

# Schools Research News

## June - July 2010

This newsletter is produced by the Chief Adviser on School Standards Unit at the Department for Education, and is intended to help keep policy and field staff, practitioners, teacher educators and others with an interest in education up to date with recently published research. If you would like to be added to, or removed from, the circulation list please email [research.summaries@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:research.summaries@education.gsi.gov.uk)

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### 1. Recently published schools research

#### [Guidance for pupils studying science](#) (Ofsted)

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This inspection study examined science curriculum provision at Key Stage 4 in 45 secondary schools and surveyed pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 to find out how they were guided towards specific science courses. Some 1,623 Key Stage 4 pupils returned completed questionnaires and 422 pupils were interviewed as part of the study.

#### **Key findings from the study:**

Inspectors found that the vast majority of Year 10 pupils were following science courses well matched to their talents, and sufficiently broad enough to permit successful progression to further science study in Year 12. However, the opportunities for pupils following a vocational Key Stage 4 course to continue with a level 3 (e.g. A level) science-based qualification were considered to be too limited, and this information was not always made clear to pupils.

Of the 45 schools visited, 34 were offering a pathway of triple science, and all but one of the remaining schools were planning to do so from September 2010. Some schools had not been fully aware of the statutory requirements for science that 'all maintained schools must offer any pupil who so wishes the opportunity to study *either* GCSEs in Science and Additional Science or Triple Science'.

In 33 of the schools visited, Year 9 pupils had already begun GCSE or vocational science courses. Schools said that this had been made easier by the ending of the Key Stage 3 statutory tests.

The schools were using the increased flexibility of Key Stage 3 to emphasise the development of practical science skills, with a focus on making science engaging and enjoyable for pupils.

The schools that were embarking on a three-year Key Stage 4 science programme were keen for the early release of the proposed new GCSE specifications, since they already (in Spring 2010) had pupils studying on the courses designed for completion in summer 2012.

All but two of the schools were seen to be firmly directing Key Stage 3 pupils to one of their available science pathways at Key Stage 4. The vast majority of the 422 pupils who were interviewed as part of the study as well as those who made written comments in the questionnaire, felt they had little choice about the science course they were studying. However, only 5 percent who completed the questionnaire reported they were unhappy with their science programme.

The 25 schools currently offering a vocational pathway tended to be very selective about which pupils they enrolled. Schools based the decision on their perception of a pupil's aptitude for course assessment using solely coursework, with no written test component. For such pupils, schools believed that these courses would lead to better grades than a more traditional examination-based qualification.

All the schools visited provided information to pupils and their parents and carers about science courses. Half of the schools had considered the readability of the information and made suitable

adjustments, but others had used verbatim text from examination board information; for example in relation to examination formats and different kinds of assessment strategies. In the questionnaire, 6 percent of Key Stage 4 pupils used careers adviser staff as a source of information on science courses.

From the questionnaire, 22 percent of the pupils had been given information about careers they could do with science qualifications. Staff were aware of the limitations of following particular courses but this awareness was not automatically translated into the basis for advice.

Pupils who had followed a vocational course at Key Stage 4 had limited opportunities for studying vocational science at either level 2 or level 3 at post-16 level, and were judged to be ill-prepared to switch back to separate sciences at AS and A level. Pupils who had studied applied science at GCSE could continue to applied science A level, but were not easily able to pick up a separate A-level science. This limitation was not the case for pupils who studied double award or triple science at Key Stage 4: they could choose vocational or applied level 3 science courses as well as the separate science AS/A levels.

## **Interactive Whiteboards and Collaborative Pupil Learning in Primary Science**

(University of Cambridge)

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This study investigated what happened when a wall-mounted interactive whiteboard (IWB) was used by groups of primary school children (8-10 years old) as they worked together on science activities. The main aim of the research was to find out if and how children could use the IWB to share ideas, solve problems and build knowledge together, and in what the IWB may offer as a distinctive classroom tool for children's collaborative learning. Case studies of collaborative group activity in twelve primary classrooms were compiled using video recordings and interviews gathered during one school year. The focus was on a series of science lessons planned by the participating teachers, in which children considered their options, planned their activity and made joint decisions about the task in hand. None of the children had worked with others at the IWB prior to these lessons and so had little or no experience of this technology except through observing their teachers.

### **Key findings from the study:**

The study found that the IWB did offer some useful and distinctive facilities for supporting children's group discussion and science learning. For example, it allowed teachers to structure a task by arranging material in a specific sequence on the IWB, for children to access and act upon as they progressed.

In terms of the children's use, the IWB allowed children to:

- access relevant material prepared by the teacher and move easily back and forward through it according to their needs;
- annotate that material to take account of their discussion;
- remove and modify what they have written to take account of each others' views and their changing shared ideas;
- ensure that all members of the group can see evidence of what is being discussed and what each has contributed, and thus advance the discussion and learning collectively.

The researchers noted that some of these things could be achieved using pen-and-paper, or other conventional means. But the IWB was found to make these things easier because of the way material could be more easily shared (within the group), retrieved, modified and stored. Classroom observations indicated that using the IWB seemed to motivate the children and most observed groups stayed well on task for the whole of their allocated time. The teacher's supporting role remained important for the children, and the IWB helped to maintain this contact even when the teacher was physically elsewhere in the classroom.

However, the researchers also found that in some ways the IWB was not well suited to the needs of a children's discussion group. For example, the IWB's size and location was found at times to prevent small children reaching all parts of the interactive screen easily. In addition, as with any computer-based technology, technical failures or 'unfriendly' responses by the machine sometimes stopped children's science activity altogether, while they waited for it to be sorted out by the teacher or tackled the problem themselves.

The researchers concluded that the IWB was useful for supporting children's discussion and science learning – but only as long as the teacher helped children develop the appropriate skills for collaboration and discussion before they used it, and offered them suitably designed tasks which made best use of the affordances of the board.

## **Current working conditions and experiences of supply teachers (NASUWT)**

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This study looked at supply teachers' working conditions and experiences, and was based on 1,800 survey responses from supply teachers registered with the NASUWT. The survey was undertaken in 2008 but has only just been published. Sixty-five per cent of survey respondents were female, which according to the researchers broadly reflected the proportion of women in the teaching workforce at the time. However respondents also included a disproportionately high number of teachers aged over 50, and a disproportionately low number of teachers under the age of 35 (who were also mainly women).

### **Key findings from the survey:**

Respondents were asked to indicate the reason why they chose to work on a supply basis. Some 41 percent said they chose to undertake supply work to supplement their teacher pension, while around a third of respondents (31 percent) said they had made a career choice to work on this basis. Four percent of respondents said they were working on a supply basis pending a successful application for permanent or temporary contracted employment. However, 11 percent said they were working on a supply basis because they were unable to secure an alternative permanent/temporary post.

Respondents were asked to indicate their current employment status. Respondents stated that in just over half the cases (53 percent) they obtained supply work through personal contacts with schools. Around a quarter of respondents (26 percent) said they were employed through an agency, while 13 percent said they were employed by a local authority as part of a supply pool, and eight percent said they obtained ad hoc supply work through a local authority on a day-by-day basis.

The majority (90 percent) of supply teachers advised that they were always paid within an agreed period for the work. However, nine percent stated that they were not paid in a timely way for the work undertaken.

Around half of respondents (51 percent) said they were satisfied with their access to opportunities to undertake long-term supply work compared to 15 percent who said that they were dissatisfied.

Around three quarters of respondents (74 percent) said they were satisfied with their access to opportunities to undertake short-term supply work compared to 16 percent who said that they were dissatisfied.

Around a fifth of all respondents (21 percent) and 40 percent of respondents aged under 35 said they were dissatisfied with their access to opportunities to gain permanent employment compared to 31 percent who were satisfied (42 percent of respondents aged under 35).

Three quarters of respondents (76 percent) said they were satisfied with their access to opportunities to teach in their preferred subject or key stage compared to 13 percent who said that they were dissatisfied.

Three quarters of respondents (74 percent) said they were satisfied with the quality of support and advice they received from their employer compared to 18 percent who are dissatisfied.

Over half of respondents (58 percent) said they were satisfied with the quality of support and information they received when starting a new placement compared to 16 percent who were dissatisfied.

Over two thirds of respondents (69 percent) said they were satisfied with the support they were provided with on behaviour management in the schools that they worked in compared to a quarter of respondents who were dissatisfied. This increased to 34 percent of respondents aged under-35 who were dissatisfied with the support that they were provided with on behaviour management.

Over two thirds of respondents (67 percent) said they were satisfied with the quality of information about the curriculum, schemes of work, policies and procedures in the schools where they worked compared to one in four respondents (26 percent) who were dissatisfied. While, 39 percent of all respondents said they were dissatisfied by their ability to access professional development/CPD compared to 33 percent who were satisfied.

## **Increased expenditure on associate staff in schools and changes in student attainment** (Institute of Education, London)

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The TDA and SSAT commissioned this study which investigated the relationship between increasing expenditure on support staff and changes in pupil attainment. To examine this relationship, three sources of data were gathered from 83 maintained secondary schools which comprised:

- data on school expenditure - schools were asked to provide details of the total spending on pastoral (e.g. pastoral support staff and behaviour support workers) or curriculum staffing (in £s) during the financial year April 1st 2005 to March 31st 2006 and again for the financial year April 1st 2008 to March 31st 2009. This included all regular annual income, irrespective of the funding source but including Standards Fund, SEN, Specialist School funds etc but not including one-off grants or capital funding.
- data on changes in staffing including details of the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) numbers of staff in 2005-6 and in 2008-9.
- attainment at Key Stage 4 (proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs A\* - C including English and Maths) over the same period.

