

**Featured news: Union raises issue for SBPs, funding issues in Wales**

[Budget cuts bigger problem for schools than funding models](#) – The impact of budget cuts is the biggest problem facing schools, the Association of Headteachers and Deputies in Scotland has warned. In a submission to a Scottish Government consultation on whether funding models for schools should change, it said: "It is clear there is a shortage of funding in schools... Even the best organised devolved school management systems or any successor scheme will not overcome this." The union also raised concerns about the need for business managers in every school to support a shift to direct funding. A separate submission by School Leaders Scotland called for a shake-up of pay scales. (The Herald, 3 November 2017)

[Most schools in Wales struggling financially](#) – The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) Cymru has said the majority of schools in Wales are struggling to make ends meet and the Welsh Government's education budget is not helping. ASCL calculated the budget shows an overall cut of £35m, meaning the £170m over two years (£85m per year) would in real terms be reduced to £50m this year. (Wales Online, 2 November 2017)

[Powys schools' overspend 'putting them at risk'](#) – Powys Council's failure to intervene has led to schools overspending by millions putting them "at risk". Schools are predicted to have a deficit of £5.4m by 2019-20, with some dipping into council reserves in addition to their own budgets. A council report said the authority has known about the growing deficit for some time but has been "reluctant to use powers" to directly intervene, which has been seen as a "weakness" by the schools that have "sensed that little action would be taken", and that the issue was now "very urgent". (BBC, 3 November 2017)

**Leading Support Services**

[National education policy](#) (see Finance section for education funding policy news)

[Scandinavian-approach takes pre-school provision by storm](#) – The Telegraph profiles Tarka, a London pre-school company offering physical, "brain-stimulating" classes to children between the ages of two and six. Set up by two ex-Army officers, its ethos is inspired by the Scandinavian approach to primary education, which prioritises exercise and co-ordination above classroom, blackboard-led learning. The founders say the UK system is "sorely lacking" in teaching children basic, practical skills, while education budgets are not geared towards recognising that the brain develops mostly before the age of six. Meanwhile, Tarka's instructors are nearly all men, "because children need male role models to look up to". (The Telegraph, 4 November 2017)

[Local level school leadership and policy](#)

[Scottish Borders school estate 'foundations' outlined](#) – Proposals have been drawn up to shape education in the Borders. A detailed assessment of secondary schools is being sought, while councillors will also be asked to agree to close three mothballed primaries. If agreed, they would see a move towards the long term aim of delivering "intergenerational learning opportunities". Service director Donna Manson said: "We will be looking to work with communities to maximise the learning opportunities and potential available for all ages". (BBC, 1 November 2017)

## Health and wellbeing

[New guide calls for pollution action at schools](#) – Schools have been urged to install air pollution monitors and encourage families to walk or cycle to school to help keep children safe from “toxic air”. Guidance published by the National Education Union and the British Lung Foundation also suggests that children could be taught about air pollution in science, citizenship, English or geography lessons. The British Lung Foundation said: “This guidance will address the lack of information and data available to teachers and parents”. (The Belfast Telegraph, 1 November 2017)

## Health and safety

[Pupil died after sliding on bannisters](#) – A 12-year-old boy died after sliding down bannisters at his school, falling about six metres, an inquest has heard. Michael Sousa fell at Jane Austen college, in Norwich, in January. Teacher Jamie Turner said he saw Michael sliding down bannisters earlier, and reprimanded him. Rebecca Handley-Kirk, acting head at the time, said staff were on duty between lessons monitoring behaviour, and a health and safety investigation by the Education Funding Agency had not made any recommendations for changes. (BBC, 30 October 2017)

## Safeguarding

[Extremist organisation working with schools](#) – Police forces, teachers and town halls have been working with a group that promotes extremism, researchers say. Muslim Engagement and Development (Mend) are claimed to have legitimised the killing of British troops and promoted conspiracy theories, according to the Henry Jackson Society, a Conservative think tank. A former Mend director Azad Ali, who has supported the killing of British soldiers, has given presentations in schools, and Mend first piloted lesson plans and school packs with the NASUWT for schools in Humberside, Leeds and Bradford. It has reported conducting teacher training sessions in Yorkshire. (The Times, 31 October 2017)

[Parents speak out over school toilet cameras](#) – Some parents have complained after a West Midland’s school installed CCTV cameras in the toilets to combat bullying and vandalism. Summerhill School’s executive headteacher James Bowkett stressed the cameras are not directed at urinals or into cubicles: “Following some disappointing behaviour from our students, who were not maintaining our high standards of behaviour whilst in the toilet areas, we took the decision to extend the network of cameras to these areas,” he explained. (BBC, 1 November 2017)

[14-year-olds charged with school attack plot](#) – Two 14-year-olds have appeared at Leeds Magistrates Court charged with plotting a Columbine School-style attack to kill children and teachers at Northallerton School and Sixth Form College. The pair were initially arrested on suspicion of preparing for an act of terrorism, but were charged with conspiracy to murder. (The Times, 3 November 2017)

[Sexting code guide for teachers](#) – Teachers have been issued with a guide to a “sexting code” used by children. While youngsters have been using abbreviations to communicate with each other since text messaging was invented, there have been growing fears that the texts have become increasingly sexual and graphic. The guide includes phrases such as CU46 - see you for sex and GNOC - get naked on cam. The Sun reports that the guide has been welcomed by teachers. One said: "It's useful to teachers because we often see what students are texting each other and we don't understand what they're saying - but now we can intervene and stop it." (The Sun, 3 November 2017)

