to working parents of three and four-year-olds is to be piloted in York next month \(BBC News, 26 August 2016\).](#) The Pre-school Learning Alliance said providers may refuse to offer the care because it could cost them money. The government has however said it was set to spend a record amount on childcare. [The Independent is also reporting on this.](#)

### School policies, structures and funding

[A pilot scheme to ban parking outside primary schools in Edinburgh has led to an increase in the number of pupils walking to school \(BBC News, 26 August 2016\).](#)

[According to a report by Audit Scotland, more work is needed to gauge the demand for college courses \(BBC News, 25 August 2016\).](#) The report suggests there had been a "steep decline" in the number of part-time students following a shake-up which included mergers and funding changes.

[Research by the Lloyds Banking Group suggests that middle-class families are being priced out of independent school as the cost of educating a child within the independent school system has risen to £157,000, where the average yearly fees for a day pupil have risen from £7,308 to £13,341](#)

[between 2003 and 2016 \(The Daily Mail, 29 August 2016\). The Independent is also reporting the story.](#)

[The Independent is reporting the cost of 'back to school' items and clothing for parents, which is currently just under £200 on average per child \(29 August 2016\).](#)

### Teaching and learning

[Scotland's second largest teaching union the Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association is to ballot its members next month on taking industrial action over excessive workload \(BBC News, 30 August 2016\).](#)

[The budget for teacher training in Scotland has been significantly cut amid the struggle to recruit teachers \(The TES, 29 August 2016\).](#) Universities have called for the Scottish government to increase funding for teacher training after it emerged that spending was now £13 million lower than seven years ago – despite the ongoing recruitment crisis.

[In the survey for The Future Leaders Trust, children have said that it is their parents who are more likely to inspire them to do well in life compared to celebrities or others \(The TES, 26 August 2016\).](#)

[More than 200 state-school pupils from disadvantaged homes will learn computer code, as part of two new pilot schemes designed to improve social mobility in the digital-technology sector \(The TES, 24 August 2016\).](#)

### Curriculum, standards and testing (including AS and A-level results week stories)

[A recent poll by Which? has suggested that over half of this year's university applicants chose A-level subjects without thinking about future prospects, and almost one in five said that choosing different subjects might have been better for their chosen degree subject \(BBC News, 25 August 2016\).](#)

Another 30% however said that they felt adequately informed about how their subjects would affect their university and degree choices, though 29% said they would have appreciated more advice on which subjects to take.

[The NAHT has said schools could refuse to administer the primary school Sats tests if discussions with government are not 'fruitful' \(The TES, 26 August 2016\).](#)

[Research Director at Cambridge Assessment and Chair of the government-commissioned review that led to the introduction of the new curriculum from 2014 Tim Oates has suggested that there should be a 'rethink' on the demanding grammar content on Sats tests for 11 year olds \(The TES, 30 August 2016\).](#)

[The exams regulator Ofqual this year forced Pearson, which runs the Edexcel exam board, to raise its grade boundary for the crucial C grade on a maths GCSE \(The TES, 25 August 2016\).](#) This shift meant a change from 32 to 33 marks required for a Grade C.

### SEND

[According to the result of a survey by Mencap, parents of children with learning disabilities are being 'pushed to breaking point' due to a lack of support over the summer holidays \(BBC News, 25 August 2016\).](#) The survey suggested over half struggled to access short breaks and respite services.

## **Government guidance and consultations**

[NAHT has published a model staff appraisal and capability policy \(23 August 2016\).](#)