The researchers highlighted that care needed to be taken when attempting to generalise the findings nationally as the achieved sample of 83 schools were performing significantly higher than average in attainment at KS4. They also noted however, that the study did not specifically explore the relationship between associate staffing and attainment in low or average achieving schools.

### **Key findings from the study:**

The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between increases in expenditure on teaching assistants and improvements in attainment.

The study found that there was no significant relationship between additional expenditure on staff other than teaching assistants (TAs) and subsequent improvements in attainment. There was also found to be no associated rise in pupil attainment with increased spending on any one particular grouping of associate staff (i.e. all curriculum, all pastoral and all curriculum and pastoral).

Increasing the absolute (FTE) number of TAs in the school, more than any other category of associate staff, was positively associated with increased pupil attainment. The researchers suggested this meant that increasing the absolute number of teacher assistants rather than just increasing spending on all staff had the greatest potential to increase pupil attainment.

The researchers noted that one potential problem in analysing whether increases in TAs are linked to increases in attainment is that the analysis does not take into account those schools that may already have high numbers of TAs and do not increase this number. The analysis looked at this issue and found that there was a significant relationship between the total number of TAs in the school in 2005 and again in 2008 with increases in attainment.

Overall the analysis showed that increasing the number of TAs was significantly associated with improved pupil attainment. It showed that schools that have fewer TAs tended to do less well than schools that have a high density of TAs. Therefore the study found the larger the number of TAs in a school the more possibility there is of improved pupil attainment.

The analysis showed however that there was no significant relationship between the number of registered Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) in a school and rises in attainment over the three years when taking into account increases in the total number of all types of TAs in the schools. Instead it showed that increasing the number of all types of TAs accounted for the changes in attainment more consistently than increasing the number of HLTAs.

There was also no significant effect on subsequent rises in attainment for TAs becoming HLTAs. The critical factor was seen as the density of TAs in the school and the nature of their deployment.

## **[Taking abuse – the experiences of teachers working with pupils with challenging behaviours in alternative provision](#)** (NASUWT)

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This study surveyed teachers and headteachers working in special schools and other specialist settings via an online survey on the NASUWT website about their experiences of working with pupils with challenging behaviour. Some 1,431 responses were received. The vast majority (90 percent) of respondents were teachers working in special schools and specialist settings in England. The remaining responses were from teachers in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The teachers who responded to the survey taught pupils with a wide range of special educational needs, although 85 percent reported that the children they taught included those with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.

### **Key findings from the survey:**

The majority of respondents (82 percent) said that their school setting had established a whole-school behaviour policy. Ten percent did not know if their school had a policy in place and seven percent of respondents said that their school did not have a pupil behaviour policy. Teachers in independent special schools (9 percent of respondents) were twice as likely as teachers in general to report the absence of a whole-school behaviour policy.

In the majority of cases, teachers indicated that their school's behaviour policy had been agreed with staff (66 percent). However, 16 percent stated that the school's policy had not been subject to agreement with staff. Teachers working in the independent sector were less likely to have been consulted on the school's behaviour policy than those working in the maintained sector.

Some 37 percent of teachers felt confident that the behaviour policy was being applied consistently by all staff. Teachers felt that inconsistent application of the behaviour policy was a feature of practice of the full range of staff within the school, including the most senior.

In those schools where respondents said that their school had an agreed behaviour policy in place, 68 percent confirmed that it included a referral procedure, and just over half of these respondents (54 percent) were confident that the school's referral system worked effectively.

The survey asked teachers to say whether they received timely support and feedback after referring a pupil for a behaviour issue. Just under half (48 percent) of all respondents said that they received timely

support while 40 percent of teachers said that they received timely feedback after referring a pupil as a result of poor behaviour.

The majority (85 percent) of respondents said that during the course of the previous two years they had needed to access some form of additional support to deal with poor pupil behaviour and indiscipline. Teachers mostly sought support from their line managers or the leadership team within the school or setting.

Around half of the teachers said that they had accessed additional support to help with behaviour management in the form of external continuing professional development and around one third had accessed additional support from their local authority.

Participating teachers said they experienced poor pupil behaviour on a daily basis. The top five specified types of incident experienced by teachers every day were: low level disruption; verbal abuse; name calling; threatening language or behaviour.

The survey asked teachers to indicate the extent to which they had been subject to allegations by pupils or others in the course of the previous two years as a result of how the teacher had managed pupil behaviour. Some 18 percent of the teachers who responded reported that they had been subject to a complaint or allegation relating to their management of pupil behaviour. Male teachers were almost twice as likely to have been subjected to a complaint or allegation within the last two years (27 percent) compared to their female counterparts (14 percent).

Over half the complaints (53 percent) investigated resulted in no further action against the teacher. In a fifth of cases, respondents reported that complaints and allegations appeared to have been ignored by the school/setting, whilst 12 of respondents stated that complaints made were reported to the police or resulted in disciplinary actions within the school.

## **The role of finance in the decision-making of higher education applicants and students** (Institute for Employment Studies)

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The *Going into HE* project (2007 – 2008) was commissioned by the former DIUS (now BIS) and aimed to develop a clearer understanding of: the role and importance of finance in the decision-making processes of young people in England when considering entering full-time Higher Education. The project also explored non-financial factors influencing young people's decisions about entering HE. The research was based on the views and experiences of 156 applicants (including 65 young people still in full-time education), parents, teachers and students, gathered through 248 separate interviews and six focus groups. A longitudinal approach was adopted, in that those interviewed early in the research as potential applicants were then followed-up when they received their exam results and finally were re-interviewed at university, having completed their journeys into HE. In terms of the sample over 50 percent of participants lived in areas of economic deprivation, while the proportion of young people receiving the means assessed Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was about the national average.

### **Key findings from the study:**

Financial factors tended not to dent HE aspirations among those planning to apply. Indeed, they tended to be outweighed by a range of non-financial factors. Insofar as finance was important in decision-making, this was in determining where to apply and study rather than what to study or whether to study at all.

Applicants tended to underestimate the amount of student financial support for which they would be eligible. Some of them arrived at key HE decisions having accessed very little information and having cursorily discounted certain options.

Insofar as fees were seen as an inevitability, there was broad support among students for financing these through loans for tuition. Preferences regarding loans for maintenance, however, were more divided: some students were receptive to bigger loans as a means of financing study while non-traditional students (e.g. those from under-represented groups) would be prepared to contemplate a lower total support package within which non-repayable support such as grants and bursaries would make up a higher proportion, leading to lower indebtedness.

The schools and colleges taking part in the study reported a range of activities to support young people's decision making about HE, and some innovative approaches were identified. These included one-to-one coaching, HE education fairs, interactive sessions in the style of *The Price is Right*, budgeting workshops, visits from representatives of various professions, visits from and to universities, and more involved project activities set within universities with undergraduates as mentors. Support was provided by a wide range of actors including tutors, dedicated careers staff, Aimhigher staff, Connexions staff, university representatives including current HE students ('Student Ambassadors'), and Local Authority finance staff.

Most effort seemed to be made in helping applicants make choices based on their academic interests and ability and into working towards successful applications. Student finance topics were almost always covered, usually in groups, though sometimes after applications have been sent in.

Applicants said the kinds of information they most accessed in terms of making decisions about HE were open days, prospectuses and online research. The information sources referred to least by applicants were information fairs and events, outreach activities and performance tables of HE establishments.

**When you are born matters: the impact of date of birth on educational outcomes in England** – IFS working paper W10/06 (Institute of Fiscal Studies, and Institute of Education, London)

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This study looked at the impact of month of birth on educational outcomes in England, and aimed to add to previous research (UK and overseas) on this topic to examine the effect of a child's date of birth and hence age on entry to compulsory schooling on their subsequent educational attainment through to age 18.

According to the study there were five types of entry policy in the mid-1990's, when the pupils studied were aged 5. These were:

	percentage of pupils*
Single entry date: all children start school in the September of the academic year in which they turn 5	44
Two entry dates: Children born 1 September to 29 February start school in the September of the academic year in which they turn 5; children born 1 March to 31 August start school in the January of the academic year in which they turn 5.	8
Three entry dates: Children start school at the beginning of the term in which they turn 5, so children born 1 September to 31 December start in September; children born 1 January to 30 April start in January and those born 1 May to 31 August start in April.	16
Other variants of two and three entry dates:	3

\* starting school between 1995-96 and 1997-98.

The study suggested that there are four ways in which age of starting school might affect attainment:

- first, with exams taken at a fixed point in the year, some pupils will be a year younger than other pupils taking the same test
- such younger pupils might also suffer from starting school “too young”, so for example, before they are emotionally ready.
- younger pupils might also suffer from being relatively young for example by being more susceptible to being bullied
- younger pupils will have had a shorter period in school when they take tests.

The study drew on national (pupil census) data on pupils born between 1990 and 1993 and linked their length of schooling to their test performance at age 7, 11 and 14. It used a second set of pupil census data for pupils born in 1985 to 1988 and linked their length of schooling to test and exam performance at ages 11, 14, 16 and 18.

### **Key findings from the study:**

The effect of a child’s starting school later and hence sitting tests younger than their peers was seen as “a penalty on academic performance” with August-born children faring worst. However even October-born children suffered some disadvantage compared to September-born and this disadvantage rose, broadly in a straight line with each succeeding birth month. This birth month effect diminished over time but was still statistically significant by the end of the study.