## Equality and social mobility

[The few still dominate top positions](#) – Old boys of nine top public schools are 94 times more likely to hold the most powerful jobs in the country, research from the London School of Economics suggests. It shows male alumni from the Clarendon Schools – Eton, Harrow, Charterhouse, Merchant Taylors', Rugby, Shrewsbury, St Paul's, Westminster, and Winchester College – hold almost 10% of top positions, despite educating only 0.15% of pupils. Authors Dr Aaron Reeves and Dr Sam Friedman said the schools' power “remains a testament to how far adrift Britain lies from true equality of opportunity” and that it goes “beyond simple academic excellence and may be rooted in an extensive extra-curricular education that endows old boys with a particular way of being that signals elite male status”. (The Mail, 30 October 2017)

## SEND

[Oldham SEN pupils let down by council](#) – Oldham Council's special educational needs department has been criticised by Ofsted after an inspection found it was taking too long to assess children, leading to a delay in getting them the correct support and to poor educational outcomes. In some cases, SEN assessments were taking six months, inspectors found. Ofsted also found data about SEN children was inaccurate, and Oldham's SEN pupils perform below national and regional GCSE averages. (Manchester Evening News, 1 November 2017)

## **HR**

### Disciplinary, legal and trade union action

[EHRC takes legal action against Greening](#) – Lawyers for families whose children have been victims of rape, sexual assault and harassment by fellow school pupils have stepped up action against the education secretary, with a letter threatening judicial review proceedings. The Equality and Human Rights Commission is funding a legal challenge, which accuses Justine Greening of being in breach of the Equality Act 2010 and failing to act to protect children from sexual abuse and harassment by classmates. The families are demanding to know when new guidance to schools will be released, and want the Government to require schools to protect the victim and their right to education, and to consider suspending alleged perpetrators. (The Guardian, 4 November 2017)

## **Infrastructure**

### Class sizes

[Super-sized classes growing](#) – Figures released to the Sunday Times under freedom of information laws have revealed how hundreds of children are being taught in classes with more than 100 pupils. Campaigners says the figures are evidence of school funding cuts hurting education. The DfE said the figures relate to lessons where it is not uncommon for classes to be taught together. (The Sunday Times, 5 November 2017)

### Governance

[SPTC: Headteachers riding roughshod over the rights of parent councils](#) – The Scottish Parent Teacher Council claims that headteachers are “riding roughshod” over parent councils in the wake of plans to give more powers to school leaders. The SPTC said members had reported a raft of concerns including heads demanding control over the agendas for meetings and refusing to provide information. (The Herald, 2 November 2017)

## New schools, expansions, mergers and closures

[Music school redistribution slammed](#) – Closing a world-renowned music school in the centre of Edinburgh to redistribute musical education elsewhere in the city will prevent children from accessing tuition across the country, according to campaigners. They say plans to re-home the City of Edinburgh Music School in four schools across the capital will cut both the instrumental music service and its status as a national centre of excellence, and will be “damaging” to pupils who want to come into general instrumental tuition. The council says the move will allow greater access to musical education. (The Scotsman, 31 October 2017)

[The future look of schools](#) – Lime Tree Primary Academy, an Atkins-designed forest school for 420 pupils in Greater Manchester, widely recognised as a template for the future of education, is profiled. “Lime Tree Academy has no corridors but is made up of a village of pavilions that interact with the external environment, enabling the Forest School ethos of outdoor teaching to be realised,” says Philip Watson, Atkins’ UK design director and head of education. The Telegraph explores how the school’s innovative architecture can transform education. (The Telegraph, 1 November 2017)

[Mega school opposition gathers pace](#) – Opposition to a new “mega school” in Leeds is mounting. Leeds City Council has proposed to make Moor Allerton Hall Primary School and Allerton Grange School a four-form entry all-through school on one combined site, creating 60 new reception places each year from September 2018. School leaders say they, staff, and parents, are not being given enough information on issues from changes to leadership and staffing to infrastructure. (Yorkshire Post, 3 November 2017)

## **Teaching and learning**

### International

[Italian kids taught to fight fake news](#) – Italy has launched a scheme to turn its secondary school pupils into internet “hoax-hunters”. The programme to help pupils to spot fake news on social media is promoted at a school in Rome. Among its recommendations are to refrain from sharing unconfirmed stories; to use search engines to check news; and to demand to know the original source of a report. “Students mustn’t be passive consumers of technology but become producers of information and knowledge themselves,” education minister Valeria Fedeli said. (The Times, 1 November 2017)

## **Government announcements, guidance, consultations and funding**

[News Story](#) – Justine Greening has announced new pilot programmes to employ teachers flexibly, and coaching schemes for women working in education. (DfE, 30 October 2017)

[News Story](#) – Education Secretary Justine Greening opens the Institute for Teaching, urging the profession to embrace the “high-quality training” it will provide. (DfE, 2 November 2017)

[Speech](#)- Nick Gibb: “The power of greater freedom and autonomy for schools”, delivered at FASNA Autumn conference. (DfE, 2 November 2017)

[News story](#) – Relationships and Sex Education for the 21st Century – Ian Bauckham to advise government on improving Relationships and Sex Education in schools. (DfE, 6 November 2017)