

In the News (15 August 2016)

Featured news: 24 new grammar schools to be opened, 'ignore' PISA tests expert suggests, three quarters of secondary pupils think they will be going to university but half of them fear the costs, and Ofsted chair under pressure to resign

[According to the TES, up to 24 new grammar schools, might be opened by the Government in working class areas, with a focus on providing for hardworking, middle income families \(The TES, 13 August 2016\). The Daily Mail is also reporting the story. The Times is also reporting the story. There are concerns that opening grammar schools could makes the teacher supply crisis worse \(The TES, 10 August 2016\).](#)

[According to Professor Yong Zhao, from the University of Oregon in the US, countries should "ignore" the world's most influential education rankings \(PISA\) because they fail to measure what matters \(The TES, 14 August 2016\).](#)

[According to a survey carried out by the Sutton Trust, more than three-quarters of secondary pupils think that they are likely to enter higher education, but half of those fear that they won't be able to afford the costs \(The TES, 12 August 2016\). The Guardian is also reporting the story. The Independent is also reporting the story.](#)

[Pressure has been mounting on Ofsted chair David Hoare to resign, with senior members of the inspectorate understood to feel "undermined" by him publicly stating that he wanted a non-teacher as the watchdog's next chief inspector \(The TES, 9 August 2016\). As TES exclusively revealed last week, **Mr Hoare** admitted that he "did not want a teacher to run Ofsted" because he wanted someone who "would listen very closely" and "understand the issues". The Ofsted chairman has also been heavily criticised for describing the Isle of Wight – one of England's most educationally low-achieving areas – as a "ghetto" that suffers from "inbreeding". Mr Hoare issued an "unreserved apology" for his comments, which he "publicly extended to everyone on the Isle of Wight".](#)

School policies, structures and funding

[The UK's leading social mobility charity has responded to government plans for more grammar schools by calling for a national drive to improve education for "highly able" pupils in comprehensives \(The TES, 8 August 2016\).](#)

[According to Paschal Donohoe, Irish Fine Gael Politician, schools should offer generic uniforms so that parents can save money on back-to-school bills \(The Times, 13 August 2016\).](#)

[All 17 schools in Edinburgh that were closed this year because of safety fears have reopened ahead of schedule \(The Times, 12 August 2016\).](#)

Teaching and learning

[Teachers are to be asked to submit challenging GCSE and A-level exam questions to Cambridge Assessment \(who own OCR\), with the best appearing on exam papers in England within the next](#)

[five years \(BBC News, 15 August 2016\)](#). There are concerns these "crowdsourced" exam questions could give some pupils an unfair advantage. [The TES is also reporting the story](#). [The Independent is also reporting the story](#).

[According to research by the University of Cambridge](#), the effect of having a positive relationship with a teacher can last up to 4 years, that children who have a positive relationship with a primary schoolteacher go on to be less aggressive as teenagers, and the key time for this effect is around age 10-11 (The TES, 9 August 2016).

Curriculum, standards and testing

[Hundreds of schoolchildren will be given free visits to local theatres, museums and galleries as part of a new scheme to increase access to the arts \(The TES, 10 August 2016\)](#). The Cultural Citizens Programme will target disadvantaged communities where few people currently visit museums, galleries or the theatre and will give children the opportunity of a behind-the-scenes look at cultural institutions, culture secretary Karen Bradley announced. The pilot programme will include 600 children and will be launched in September in three areas: Liverpool and Blackpool, Birmingham and Barking and Dagenham.

[Schools and colleges are being warned to expect "more variation" in AS-level results in England this year \(BBC News, 9 August 2016\)](#). Results in the 13 decoupled subjects have been "relatively stable in recent years", according to a report from Ofqual. However, this year "we expect that there will be more variability than between 2015 and 2016". [The Daily Mail is also reporting the story](#). [The TES is also reporting the story](#). [The Guardian is also reporting the story](#).

[A YouGov poll for TES has found that nearly half of teachers lack confidence that this summer's A-level and GCSE results will be true reflections of their pupils' achievements \(The TES, 12 August 2016\)](#). Just 6% have total confidence in the grades pupils will receive.

Safeguarding

[Three-quarters of parents think sexting is harmful, yet most have made no effort to find out more about the practice of sharing indecent photographs and videos, according to a survey to be published this week \(The Times, 14 August 2016\)](#).

SEND

[According to a poll by ATL of 600 staff, more than 80% felt that pupils with special needs are being failed by the system, where there is a lack of support for them \(BBC News, 12 August 2016\)](#). Nearly 71% felt that the school system was failing to identify all children with special needs quickly enough and almost half said they were unable to access support and training they needed to help their pupils. [The TES is also reporting the story](#).

Higher education (HE)

[According to a YouGov survey, more than a third of UK female students and a fifth of male students have mental health problems, meaning around a quarter overall \(BBC News, 11 August 2016\)](#). Of these, the rates for depression and anxiety were very similar (77 and 74% respectively).

[A new report suggests graduate debt this year will be around £41,000, approximately a third of the average mortgage debt, as debts continue to rise \(BBC News, 9 August 2016\)](#).

[More pupils from Scotland got a university place on exams results day than in any previous year \(BBC News, 9 August 2016\).](#)

[A ComRes poll suggests young people from low-income backgrounds feel considerably less likely to attend university compared with their more well-off peers \(The Daily Mail, 15 August 2016\).](#) The original TES story can be accessed from [here](#).

Youth funding

[A report for the Unison trade union shows how UK youth services are under intense financial pressure, with the report highlighting the need for councils to 'look at new ways' to secure youth services \(BBC News, 12 August 2016\).](#) Over 600 youth centres have been closed, 3650 staff have lost their jobs and 139,000 youth places have been cut.

Government guidance and consultations

The DfE and SFA has published [proposals for a new funding model for apprenticeships](#) and further details on the apprenticeship levy (12 August 2016). Under the plans for the levy, the government has proposed that employers that are too small to pay the levy - around 98% of employers in England - will have 90% of the costs of training paid for by the government. Extra support - worth £2,000 per trainee - will also be available for employers and training providers that take on 16- to 18-year-old apprentices or young care leavers. Employers with fewer than 50 employees will also have 100% of training costs paid for by government if they take on these apprentices. [The BBC is reporting on the £2,000 incentive for trainees.](#)

[The apprenticeships levy guidance has been updated to include information about proposals to make changes to apprenticeship funding from May 2017 \(DfE, 12 August 2016\).](#)

[Education Secretary Justine Greening announced major changes to deliver a fairer funding system for nurseries, preschools and childminders with the aim of supporting ordinary families with the cost of childcare \(DfE, 11 August 2016\).](#)

[The DfE is seeking views on proposed changes to funding free childcare and early education for 3- and 4-year-olds, including a new national funding formula. The deadline for this consultation is 22 September, 5pm. The TES is also reporting on the proposal.](#)

[The Schools: Statutory guidance has been updated to include the school teachers' pay and conditions 2016 information under the staff employment and teachers' pay heading \(DfE, 10 August 2016\).](#)

The early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP), a series of teacher assessments of children's skills at the end of their first year of primary education, was set to become non-statutory for schools from September 2016 under plans announced by the Department for Education in 2014 (The DfE and the TES, 11 August 2016). However, an email sent to heads by the Standards and Testing Agency today said the assessments would now continue to be a statutory requirement for schools in the 2016-17 school year.