Looking at different admissions policies, the study concluded that receiving one term less schooling prior to the test at age 7 was more important as a negative effect on attainment than was the positive effect of starting school at an older age. At age 14 however, admissions policy had no apparent effect, suggesting that the impact of having more schooling (up to two terms) had only a short-term effect.

Birth date effects persisted beyond age 14 through to 16 and 18/19 implying that this affected entry to higher education and hence adult labour market outcomes.

The authors concluded by suggesting that to counter the birth month effect on attainment, either exam results should be “normalised” to allow for age effects or pupils should be able to take exams over a longer “window” of time so allowing younger pupils to take exams when they are ready.

**Gender differences in educational attainment: influences of the family environment,** (University of York) article published in the British Educational Research Journal, April 2010

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This study examined whether boys' and girls' early educational attainment levels were similarly related to disadvantage in the family environment. The study looked at two broad types of family disadvantage:

- socio-economic: family income, employment, parental qualifications, housing tenure and character of the area where the family lived
- demographic: whether single parent, young parent or from an ethnic minority, number of children in the home and whether English was the first language

The researchers drew on the England part of the UK Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) of a large sample of children born in 2000 and 2001 and which re-surveyed families when their child was aged 3 and 5. Information on educational attainment at age 5 came from Foundation Stage Profile teacher assessments in various aspects of communication, language and literacy (CLL) and maths.

## Findings from the study:

A simple comparison of test results showed overall that girls out-performed boys in CLL and also, but a less degree, in maths. Socio-economic and demographic disadvantage also had the expected negative effect on attainment, particularly regarding mother's education, young motherhood, low family income and unemployment.

Next, looking at evidence of differential effects of disadvantage on boys' attainment, the study found that in CLL and maths, mother's (lack of) qualifications, living in a deprived area and being a young mother all had a greater adverse effect for boys than for girls. No other measure of family disadvantage showed any differential effect and this included ethnicity (in contrast to some other research), and family income

The authors proposed further research, using the same source, to identify the mechanisms by which family disadvantage differentially affects boys, notably by looking at parenting behaviours and the quality of parent-child relationships.

**The third evaluation of the school fruit and vegetable scheme**, (NFER and University of Leeds)

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This study assessed the longer-term impact on young primary pupils' fruit and vegetable consumption of the Dept of Health's "School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme", launched in 2004 across schools in England. The scheme consisted of promotional activity on the health merits of eating fruit and vegetables plus the provision of a free piece of fruit or vegetable to every 4 to 6 year old each day. The study measured pupils' consumption of fruit and vegetables by asking them to complete a single 24 hour record of what they ate, starting on arrival at school and then carrying on through to after-school and home up to and including breakfast of the following day. (Parents were asked to complete the home section of the record). The first evaluation, in 2004, used a sample of schools in the North-East, and gathered "baseline" information on consumption, before the scheme started, followed by further records in the same year, after the start of the scheme. This third evaluation in 2008 (the second was in 2006) used this same approach but with just a single 24 hour measure of consumption. In both 2006 and 2008 the record day was in November. Some 2562 pupils from 42 schools took part in the study.

## Key findings from the study:

Looking first just at the overall patterns of consumption in 2008:

- Children ate more vegetables than fruit and averaged 4.3 portions of fruit and vegetables a day so a little less than the "5 a day" recommendation.
- Older children (in Years 3 and 5) ate significantly less fruit and vegetables than those in Years 1 and 2. This pattern reflected changes in consumption at school rather than at home and, in particular, lower consumption of fruit by older pupils in school breaks.
- Girls ate significantly more fruit and vegetables than boys (there was no such difference in 2004 and 2006).
- Those who ate a packed lunch (39 percent of the total) ate significantly more fruit and drank fruit juice than those who had school meals but the latter group ate much more vegetables over the 24 hours.
- Overall, school meals were "healthier" in terms of fruit and vegetables than packed lunches.

In terms of changes over time and persistence of greater consumption of fruit and vegetables by older children, once they ceased to be eligible for free fruit or vegetables:

- Overall consumption of fruit and vegetables rose between 2004 and 2006 and this initial rise was largely but not wholly maintained in 2008.

- The increase was mainly due to higher vegetable consumption.
- Girls continued to eat more fruit and vegetables than boys.
- Older pupils continued to eat less fruit and vegetables than younger pupils and the scheme had not affected this pattern but older pupils in 2008 were eating more than their counterparts in 2004.
- The increase in fruit and vegetable consumption was greater for school lunch pupils than those having a packed lunch.
- There had been an increase in the proportion of pupils eating “5 a day” between 2004 and 2006 but no further increase by 2008.

The study was also able to compare a small sub-group of the same pupils who were in Year 1 in 2004 and Year 5 in 2008. On average, fruit consumption fell with age but vegetable consumption rose so that overall consumption of the two food groups remained unchanged. This contrasted with the study’s finding that, comparing different groups of pupils, the older typically eat less fruit and vegetables.

Finally, the study modelled changes in consumption by bringing in other factors apart from pupil gender and age. It found, for example, that vegetable consumption tended to fall over time in schools with high levels of pupil deprivation. This was also true for fruit and vegetable consumption combined.

## **Gangs and schools** (The Perpetuity Group)

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This report, commissioned by NASUWT in 2007 consisted of a literature review and four case studies into how gangs and gang culture affect schools. The aim was to assess if gangs represented a significant issue and identify what schools might do to manage any impact from gangs. The report was completed in 2008 but has recently been added to the website.

Drawing on previous research the report suggests that there are three broad types of gang:

- **peer group:** a relatively small, unorganised and transient group of peers who share the same space and a common history. Involvement in crime is mostly non-serious and not integral to the identity of the group.
- **gang:** a relatively durable group who have a collective identity and who meet frequently. They are predominantly street-based groups of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a distinct group for whom crime and violence are integral to the group’s identity.
- **organised criminal group:** a group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain

The study stresses that, in reality, pupil gangs do not readily fit into a single category and that different observers – teachers, pupils, “gang” members will differ on whether a group of pupils does constitute a gang. However, this definition came nearest to the study’s main area of concern.

### **Key findings from the report:**

The literature review found no hard statistical evidence on the prevalence of school gangs nor how this might have changed over time. However, there was some evidence to suggest that gang membership more generally amongst under-16s (not school gangs) had increased in the past five years, and young people were joining gangs at an earlier age and gangs were becoming more violent with greater resort to weapons. The research suggested however that there was just a small minority of pupils in any school who were gang members. For example, one study, just of London pupils aged 11-15 in 2005 found just 4 percent of young people admitted belonging to a gang that had a territory.

The study suggested that problems with gangs tended to reflect problems in the local communities they serve rather than developing in the school. However, certain aspects of school life were found to lend themselves to gang predation, notably the journey to and from school and school break times.

The literature review found no evidence of a clear link between ethnicity and propensity to be in a gang; indeed gangs were often ethnically mixed and their composition was more likely to reflect that of their locality.

One study, for London, found that up to 40 percent of gang members had joined through fear of being intimidated either by their local gang or members of other gangs.

The lack of UK research on the impact of gangs on schools meant that there was no ready information on “what works” in tackling problems of gangs in schools. However there was some evidence from the case studies to suggest some school actions seem promising:

- targeted education about the ill effects of gangs
- greater efforts at pupil inclusion given the association between gang membership and unauthorised absence, drop-out and exclusion. (The study found that where schools exclude pupils for violence or carrying weapons this could reinforce pupils’ attachment to their gang).
- greater support to allow schools to adapt to sharply changing demographic composition of their catchment area
- more enforcement such as by school uniforms, dispersal of large groups of pupils and having a police officer on site.

**[Reading and writing in Years 1 and 2](#)** (The Review Office, New Zealand)

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This study examined good practice in the teaching and learning and assessment of reading and writing in the first two years of schooling in New Zealand. Some 212 primary schools were involved in the New Zealand Government commissioned study. Data collection included questionnaires and interviews with school staff, classroom observation and an examination of participating schools’ documents including teaching materials.

### **Examples of good practice identified in the report included:**

#### *Reading*

In effective schools, teachers discussed achievement data collectively and used it to reflect on how well children were progressing in reading. These regular discussions helped staff to identify rates of progress including those who needed additional support, and to examine and share teaching practices used to bring about improvements.

Assessment data were used to form instructional reading groups that were flexible enough to cater for children’s changing levels of progress and learning needs. Teachers combined data from formal assessments with judgements made during daily reading instruction to decide on, or modify, specific teaching practices.

Both teachers and headteachers had a sense of urgency about increasing children’s abilities to develop as readers. In some schools, records from early childhood education were taken into account and additional assessments undertaken as part of the transition to school. In other cases formal assessments were collected as soon as possible after the children started school, and repeated at six months, and then a year later, to make comparisons and highlight the next development steps.

Lessons and activities were based on the diagnosed needs of individuals and groups of children. Lead teachers and or school leaders shared and discussed ideas, instances and effective strategies. They read literature about best teaching practice and discussed these aspects together. Teachers with reading expertise modelled effective practice and mentored colleagues to develop their confidence in using an increasing set of teaching strategies.

Many teachers were seen as highly enthusiastic and displayed a sense of excitement about reading. They combined approaches such as whole language, emphasising meaning and strategy instruction, and phonics-based methods of teaching to cater for their children's diverse needs. They decided on the appropriateness of their method of teaching based on their diagnoses of children's needs. Teachers encouraged children's curiosity about the pictures, text, stories and ideas in their reading books.

Teachers demonstrated an extensive repertoire of reading strategies and an awareness of the knowledge and skills children needed to develop as successful readers. They encouraged children's enjoyment of, and interest in rhyme, rhythm and humour to capture their interest and help them understand word patterns. Teachers used effective questioning to help children's oral language development. They encouraged them to share ideas, increase their understanding of what they were reading, and explore the meaning of new words. They provided children with opportunities to re-read known stories independently or with their buddies.

