In the News (26 October 2015)

**Featured news: DfE launches consultation on proposals to speed up the transformation of failing and coasting schools, IFS report shows real terms, per-pupil cut for school budgets over the next 5 years and MPs lobby the PM over school funding**

The DfE has launched a consultation on proposals to speed up the transformation of failing and ‘coasting’ schools (21 October 2015). The consultation will run until 18 December. Click [here](#) to find out more.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies has released a report showing how schools will feel the funding difference over the next 5 years in comparison to the previous 5 (21 October 2015). They forecast an 8% cut in real terms per pupil over the next 5 years. The TES is also written about the report’s findings.

Last week, MPs also lobbied the Prime Minister to overhaul the school funding system which would see budgets in some areas cut, and others increased (The TES, 22 October 2015).

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**Curriculum, standards and testing**

**Schools in Wales are set to teach a new curriculum from 2021 (BBC News, 22 October 2015).**

The Daily Mail is reporting the story that Pearson Education, which also owns the EdExcel examination board, has had £1.5 billion knocked off its value after a profits warning sent their shares into a decline last week (21 October 2015). Pearson had downgraded its profit forecasts by 12.5%, and has blamed currency changes and the sale of its Financial Times newspaper.

The TES is also reporting the increase in the number of fines given to parents for taking pupils out of school for term-time holidays (21 October 2015). Meanwhile, the LGA called for a common sense approach when it comes to pupils have time off for holidays during term-time (21 October 2015).

A survey by the National Society for Education in Arts and Design, shows 44% of respondents feels lesson time allocated to art and design has been cut, and more than half feel that in the last five years, the standard achieved by pupils when they enter secondary school has fallen (The TES, 24 October 2015). The Society suggests the fall at KS3 is due to a focus on numeracy and literacy, and that the subjects are suffering as they are not included in the English Baccalaureate measure of core academic subjects.

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**Academisation, free and grammar schools**

The Guardian is reporting the story of the Griffin Schools Trust, who paid over £800,000 in 2 years to consultants in companies in which its founders or trustees had financial interests (24 October 2015). The case is leading to new questions for the government over accountability for the academy schools programme.
The Guardian is also running a speed read article on Free Schools, suggesting the hundreds of thousands of pounds on average free schools have received for children with behavioural difficulties (20 October 2015).

The BBC is also reporting the story that a London MP who says he will help a local grammar school expand to a neighbouring area (23 October 2015). Wallington County Grammar School in Sutton, South London, has expressed an interest in opening a site in non-selective area of Croydon. The news comes just a few weeks after the green light was given to the grammar annexe proposal in another neighbouring county for the Weald of Kent School, which has been criticised in relation to the government’s legislation which has banned the opening of new grammar schools.

Meanwhile, Berkshire County Council are also looking at the possibility of building a grammar school in Maidenhead (BBC News, 22 October 2015).

The Daily Mail is reporting the story that former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell has ambitions of opening a free school which would specialise in arts and business education (25 October 2015). The plans are apparently in an early phase. The Guardian is also reporting the story.

School funding, places and free school meals

The TES is reporting the anonymous story of the parent who played the admissions system to get their child into the good local Catholic school in the area (22 October 2015). Meanwhile a survey of 1,000 parents suggests that overall, over 80% of them are happy with their child’s education (The TES, 23 October 2015).

The TES is also reporting the story that ministers are considering plans to give additional Pupil Premium money to disadvantaged pupils who start school with lower attainment levels, which would come from cutting pupil premium funding for higher-attaining pupils (23 October 2015).

Teaching and learning

A new report was released on Friday looking at the reasons why people go into teaching and remain in the profession (23 October 2015). The study, conducted by LKMco, was based on 1009 respondents data and suggests over half go into and stay in teaching to make a difference to pupils’ lives. Results also vary in terms of reasons around subject interest. A number said once they had entered the profession, holiday and pay became important, with 65% saying it was an important factor for them staying in teaching, compared to 52% who said it was important at the point they entered teaching.

A new research study is going to focus on how children in military families feel about frequently changing schools (The TES, 25 October 2015). The aim is to help improve military’s children’s time in education.

Wellington College, a private Berkshire-based school, has called upon Rikki Arundel, a transgender woman, to come and talk to pupils about gender equality (The TES, 23 October 2015).

A survey of teachers (conducted by the TES), suggests that the secondary school staffroom may be a thing of the past. The survey suggests around a third rarely or never used the staffroom, and nearly 2/3 said they used the staffroom less now than when they started in the profession (26 October 2015).

International teaching and learning
Barack Obama has called for schools in the US to limit testing in favour of introducing more creativity in the classroom, a move which resonates with some viewpoints in the UK (The TES, 26 October 2015). The Guardian is also reporting the story.

Author and academic Sir Anthony Seldon says China’s education system needs to change or risk its youngsters and its economy suffering in the future (BBC News, 23 October 2015). Chinese education is criticised for its rote, repetitive approach to learning, which were particularly apparent following experiments in the UK using Chinese teaching methods.

Safeguarding, SEND and mental health

Mary Bousted, leader of the ATL, is warning of the stress on teachers, where there have been stories of teachers reduced to tears and not being helped with their workloads. Bousted is calling on Headteachers to back their staff. The BBC is reporting the story, and Bousted originally wrote a recent article in the TES.

A survey commissioned by AVG Technologies suggests children are being cyberbullied (one in 14 pupils), are accessing inappropriate material (one in 20 pupils) or being targeted by extremist groups (one in 33 pupils), all whilst working online in school (The TES, 20 October 2015).

DfE and EFA Guidance, press releases and consultations

The DfE has also released research on the current childcare and early education programme in England (23 October 2015).

The DfE has updated its Pupil Premium funding allocations webpage for 2015-16 (23 October 2015). The page now has a link to the ‘Focus on Pupil Premium’ video.

The DfE has released PE and Sport Premium funding allocation details for 2015-16 (22 October 2015). The figures are unchanged from last year (schools with 16 or fewer pupils receive £500 per pupil, schools with 17 or more pupils receive £8,000 plus £5 per pupil).

Schools needs to ensure they are publishing certain information on their websites. Click here for the list developed by the NGA.

Last week, the Government released its counter-terrorism strategy (19 October 2015). The strategy includes the requirement on schools to make sure that the identities of governors are publicly available to parents and wider communities.