

# EDUCATOR SECTOR NEWS – SEPTEMBER 2016

## TES

**Four out of five teachers are opposed to grammar school plans, poll shows** – A new poll showed that 82% of respondents were opposed to the creation of new grammar schools, while 81% did not believe there was any evidence to support the opening of more schools. <https://goo.gl/WMXrdJ>

**Grammar schools will 'increase inequality', warns influential IFS** – The think tank Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) has warned that expanding the number of grammar schools will “increase inequality” in the education system throughout England. The IFS explains that under a selective system, those who pass the 11-plus tend to do better, but those who fail tend to fail worse than when in a comprehensive system. They make reference to research from the 1980s which highlighted a decline in the performance of pupils who were not able to attend grammar schools. <https://goo.gl/OyKJRC>

## INSTITUTE OF OUTDOOR LEARNING

**Busting the myths on outdoor learning in schools** - Jim Burt writes for Natural England. Evidence from the Monitoring of Engagement with Natural Environment (MENE) showed that during 2013-15, only 8% of school aged children visited the natural environment with their schools. He expressed that this may be due to confidence teachers have in taking young people outdoors. <https://goo.gl/W6rS9q>

## COUNCIL FOR LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

**Doctors urged to offer 'exercise outdoors' prescriptions** – The Local Government Association has stated that Doctors in England and Wales should offer overweight patients “green space” prescriptions to get them exercising outdoors. The LGC is calling on the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups to drive the initiative forward. <https://goo.gl/JJtT67>

## DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

**Views sought on plans to boost apprenticeships** – The Government have published proposals for a new funding model for apprenticeships along with further details on the apprenticeship levy. The plans propose that employers which are too small to pay the levy will have 90% of the training costs paid for by the government. Extra support will also be available for employers and training providers who take on 16-18yr old apprentices or young care leavers. More flexibility is also available to use the levy funds to retrain workers in new skills, even if they have prior qualifications. <http://goo.gl/ILp0mK>

**New proposals to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century school system that works for everyone have been unveiled by Education Secretary Justine Greening** – On the 12<sup>th</sup> September, Justine Greening announced that the government proposes to allow new selective schools to open, create stronger requirements for independent schools, require universities to open or sponsor schools in exchange for raising of tuition fees and to lift the cap on new faith free schools. Education Secretary Justine Greening said: “This government is making the case for social reform to build a true meritocracy in Britain, and education lies at the heart of that ambition. The proposals I have published today build on the government’s successful reforms to our education system. We want to make more good school places available in more areas, ensuring we give every child an excellent education and the opportunity to fulfil their potential. I would urge everyone to look at the detail in the consultation document and join that debate.” <https://goo.gl/tigh2D>

**Parents still face 'uphill struggle' to get satisfactory SEN support** – SEC Ed summarises claims by the National Autistic Society (NAS) that a recent survey showed that 74% of parents did not find negotiating the new SEND system in England an easy experience. NAS also flagged concerns that 69% of parents were waiting more than a year to get the support they needed for their child, and 16% waiting over 3 years. The new system was designed to be broader, and follow children from age 0-25, making interagency support easier to implement. Latest figures however, show that only 18% of SEN statements have been transferred across to the new system. <https://goo.gl/lqHmzw>

**Criticism, skepticism and anger greets selective education policy** – There has been widespread negativity in response to the proposal on 12 September for the proposed selective education policies, with multiple comments such as “policy of nostalgia” and labelling selection a “blight”. Concerns over the development of further grammar schools being created have been raised, particularly with regard to access for the less privileged. Many high profile educationalists, and charities, have voiced their opinions. This article is a good summary of these ideas. <https://goo.gl/smy6PJ>

**Body image and societal pressure leaves girls less happy** – A new study by the Wales Institute for Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD) showed that nearly 25% of girls admitted to feeling worried at school, compared to 16.5% of boys. 24% of girls said they felt they did not “belong” at school, and nearly 20% said that they didn't feel school was a place where the teachers know them well. Body image and social media topics were suggested to be likely pressures, increasing girls' emotional problems. <https://goo.gl/vVBE2f>

## SCHOOLS WEEK

**GCSE A\*-C pass rate drops sharply** – There was a fall of 2.1 percentage points in the pass rate, down to 66.9% A\*-C grades. A\* grades dropped by 0.1 percentage points. The drop has been linked to the number of forces English and Maths GCSE resits among 17 year olds, who were required to take the exams after failing to gain a C grade last year. However, A\*-C in English and Maths for 16 year olds increased by 1.4 percentage points. Concerns over modern foreign languages, history and geography grade drops were raised. <http://goo.gl/kblA9e>

**Poorer pupils less likely to do apprenticeships** – The education charity is calling for more inclusive apprenticeships, after data from the DfE highlighted that students from low income backgrounds are less likely to take up an apprenticeship, despite the government's pledge to create 3m more apprenticeships by 2020. The date will be made available in the final DfE “Progression report” shortly. Concerns were raised that apprentices are not eligible for the DfE's 16-19 bursary for food, transport and equipment. Parents are able to claim child benefit for 16-18year olds who continue in full time education or vocational training, but not those who take on an apprenticeship. The minimum wage of £3.30 per hour was also highlighted as a potential concern for low income families. <http://goo.gl/lwXECY>