Teachers recognised a teachable moment and responded to learning needs as they arose. Follow-up or response activities were carefully selected to help children practise the skills focused on during the guided reading lesson.

Teachers ensured that children were reading, or using print, during every moment of the reading lesson. Children had plentiful and appropriately levelled texts in their reading boxes, big books, poetry cards, reading games and in class and school libraries. In addition children had supporting activities such as letter and word games, and used technology that involved reading, viewing and listening. Displayed reading goals, modelling books and task boards gave visual prompts encouraging children to read or use print independently while the teacher was involved with other groups of children.

### *Writing*

Where schools managed their own literacy development, teachers had been encouraged to share research and literature about effective writing practice. Lead teachers then led syndicate or team discussions about how new practices might be included in their classroom programmes. They observed each other's teaching to suggest improvements and shared successful teaching approaches. The quality of discussion, reflection and learning resulting from professional learning and development had a positive effect in helping teachers develop confidence about determining children's achievement and progress in writing.

In effective schools, teachers worked together, across the school or in clusters with other schools, to critically analyse writing samples. Assessments were analysed to identify what children had mastered and what their next learning steps would be. The information was also used to identify and group together children with similar learning needs. Team, school or cluster meetings provided time for teachers to reflect on, and discuss, practices that encouraged children to progress as writers. Teachers met regularly to moderate each others' professional judgements about children's unassisted writing samples. Moderation of writing samples gave teachers useful opportunities to talk about different ways and stages children develop their writing.

Effective teachers gave children a purpose for writing and encouraged them to write about things and experiences they were likely to be familiar with. Teachers immediately reinforced children's suggestions when they offered interesting or exciting words. Introductory discussions were carefully timed to ensure children were motivated and did not sit for too long.

Children were given ways to improve their writing. During shared writing sessions, teachers modelled language features by writing together with individuals or groups. They carefully broke down the skills children were expected to focus on. This helped children to understand what they were learning to do and what they should be looking for in their writing. When modelling, teachers used contexts suggested by children to show how their ideas were valued. Children were taught to use diagrams, charts and pictures to plan their own writing. They could talk about the skills they were focusing on and how they could improve.

Good classroom management made time available for teachers to support individual writers. They managed time with small groups of children who needed additional help or extension. Teachers roved around the class reinforcing children's success with the language features or writing skills focused on in the lesson. They had conversations with individual children to help them further refine or expand their ideas, help them edit their work, and highlight their success and progress.

## **Financial efficiency in schools** (Craig Ross Dawson) DFE research report 007

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This study explored financial challenges faced by schools; attitudes and prioritisation of school financial management; information and support currently used, as well as motivating factors to encourage the sharing of good practice. A mixed methodology was employed, comprising eight discussion groups with head teachers and bursars or school business managers and twelve individual depth interviews with head teachers, school business managers and governors. The research took place across England, (London, Yorkshire, West Midlands and Kent) in March 2010.

### **Key findings from the study:**

All those involved in the financial management of schools recognised that they were facing tighter budgets in the coming years and would need to manage their finance more carefully than ever.

For most, staffing costs were a priority as they accounted for the majority (80-95 percent) of their budgets.

Head teachers tended to be closely involved with financial management though a number preferred to leave the practical aspects to their finance teams. Those in smaller (typically primary) schools tended to be more hands-on than others, often due to the fact that they did not have full-time financial managers.

Bursar attitudes to financial management varied widely according to a number of factors including the amount of contact they had with a school (i.e. whether they were employed or contracted; whether they worked full or part time); their professional background (private vs. public sector) and their roles and level of autonomy within the schools.

There were differences in financial management between primary and secondary schools. Overall, primary schools had lower budgets, less flexibility and their approach to financial management was often less formal.

Governors were seen as being an influential force in the financial management of schools but their level of influence and effectiveness depended on who the governors were: their background, knowledge and interest in the subject. Heads and bursars actively sought out individuals with appropriate experience and understanding.

Definitions of financial efficiency varied but all agreed that using money wisely was key. The main areas of debate were: value for money; to what extent schools should be viewed as businesses; and the potential to make efficiencies.

Participants tended to blame external circumstances for any lapses in efficiency yet felt that they had made improvements to their school's financial state.

Most schools tended to categorise themselves as fairly efficient although there was no obvious correlation between their perception and whether their school was classified as efficient for the purpose of this research.

In terms of resources, local authorities and the Department were seen as the most obvious sources of information to most participants. LAs were often relied upon because they were assumed to be a reliable conduit for anything relevant. However they were also considered to be overly bureaucratic and

inefficient, while the Department had a reputation for being authoritative and informed. Yet the fact that they covered all aspects of education meant that they were not necessarily the first place to turn to for financial advice.

The majority of participants preferred practical online tools to assist them rather than pages of text and information. The benchmarking tool was popular because it enabled them to make simple comparisons, though most thought it could be refined to allow more complex data sorting.

**School support staff - topic paper** (Schools Analysis Research Division, Department for Education)

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This topic paper presents the latest statistics and research on support staff. Topics covered include: details of the numbers and characteristics of support staff; the impact of receiving additional support on pupils' attitudes to learning and academic progress; the deployment of support staff; and the training and development of support staff.

### **Key findings from this review of evidence include:**

Spend on support staff, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of schools' total expenditure has increased since 2002/03, especially for education support staff.

Evidence suggests that support staff have had a positive impact on teachers' workloads, job satisfaction and stress levels.

The evidence of the impact of support staff on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attainment is mixed. Some studies reported positive impacts from the use of support staff on academic engagement, behaviour, attendance and on academic progress. However, evidence from a large-scale analysis of the impacts of support staff found no significant effect of receiving additional support on pupils' Positive Attitudes to Learning (PAL) outcomes (except for Year 9 pupils where the effect of support staff was largely positive) and a broadly negative impact of support staff on academic progress.

Classroom-based support staff spent the majority of their time supporting low ability or SEN pupils, usually in English or maths. One study found that primary teaching assistants were more likely to support pupils in small groups whereas secondary teaching assistants were more likely to provide support on a one-to-one basis.

Opportunities for joint planning and communication between teachers and support staff appeared to be rare and where they did happen they tended to be brief and on an ad hoc basis.

Very few teachers had received training on how to work with support staff although some schools provide guidance and support on this.

It was likely that support for the least able pupils is being delivered by support staff who have less pedagogical and subject knowledge and experience than teachers.

There were marked differences between the way in which teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) interacted with pupils. TAs were often more concerned with task completion than with enhancing learning and could sometimes remove the responsibility for the task from the pupil. This could lead to the supported pupil becoming dependent on the TA.

Although most staff had received training in the last 12 months, a quarter had not. Training usually took place within the school and usually within School Closure Days (INSET) time. However, there was evidence that not all schools involved support staff in these sessions.

Although support staff were overwhelmingly positive about the quality and relevance of the training they had received, only 50 percent thought that it had helped them in their role and only 15 percent thought that it had helped improve children's outcomes.

There was evidence that increasing numbers of schools were facing problems with recruiting and retaining support staff. Increasing proportions of schools were reporting support staff vacancies, recruitment problems and turnover problems.

The majority of support staff were satisfied with their job, their contract and conditions of employment and with their working arrangements and feel appreciated by their school. Primary school support staff were more satisfied than secondary school support staff, and technicians appear to be less satisfied than other roles.

## **Languages at Key Stage 4 2009 – 2011: evaluation of the impact of Languages Review recommendations: baseline findings from the first year of the evaluation**

(NFER) DFE research brief RBX-10-1

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The Languages Review was commissioned in response to the accelerated decline in languages uptake at KS4 when languages became an optional subject. The Review sought to strengthen incentives for schools and young people to continue with languages post-14 and offered initiatives to promote languages at KS4 (for example, the introduction of new languages performance indicators to improve schools' accountability). The Department commissioned this longitudinal study of languages (2009-2011) to evaluate how effective the programme of work initiated by the Languages Review has been in reversing the decline in the take up of languages at GCSE. The study consists of an annual survey of a nationally representative sample of secondary schools in England (in 2009, 2010 and 2011) and case study visits to five case study schools in autumn 2009 and 2010. This research brief reports on findings from the 2009 survey and the first round of case study visits.

### **Key Findings from the study:**

#### Languages provision and accreditation

Sixty nine percent of heads of language departments said that languages would be an optional subject at Key Stage 4 in 2009/10; 11 percent said that languages would be compulsory for some but not all, and 18 percent said that they would be compulsory for all pupils at KS4.

Schools reported to teach and accredit a range of languages: apart from French, Spanish and German (offered in the majority of schools) small numbers of schools offered Italian, Mandarin and Urdu. Almost all schools would be offering the GCSE full course at KS4, nearly half GCE AS level, and just under a fifth Asset Languages. Fast tracked GCSE courses would be offered in 34 percent of schools.

#### Levels of languages uptake at KS4

19 percent of schools reported that they had set a benchmark for languages uptake at KS4 in 2009/10 and 51 percent of these thought that they would meet their target. In these schools, the average level of the benchmark set was approximately at two thirds of pupils (64 percent). Only ten percent of schools had set a benchmark lower than 50 percent.

#### Factors supporting languages uptake at KS4

Factors seen as encouraging language uptake at KS4 included: good resources; support from the school leadership team and a strong languages department adopting exciting approaches to languages learning and teaching. The optional status of languages was reported to be the main barrier to uptake.

#### Perceived impact of the Languages Review's main recommendations

Some heads of languages reported that the broader recommendations of the 2007 Languages Review (the Primary Languages Initiative, broader range of languages, flexibility of accreditation) were having some positive effect on uptake of languages taught at KS4, but relatively high proportions of schools

reported no impact of these recommendations. In the case study schools, teachers were aware of the Languages Review, but said that it had not changed the way they worked.

**The characteristics of bullying victims in schools** (National Centre for Social Research) DFE  
research brief 001

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The report investigated the characteristics of bullying victims aged 14-16 using the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE). It examined the relationships between these characteristics and the likelihood of a young person reporting that they had experienced bullying. The LSYPE data on individual and family characteristics were linked to National Pupil Database attainment data (at pupil level) and data on free school meals and special educational needs (and other school level characteristics). The dataset was analysed using statistical analysis to explore individual predictors of bullying while adjusting for other characteristics.

### **Key findings from the study:**

Almost half the young people reported being bullied at age 14 (47 percent), but the proportion decreased with age to 41 percent at age 15 and 29 percent by the age of 16.

The most common type of bullying reported was name calling (31 percent at age 14, 15 percent at age 16), followed by being threatened with violence (20 percent at age 14, 13 percent at age 16), being a victim of actual violence (18 percent at age 14, 10 percent at age 16), being socially excluded (17 percent at age 14, 11 percent at age 16) and finally being forced to hand over money or possessions (3 percent at age 14, 1 percent at age 16).

Characteristics associated with being bullied included being female (although boys were more likely to experience physical types of bullying), being white, having a religion that was felt to be important to the young person (although only for name-calling) having a special educational need (SEN) or disability, having been in care, living in a step family, being a young carer and having changed school at age 14-15.

Young people whose parents also reported that they were being bullied were more likely to 'escape' bullying by the age of 16, suggesting that parental awareness might be a key factor in helping young people to escape being bullied.

Young people who had reported being bullied had lower Key Stage 4 scores than other young people. They were also more likely to leave full time education at the age of 16, and were particularly likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET).

A number of characteristics of the school that were associated with bullying, including the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals (FSM), the proportion of pupils with SEN and whether the school was a mixed or single sex school. Pupils attending schools with higher proportions of FSM pupils were less likely to report being bullied, and especially unlikely to report name calling.

Pupils attending schools with more pupils with SEN were more likely to report being bullied and especially likely to report being called names (the most common type of bullying identified).

Overall, young people in single sex schools were more likely to report being bullied than those in mixed schools. Girls attending all-girls' schools were less likely to report being called names than girls attending mixed schools, but became more likely to report threats of violence or actual violence by the age of 16.

**UK Resilience evaluation: second interim report** (London School of Economics) DFE  
research brief 006

The UKRP is a modified version of the Penn Resiliency Programme developed by Psychologists at Penn University in the U.S. The programmes aim to teach cognitive-behavioural and social problem-solving skills via a series of taught workshops. The UKRP evaluation aimed to investigate whether the programme could be delivered at scale in three local authorities, and whether it had a shorter and / or longer-term impact on pupils' resiliency to depression and anxiety, and other outcomes including attendance at school. The research consisted of three main parts: quantitative analysis based on a controlled trial design; surveys of teacher and Year 7 pupils' satisfaction with the programme; and ten case study schools.

### **Key findings from the research:**

The quantitative analysis found a significant short-run improvement in pupils' attendance at school and depression symptom scores. There was also a positive impact on anxiety, but this was smaller, and concentrated in a few groups of pupils, notably boys, particularly those with SEN or FSM entitlement, and lower-attaining girls.

Weekly workshops showed a larger impact than those timetabled fortnightly. The impact also varied by pupil characteristics, and was larger for pupils with special educational needs (when the outcome was anxiety or depression); for pupils entitled to free school meals (anxiety and attendance); for pupils who had not attained the national target levels in Key Stage 2 exams (depression, anxiety and attendance); and for pupils with worse initial scores for symptoms of depression or anxiety (depression and anxiety).

On average the effect of the workshops lasted only as long as the academic year, and had faded by the one-year follow-up questionnaire in June 2009. However, there was still an impact for certain groups at follow-up, particularly for pupils who had not attained the national target levels at Key Stage 2 in English or maths.

Return visits to nine of the case study schools revealed that seven of the nine schools were continuing to deliver the UKRP to all Year 7 pupils.

In three schools the UKRP was being delivered primarily by teachers and in the other four schools it was delivered primarily by non-teachers (for example, teaching assistants, cover supervisors or learning mentors).

At schools where more non-teachers delivered the UKRP it appeared that pay and holiday arrangements, workloads, and non-teachers seeing the UKRP as a good career development opportunity may have contributed to this higher take-up by non-teachers.

Facilitators were extremely positive about the ideas underlying the programme and about the training they had received. Most reported that they used the skills themselves.

Facilitators found the curriculum materials didactic and thought they could be improved. Many felt that some pupils struggled with the programme content and materials.

Pupils were generally positive about the programme. Interviews for the First Interim Report suggested that pupils had applied UKRP skills in real life situations, and some interviewees showed a good understanding of elements of the programme.

The UKRP was accommodated in the curriculum either as a stand-alone subject, timetabled once per fortnight or timetabled weekly in conjunction with another subject. For example, in some schools the UKRP was delivered during English lessons or in PSHE lessons.

This small scale research explored the aspirations for the future of young people in care, and the support these young people wanted to help them realise these aspirations. It also looked at foster carers' thoughts about supporting their foster children's aspirations. The research was based on: interviews with 14 children aged 10 and above living with a foster family and focus group discussions with 22 foster carers and children's home staff.

### **Key findings from the study:**

The young people consulted tended to see themselves as having behavioural problems at school because of feeling angry and unhappy. They found their behaviour and emotions were often a barrier to learning. A consistent approach in messages about behaviour from schools and home was deemed essential to help young people in care feel supported and develop as confident individuals.

Most young people and Foster Carers in the sample recognised that schools had been trying to support young people's learning and developing their aspirations for the future. All recognised the value and importance of regular support from Learning Mentors, especially when the relationship has been tailored to the individual's needs.

Participating young people tended to feel they were most receptive to help from schools about anything including their futures at age 15 to 16. Some admitted that even though they may reject help, seeing schools 'hanging on in there' sent them a positive message and helped them to feel a sense of belonging.

Some young people in the sample believed that because they were in care they benefitted from more chances at education than their peers. Some believed they were likely to get a place at college with funding support. A few believed that this special treatment could impact negatively on their motivation to work hard at school, especially in subjects they did not enjoy and teachers they did not like.

Treating the young people kindly was deemed essential but relaxing the rules at school was considered unnecessary and possibly counter-productive.

GCSEs and educational attainment appeared as a real goal for some in this sample, including those aged 16 who had not yet taken them.

All understood the value of having GCSEs for their future prospects and most saw attaining them as a real achievement, particularly in the context of most of their families. Most admitted that grades were less important than having GCSEs per se.

Those who had already selected options received support from Foster Carers, teachers and mentors. Birth family tended not to be involved.

Learning mentors were seen as essential part of these pupils' experience at school. Their input seemed to work best when it was in tune with the child's needs, respecting their privacy and giving them emotional support. Most in this sample felt that Learning Mentor support would be even more beneficial if it began in Primary school and the mentor could support the young person's transition to secondary school.

The study examined alcohol consumption among young people aged 14-17 including impact on educational attainment using data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) and linked data from the National Pupil Database.

### **Key findings from the study:**

Around 55 percent of young people had tried alcohol at age 14, rising to around 85 percent by the age of 17. Young people were more likely to have tried alcohol if they were female or if they had been bullied in the last year (the latter being particularly associated with frequent drinking). However, characteristics such as having an ethnic minority background and being religious were protective against trying alcohol.

There was some evidence of a “drinking culture” in certain schools, with pupils more likely to drink in schools where there was a higher proportion of white pupils or pupils who were not eligible for free school meals (FSM), regardless of their own ethnicity or eligibility for FSM.

Drinking was associated with a number of negative educational outcomes, including being not in employment, education or training (NEET), lower GCSE scores, and not remaining in full-time education beyond the age of 16. However, this was largely explained by links between drinking and other risky behaviours (in the case of being NEET and not remaining in full-time education) and more negative attitudes to education and aspirations for post-compulsory education (in the case of GCSE scores).

In the case of GCSE scores, it was mostly attitudes (including the young persons and their main parent’s attitude to school) as well as parental involvement with the school, family cohesion and the young person’s aspirations for post-compulsory education that explained most of the relationship between drinking and attainment. Other risky behaviours appeared less important in this relationship than they were for the young person’s post-16 destination, and instead it was likely that there may be a cycle of lower aspirations/poor attitude to education and alcohol consumption that ultimately leads to lower attainment.

The researchers suggested it may therefore be possible to reduce drinking among young people and ultimately raise their attainment by focusing on their educational aspirations and working to improve attitudes to school among young people and their parents.

**Young people omnibus 2010 – a research study of 16 year olds on behalf of the Sutton Trust** (Ipsos MORI)

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This report presented findings from the 2010 Young people omnibus survey of secondary school pupils, carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Sutton Trust. The survey was based on 2,700 pupil responses from 114 secondary schools in England and Wales and was undertaken between January and April this year. The findings from the 2010 survey were compared with findings from previous years.

### **Key findings from the survey:**

#### Pupil grouping

A third (32 percent) of young people said they were taught in streams (separated by ability for all subjects), while just under a quarter (23 percent) were not taught this way. Some 42 percent of pupils were unsure whether they were streamed or not.

Being taught in sets (ability groups) appeared to be far more common than streaming, with 94 percent of pupils claiming to be taught in sets for at least one of their core subjects: English, maths or science. Maths was most commonly reported as taught in sets (89 percent), followed by English (80 percent) and science (72 percent). Whilst around two thirds of pupils (64 percent) said they are taught in sets for all three of these core subjects.

The only non-core subject taught in sets with any frequency appears to be Modern Foreign Languages (50 percent). The teaching of other subjects in sets was far less common, with other individual subjects mentioned by fewer than one in ten pupils.

Findings on teaching in sets were broadly in line with those from the 2006 survey, but notably there was a significant increase in the teaching of English in sets which was 80 percent in 2010, up from 62 percent in 2006.

#### Private or home tuition

Some 8 percent of pupils claimed to have received home tuition this year and similar proportions received it in previous years. Overall, a fifth of pupils (20 percent) said they had received private or home tuition at some stage, while just under three quarters (73 percent) have never done so.

Pupils in Year 11 were more likely to have received private/home tuition in the last year than pupils in any other year group, particularly the youngest surveyed (12 percent of Year 11 pupils compared with 6 percent of Year 7 pupils).

As in previous years, ethnic origin appeared to be a significant factor in whether young people had received private/home tuition. Black and Asian pupils had the highest rates of private/home tuition (38 percent and 43 percent respectively having ever received this) compared with 17 percent of white pupils in the survey.

As in previous surveys, a significantly higher-than-average proportion of pupils in London reported having received private/home tuition at some stage (33 percent compared with 20 percent overall). However, the 2010 findings also suggested that private or home tuition was more common than average in the West Midlands, where 30 percent of young people claimed to have had this at some point.

The reasons for receiving private/home tuition have remained in line with those from 2005. The most common reason was to assist with the pupil's performance in a specific test or exam – almost half (47 percent) of those who said they had ever received private tuition gave this as a reason. Other reasons were to help with school work in general (45 percent in 2010 compared to 41 percent in 2005), and because pupils have a specific interest in the subject (18 percent versus 15 percent in 2005).

Receiving private tuition due to a specific interest in a subject was more common among boys (23 percent) than girls (12 percent), and was also mentioned more than average by pupils from a BME background (25 percent).

#### Higher education

Some 80 percent of young people said they were likely (*very + fairly*) to go into higher education, the highest level recorded since the survey began in 2003. The proportion of young people who say they were *unlikely* to go into higher education remained at 8 percent, in line with findings from 2008

A preference for doing something practical (45 percent) and to begin earning money (45 percent) remained the primary reasons for not going into higher education. In addition, compared with 2008, there had been significant increases in several of the other reasons which pupils gave for being unlikely to go into higher education, most notably: 'I'm not clever enough' (38 percent up from 22 percent) and 'I won't get good enough exam results to get into university' (31 percent up from 20 percent).

Amongst young people who say they were unlikely to go into HE, girls were significantly more likely than boys to give *not being clever enough* as a reason for not going into higher education (50 percent and 28 percent respectively). However, overall girls more frequently said they were likely to go into higher education than boys (82 percent and 77 percent respectively). They were also more likely to say they were *very likely* to go into higher education (42 percent compared with 36 percent).

Pupils in Years 10 and 11, who were close to making (or had already made) their post-compulsory education choices, were more likely than younger pupils in Year 7 to say they would continue into

higher education (82 percent each versus 76 percent respectively). These pupils were also more likely than average to say they are *very likely* to continue into higher education (45 percent and 55 percent versus 27 percent respectively).

Pupils of Black or Asian origin are more likely to say they will go into higher education than white pupils (89 percent and 90 percent compared with 79 percent respectively).

Pupils living in households without a working parent were significantly more likely than average to say they would not be continuing into HE (12 percent compared with 7 percent on average). Those who lived in households where two parents or one parent worked more frequently said they were likely to continue into higher education than those in non-working households (81 percent, 80 percent and 68 percent respectively).

The study also asked about the impact of potentially raising tuition fees. Two-thirds (68 percent) of young people said they were likely (*very + fairly*) to go onto higher education if the tuition fee went up to £5,000 (from £3,225) a year (compared with 80 percent likely prior to any discussion of tuition fees). The likelihood of continuing into higher education dropped to under half (45 percent) if the fees increased to £7,000 a year, and to a quarter (26 percent) if the amount charged was £10,000 per annum.

## **Young people's Reading: The Importance of the home environment and family support** (National Literacy Trust)

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This study looked at simple correlations between reading by young people aged 8 to 16 and various characteristics of their own lives and those of their families. The source was an on-line survey completed at the end of 2009 by just over 17,000 pupils drawn from 112 schools in the UK. There was a near even split between boys and girls but nearly two-thirds were aged 11-13. The study also had reading attainment data for a sub-sample of just under a quarter. This survey is a follow up to a similar one conducted in 2005 by the NLT.

The focus of the study is on the influence of parents on their children's reading. The authors argue that while parental engagement in their children's education is a key determinant of attainment in general this is particularly so for reading. Furthermore, it is relatively simple for parents to promote reading through the provision of reading materials, through reading to children and through showing an enthusiasm for reading themselves.

The authors note that such a study cannot establish causes but can identify possible relationships between factors.

### **Key findings from the study:**

Book ownership showed the sharpest difference between children in their reported enjoyment of reading with 59 percent of those owning books saying they enjoyed reading "very much" or "quite a lot" compared to 28 percent who owned no books. There was much less difference in enjoyment relative to whether children did or not read either newspapers or magazines. Book ownership also correlated with whether children "read outside class every day".

Children who did not own books were also more likely to express various negative attitudes to reading such as "reading is more for girls than for boys", "I only read when I have to", "reading is boring", disagreeing with the proposition "reading is important to succeed in life".

The study gives limited information on the characteristics of children who owned no books. They were just over a quarter of the sample (27 percent), more likely (but not a lot more so) to be boys and slightly more likely to be younger.

For the sub-sample where reading attainment data were available, there was also a clear positive correlation between owning books and attainment although as throughout the report this might well reflect various other factors, notably family income.

Some 36 percent of children said their mother encouraged them “a lot” to read with a rather small proportion, 26 percent saying their fathers encouraged them to this degree. Some 31 percent said their fathers did not encourage them at all. The replies from boys and girls were near identical regarding perceived parental encouragement and this held for mothers and fathers. There was though some tendency for pupils on Free School Meals to be less likely to say that their father encouraged their reading.

There was a clear correlation between parental encouragement to read and children’s enjoyment of reading but a weaker link with whether children read outside class every day.

Over twice as many fathers were not seen to be reading compared to mothers (26 percent and 12 percent respectively). Children on Free School Meals were more likely not to see their parents reading, particularly their fathers with 33 percent of FSM children never seeing their father reading. Children who saw their mother and father reading also tended to have more positive attitudes to reading.

## Local authorities and home education (Ofsted)

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This inspection study looked at how well a sample of local authorities discharged their duties towards children and young people who were educated at home. The report considered the views of parents and their children, the reasons why some families chose home education, and the implications for the welfare and education of children and young people concerned. The study was based on visits to 15 local authorities of different sizes across England, including rural and urban authorities. The visits included interviews with local authority staff, as well as headteachers from independent and maintained schools. The inspectors also met with 120 parents and their children who were educated at home. In addition, the study also considered questionnaire responses from 148 parents and 158 children and young people.

### Key findings from the report:

All 15 local authorities visited took a range of actions to carry out their statutory duty to establish whether all children in their area were receiving a ‘suitable’ and ‘efficient’ education, but all were aware that their knowledge of their population was incomplete.

There was no national information available about the number of children who were home educated, the reasons for parents choosing home education, the type and quality of the education that children were receiving or the outcomes for this group of young people.

Within the surveyed authorities, there was no consistent monitoring of information about the home-educated population by ethnic background, religion, age, gender, special educational need or the reason that the parents had chosen home education.

All the local authorities visited followed the guidance provided by the Department on monitoring the quality of the education provided by registered home educators. Five of the authorities, within the limitations of their resources, provided additional support for families.

Parents’ attitudes to the local authority were influenced by the tone of the local policy and guidance materials, and the approach of the local authority officer who was responsible for registration and visits. However, even in authorities where the policy was written with empathy and officers had a good

understanding of the varying nature of home education, some families would not allow local authority officers to make home visits.

All the local authorities surveyed reported that a very small number of parents had removed their children from school when they were on the brink of being prosecuted for their child's non-attendance. Local authorities were concerned that in these situations insufficient education was taking place. However, only five of the surveyed authorities had initiated School Attendance Orders with a family and only three had actually served one.

The children and young people whom inspectors met were enthusiastic about their learning and explained what they thought they had gained by being educated at home. Those who had attended school compared their experiences and conveyed clearly that, for varying reasons, they were happier now that they were being educated at home.

Almost all the parents surveyed whose children had special educational needs and/or disabilities had removed them from school because they believed their child's needs were not being met. However, once they were educating their children at home they experienced a lack of specialist support. Children did not always receive support such as speech and language therapy or physiotherapy unless the parents commissioned and paid for it.

Five of the local authorities placed great emphasis on mediating between parents and a school to try to resolve problems before the child was removed. The authorities were aware that some parents elected to educate their child at home because they were unhappy with the child's school experience.

Parents who received monitoring and support from the local authorities generally commented that they welcomed the advice or encouragement and would have liked further support of various kinds, particularly financial. The cost of taking public examinations was a particular issue.

**Ensuring that all children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between key stages** (NFER)

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The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) commissioned this research review on: what works in ensuring that all children and young people make sustained progress and remain fully engaged through all transitions between key stages. It was based on a rapid review of the research literature involving systematic searching. The reviewers found there was a wide range of good, robust evidence in relation to the review question. However, the weaknesses of the review were that only a few studies used experimental designs to assess the impact of transition practices on children's outcomes. Another limitation was that most of the studies in relation to 'what works' only carried out a short-term follow-up so the longer term effects of a particular practice were often unknown.

### **Key findings from the review:**

While the majority of children and young people were found to make successful transitions, those from vulnerable groups were more likely to experience difficulties, especially children from economically deprived backgrounds and children with special educational needs.

At early years foundation stage (EYFS) to Key Stage 1, children who were the youngest in their year were found to experience more difficulties with transition.

For the primary to secondary transition, children from poorer families and those with special educational needs tended to experience greater difficulties.

At post-16, young people exhibiting under-achievement, a history of absences and poor behaviour were at risk of particular difficulty in making the transition to further education or training.

How children and young people fared during transition was connected to a range of socio-emotional, behavioural and organisational factors. Their ability to cope with change was related to the level of support received from families and schools in adjusting to their new environment.

Both universal and targeted transition practices, such as providing information for families through booklets and talks, visits to new settings, summer programmes, curriculum bridging initiatives, school linking schemes, induction programmes and buddy/mentoring schemes were helpful in improving outcomes, especially for vulnerable groups.

The use of transition practices and exercises improved social and academic outcomes for all children and young people and were particularly beneficial for those most at risk of experiencing difficulties during transition.

Features of good practice included: a focus on the whole child; implementing a number of transition practices; and helping young children to develop the skills needed to help them cope with transition in the future.

Effective transitions promote good communication between all stakeholders, encourage induction (such as visits to the new environment in advance of the transition) and balance continuity (in curriculum, environment, friendship groups and routines) with positive opportunities for change.

**Narrowing the gap in educational achievement and improving emotional resilience for children and young people with additional needs** (University of Manchester and the NFER)

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The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) commissioned this research review in order to identify what was working in narrowing the gap in educational achievement and improving emotional resilience for children and young people with additional needs. The review was based on a rapid review of recent research literature, involving systematic searching, and an analysis of key data. The review focused on generic issues to do with service organisation and delivery.

### **Key findings from the review:**

The review found that in order to narrow the gap for children and young people with additional needs, services should both address the barriers to learning and support emotional resilience.

Multi-strand programmes targeting a wide range of children and young people with additional needs were a promising way of addressing barriers to learning.

There was positive evidence that full-service extended schools, multi-agency teams working with schools and alternative curriculum programmes have achieved beneficial outcomes for children and young people with additional needs. Outcomes so far included improved engagement in learning, improvements in behaviour, improvements in attendance and changes in aspirations. The researchers suggested impact on attainment levels may emerge over the longer term.

There was evidence to suggest that small-group work, one-to-one approaches and out-of-hours programmes could improve children's emotional functioning, social skills and relationships. Individual interventions were likely to be most effective if they were part of whole-school approaches to social and emotional wellbeing, such as the Social emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme.

The key features of interventions that seemed to be achieving positive outcomes were: flexibility; links with school structures and systems; holistic approaches, activities that build on children and young

people's strengths and interests; and striking a balance between a focus on individuals and a wider organisational perspective.

## Assessing pupils' progress (APP) in Key Stage 3 science (NFER)

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This research surveyed the views of local authority secondary science consultants on Assessing pupils' progress (APP) in KS3 science. APP is a structured approach which aims to strengthen in-school assessment. It enables teachers to make judgments about their pupils' attainment, keyed into national standards; develops and refines teachers' understanding of progression in their subject; provides diagnostic information about the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and groups of pupils; and enables teachers to track pupils' progress over time. APP in KS3 science was introduced by the National Strategies in 2009. The researchers surveyed LA science consultants through two online questionnaires in May and September 2009. 57 LA science consultants responded to the first questionnaire, 47 to the second questionnaire, and 28 consultants responded to both.

### Key findings from the research:

On balance, positive responses about APP outweighed negative ones, and this general feeling was the same between questionnaire 1 (May 2009) and questionnaire 2 (September 2009). The LA science consultants believed that APP in Key Stage 3 science would make a positive contribution to teaching and learning in the subject.

The main positive features of APP as seen by the LA consultants were:

- the ability of teachers to use their professionalism;
- helps teachers to feel more confident about assigning levels to pupils as part of every day teaching and learning;
- provides a useful tool to support assessment for learning (AfL) practice particularly related to pupil feedback and setting of curriculum targets;
- makes the next steps in teaching clearer to both the teacher and pupils
- provides a consistent language for teachers to use when assessing pupils' work and when working within department, across department, across schools and key stages

The majority of LA science consultants (64 percent in questionnaire 2, 61 percent in questionnaire 1) said feedback from teachers had also been positive.

Just over a third (34 percent) of LA science consultants thought it was too early to tell if APP was being used as they envisaged.

In terms of potential barriers to implementing / using APP these included: a possible lack of understanding of APP and AfL approaches (39 percent of LA science consultants); and APP criteria being complicated by having too many statements (40 percent).

Of the schools the LA science consultants worked with, the majority were reported as incorporating APP into their teaching of Key Stage 3 science. From the consultants who participated, only a small number of schools were reported as not incorporating APP into their teaching of Key Stage 3 science.

The second questionnaire asked LA science consultants to explain why some schools had opted not to incorporate APP into Key Stage 3 science: 19 percent said these schools felt their current systems for assessment were adequate and, therefore, APP was not necessary. A further 19 percent said the schools had not given a reason.

The LA consultants were asked what additional materials or resources would be useful for LA consultants and teachers to support the use of APP in Key Stage 3 science. Nearly half (49 percent in questionnaire 2 and 32 percent in questionnaire 1) felt that assessment tasks linked to APP would be beneficial. A further 30 percent (questionnaire 2) felt that more guidance on managing the process and exemplars of recording outcomes would be helpful.

## **School Bullying** (Goldsmiths College, University of London)

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Commissioned by the NSPCC, this paper summarised UK and international research on school bullying (between pupils) drawing on around 90 studies.

### **Findings from the report:**

Studies of pupils who were bullies suggested that they tended to be generally more aggressive than other pupils. There was also some evidence to suggest that pupils who were bullies were more likely to come from families with low parental involvement and supervision and where discipline was harsh and inconsistent.

The report found no consistent evidence that pupils who were bullies had low self-esteem. Some bullies had poor social skills but others were relatively socially sophisticated which allowed them to manipulate others. Related to this, primary school children tended to reject bullies rather than their victims but, in secondary, this reversed and bullies could be popular. Pupils who were bullies also tended to associate with other pupils who bullied and who were susceptible to social pressure.

Follow-up studies of bullies suggested that, as adults, they were at greater risk of poor academic achievement, poor social adjustment, substance abuse and criminal activity. When bullies became parents they were more likely to be aggressive to their partners and children and these latter were in turn more liable to become bullies.

Victims of bullying tended to be passive, to have fewer friends, were more likely to lack social skills, and to have disabilities. Victims also tended to have over-protective parents but, in contrast, also were more likely to be bullied by their brothers and sisters.

A few pupils, typically in primary schools, were both bullies and victims.

Around half of victims reported being bullied to their school with boys and older pupils less likely to report. Suggested reasons for not reporting included fear of retribution by the bullies or a belief that they the victim, were partly to blame. Studies of teachers found that they claimed to intervene in most bullying incidents but, when pupils were questioned, their perception was that teachers did not intervene or were indifferent about bullying and, where they did intervene, this made no difference or even worsened matters. In general therefore pupils tended to prefer to tell their schoolmates about being bullied rather than their teachers.

## **Transforming religious education ~ religious education in schools 2006-09** Ofsted

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This inspection report evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of religious education (RE) in primary and secondary schools in England and considered the key issues at the heart of RE teaching today. It was based on evidence from visits to 94 primary and 89 secondary schools between 2006 and 2009. The sample of schools represented a cross-section, including voluntary controlled schools, but did not include voluntary aided schools, for which there are separate inspection arrangements.

### **Key findings from the report:**

Pupils' achievement in RE in the 94 primary schools visited was considered broadly similar to that in Ofsted's previous study of RE reported in 2007. It was good or outstanding in four out of 10 schools and was inadequate in only one school.

Pupils' achievement in RE in the secondary schools visited showed a very mixed picture. It was good or outstanding in 40 of the 89 schools visited but was judged to be inadequate in 14 schools.

There has been a continuing rise in the numbers taking GCSE and A- and AS-level examinations in RE. However the report suggested some concerns about the quality of much of the learning that takes place in GCSE short courses.

Most of the secondary schools in the survey with sixth forms did not fully meet the statutory requirement to provide core RE for all students beyond the age of 16.

The contribution of RE to the promotion of community cohesion was a strength of the subject in most of the schools visited. However, inspectors thought there was scope to extend the opportunities within the curriculum to enrich pupils' learning through greater use of fieldwork and contacts with religious and belief groups in the local community.

There is uncertainty among many teachers of RE about what they are trying to achieve in the subject resulting in a lack of well-structured and sequenced teaching and learning, substantial weaknesses in the quality of assessment and a limited use of higher order thinking skills to promote greater challenge.

Where RE was most effective, it used a range of enquiry skills such as investigation, interpretation, analysis, evaluation and reflection. However, this use was not yet defined clearly enough or integrated effectively within guidance to schools and, as a result, was not embedded sufficiently into classroom practice.

There were a number of specific weaknesses in the teaching about Christianity. Many primary and secondary schools visited did not pay sufficient attention to the progressive and systematic investigation of the core beliefs of Christianity.

There were considered to be significant inconsistencies in the way humanism and other non-religious beliefs were taught, and some uncertainties about the relationship between fostering respect for pupils' beliefs and encouraging open, critical, investigative learning in RE.

The reliance on a narrow curriculum model in primary schools based on RE being delivered in half-termly units taught weekly, often inhibited sustained learning in the subject and limited the opportunities to link the subject to other areas of the curriculum.

There was often a lack of continuity and progression between the RE curriculum in Key Stage 3 and the GCSE short courses. In the worst cases, this lack of continuity distorted pupils' understanding of religion and belief.

The effectiveness of specialist staff training in RE was judged to be inadequate in four out of 10 of the schools visited. They were not giving sufficient time and resources to support teachers' professional development in the subject.

**Teachers' Mental Health: A study exploring the experiences of teachers with work-related stress and mental health problems** (COMPASS, the Centre for Mental Health Research and Policy)

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NASUWT the teachers' union commissioned this, mainly descriptive, report describing teachers' experiences of stress and resulting mental health concerns arising from their day-to-day work in

schools. The research for the study was based on a literature review and interviews with a sample of 39 teachers under stress in the previous 12 months (drawn from a larger group who had responded to a press advert) plus interviews with some six senior school managers who had managed stressed teachers and again who had responded to the advert.

### **Key findings from the report:**

The authors noted that employment is a major area in which people find a sense of purpose, belonging, satisfaction and personal identity. Hence, when things go wrong in work, this can lead to unhappiness, anxiety and depression. The researchers referred to survey evidence which showed that stress and workload are factors cited in why teachers leave teaching. A 2008 ONS study of occupational stress found that around a third of UK teachers found their work extremely stressful, and a recent NASUWT survey found that 69 percent of teachers surveyed said they experienced stress. While, a 2006 survey by the Health and Safety Executive found that school teaching had above average levels of common mental health disorders. Finally studies have found that workplace stress was associated with higher likelihood of absence from work, longer periods of absence and a higher likelihood of early retirement.

Through the literature review, the researchers identified a series of factors as most likely to negatively impact on teachers' emotional and psychological wellbeing as well as their sense of professional identity and self-esteem. These were under five main categories:

- relations with school management (e.g. is this supportive, communicative, bullying, respectful, discriminatory, controlling etc)
- workload (including pupil factors such as spread of ability, presence of disruptive pupils, and availability of resources)
- "systemic" (excessive government intervention and innovation, loss of school autonomy, sense of greater external control through exam targets, perceived over-emphasis on pupil attainment rather than developing the whole person, inspection)
- role-related (lack of autonomy, de-skilling, unwanted duties, role ambiguity)
- relationships with other staff (lack of co-operation, conflicts)

The results of the teachers' interviews revealed that they perceived these same factors as contributing to their difficulties.

The interviews with the six school managers suggested that they felt that their own, teacher management jobs, had become more stressed. The causes here included perceived more aggressive and higher stakes school inspection together with initiative overload, and excessive workload.

Overall, the authors pointed out that their fieldwork could only portray teacher perceptions of the extent and causes of stress. They noted thus that "There is little evidence, beyond the anecdotal, that high-stakes accountability and inspection has significantly contributed to the mental health problems of pupils and staff" ... [the studies required to test this] "have not been undertaken".

## **Improving numeracy in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3** (Estyn)

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The Welsh inspection report aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of policies to improve standards of numeracy (i.e. proficiency with number) and to identify examples of best practice in key areas. The report is based on inspection outcomes of primary and secondary schools in Wales between 2005 and 2009; national curriculum teacher assessments in mathematics at key stage 2 and key stage 3; questionnaire responses completed by officers in 21 local authorities and interviews with advisory staff in seven local authorities and with staff in 11 primary and 10 secondary schools; and observation of numeracy 'catch-up' groups in these schools and discussion with pupils.

### **Key findings relating to good practice in the report:**

The schools with the most successful numeracy catch up programmes have clear and precise criteria for selecting pupils. Most of these schools target pupils who may not reach the expected level for the end of the key stage without extra support. Many use scores on standardised tests in mathematics as well as advice from the class teacher to identify these pupils. In the best practice, secondary schools also ask primary teachers to identify those pupils who would benefit from support during Year 7.

In an increasing number of secondary schools, older pupils act as 'buddies' or coaches to support identified pupils in Key Stage 3. The buddies are usually students from Years 12 and Year 13 although Year 10 and Year 11 pupils also fulfil this role well in a few 11-16 schools. Most of these schools provide appropriate training to help the buddies to fulfil their role well. In the majority of the schools, buddies are able to gain credit towards key skills qualifications in working with others, the community element of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification or the Duke of Edinburgh award as a result of supporting the younger pupils.

In a minority of secondary schools, mathematics teachers provide numeracy practice booklets for all pupils to complete with their form tutors during registration. These are most successful when the numeracy co-ordinator supports form teachers well and trains them in the methods of calculation used by the mathematics department. In these schools, the booklets provide useful opportunities for pupils to reinforce and practise their skills.

In terms of transition arrangements good practice included teachers from the secondary and primary schools meeting to discuss the methods of calculation used in mathematics lessons. As a result, these schools have adopted consistent methods of teaching mental and written calculations in number in both key stage 2 and key stage 3.

One of the most influential factors in continuing to improve numeracy in the most successful secondary schools is having a well-established numeracy group within the school, representing most, if not all departments. This group makes sure that there is good communication and that all departments receive information, training and reminders of ways of using numeracy well. Members of the group act as numeracy 'champions' within each subject and drive the initiative within that subject. The most effective groups also include a member of the senior leadership team.

## 4. Places to find research

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Websites and databases to look for research – including digests for practitioners.

The following websites provide summaries of research written specifically for stakeholder groups:

**The Research Informed Practice Site** [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/research](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/research)

Sponsored by the Department for Education, this site provides a searchable database of summaries of research written for practitioners. The digests cover a wide range of topics including: mathematics, English, behaviour, inclusion and thinking skills. The site offers a range of facilities including the ability to send digests to a friend option.

**Research for Teachers** <http://www.gtce.org.uk/teachers/rft/>

Formerly known as Research Of the Month, these articles are summaries of full length research studies written specifically for school staff. They include case study examples of how the research works in practice and a list of where to find out more information. RfT is sponsored by the General Teaching Council for England.

**Teaching Training Resource Bank** [www.ttrb.ac.uk](http://www.ttrb.ac.uk)

The TTRB acts as a portal for a wide range of research on topics of relevance to teacher educators, practitioners and student teachers. All materials on the site are quality assured through a process of academic scrutiny and monitoring is undertaken by a team of teacher educators from across the UK. TTRB also provides a [free e-librarian service](#) for teacher educators, practitioners and field staff who are looking for specific education research. TTRB also provides specific advice on research on behaviour, diversity and Special Educational Needs through its specialist networks with Higher Education Institutes. More about these networks can be found on the main site.

**National Teacher Research Panel** [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/ntrp](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/ntrp)

The National Teacher Research Panel website provides resources for practitioners interested in undertaking research in their own schools and class rooms. These include summaries of practitioner research and guidelines for using research as part of CPD activities.

**Eurydice** [www.eurydice.org](http://www.eurydice.org)

Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. The Network provides comparable information on education systems and policies throughout Europe.

**National Centre for the Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics** [www.ncetm.org.uk](http://www.ncetm.org.uk)

The National Centre for the Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics is funded by the DfE and provides a range of resources and research evidence to support teaching and learning in mathematics.

**Educational evidence portal (EEP)** [www.eep.ac.uk](http://www.eep.ac.uk)

The Educational Evidence Portal brings together research and evidence for educational professionals in one place. Documents from leading education organisations have been collated in one, easily accessible, searchable site, making information and evidence on a wide and ever-growing range of topics freely available. As well as education, the site is developing to include relevant aspects of children's services research too.

**Practical Research for Education (PRE)** [www.preonline.co.uk](http://www.preonline.co.uk)

PRE Online provides research articles written with school staff in mind and focuses on practical applications from research. It is a priced publication but each issue includes a free article to download. The free article focuses on pupils' attitudes towards reading in Years 4 and 6.

### 3. Developing Young Researchers

NFER has recently begun a project to develop 'starter-level' web-based guidance for those who want to encourage young researchers. The completed website will offer simple guidance, supported by references to other publications, further information/links and case study examples.

We are very keen to involve people who work with children and young people (for example in schools, colleges, voluntary organisations and children's services) and are relatively new to supporting young researchers. If you are interested in helping us to develop and trial the guidance and act as a case study please contact [youngresearchers@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:youngresearchers@nfer.ac.uk).

### 4. Call for local practical examples from the Centre for Excellence in Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) is seeking local practice examples in relation to its schools and communities research theme. Funded by the Department, C4EO has been established to help transform outcomes for children, young people and their families by identifying and coordinating local, regional and national evidence of 'what works' to create a single and comprehensive picture of effective practice.

The Centre is keen to receive examples of effective local practice linked to its schools and communities research priorities of narrowing the gap for children and young people with additional needs; effective transitions; and family well-being and community cohesion. It is also keen to hear about effective local area school commissioning arrangements.

Further information on C4EO's validated local practice programme is available online at <http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/general/localpracticeexamples.aspx?themeid=10>, as is more detailed information on the schools and communities theme calls:

<http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/schools/default.aspx?themeid=6&accesstypeid=1>."