

Schools Research News

May 2008

This monthly newsletter is produced by the Chief Adviser on School Standards Unit at the Department for Children, Schools and Families 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, forthcoming events, and research for practice news. If you would like to be added to, or removed from, the circulation list please email research.summaries@dcfs.gsi.gov.uk The newsletter can also be viewed online at The Research Informed Practice Site (TRIPS) www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/research.

To access full articles – click on summary headings where available.

Content

1. Recently published schools research

[Secondary school and curriculum and staffing survey](#)

Survey completed by more than 14,000 teachers

[Parental involvement in children's education](#)

Interviews with more than 5,000 parents and children in state schools

[Effective teaching of inference skills for reading](#)

Literature review

[Use of ICTs in supporting pupils' development of algebraic ideas](#)

Systematic review

[Final evaluation of On Track – for at risk pupils](#)

Longitudinal study includes tackling poor behaviour and truancy

[Teacher resignation and recruitment survey](#)

Responses from around 10,000 teachers

[Evaluation of Reading Recovery, an early literacy intervention](#)

Follow up study of 42 schools

[Responding to the Rose Review: schools' approaches to the systematic teaching of phonics](#)

Ofsted report

[Impact of early reading intervention delivered by classroom assistants](#)

Pupil progress 18 months after receiving intervention

[Pupils' views on male and female teachers](#)

Responses from 9,000 teachers

[Learners and technology](#)

Pupils' attitudes towards technology

[Emerging technologies for learning](#)

Contemporary issues in technology and learning including growing up with Google

[Schools and sustainability](#)

Ofsted report

[The impact of the school environment on pupils' attitudes towards education](#)

Survey of pupils in a new school building

[Good practice in the use of ICT in Wales](#)

Report to the Welsh Assembly

2. Statistical reports

[Pupil characteristics and class sizes for maintained schools in England](#)

Report includes data on eligibility for free school meals and ethnicity

3. Digests for practitioners

[This month's digests for practitioners include:](#)

The role of specialists in continuing professional development

Generating, shaping and developing pupils' skills in writing

4. Places for practitioners, teacher educators and students to find research

[List of useful websites for practitioners and students to find research](#)

5. Forthcoming events

[Helping children to say and write what they think](#)

Conference for secondary teachers and advisers of subject English

1. Recently published schools research

The secondary school and curriculum staffing survey 2007 (NFER)

DCSF Research Brief 026

[Back to contents list](#)

The secondary school and curriculum staffing survey is commissioned periodically to provide a picture of the secondary school teaching workforce in terms of teachers' qualifications and the curriculum subjects they teach. The 2007 survey was completed by 14,137 teachers from 327 schools and the findings were compared to a similar survey undertaken in 2002.

Key findings from the survey:

96% of teachers' highest post A-level qualification was a degree, a higher degree, a BEd, or a PGCE.

The proportions of teachers with post A-level qualifications in the subjects they taught varied across subjects from less than 10% in some subjects (e.g. careers education at 7%), to over 80% in others (e.g. music at 87%).

The subjects with the highest proportions of post A-level qualified teachers were chemistry, biology and physics where at least 90% of teachers had post A-level qualifications in relevant subjects.

In terms of the qualification subjects of science teachers, approximately a third held specialisms in biology (32%), followed by chemistry (22%), physics (22%), other science (16%), while 8% were non-science.

The 2007 survey results showed a 10% increase in the proportions of teachers with degrees or higher degrees in the subjects they taught compared to the 2002 survey.

In most subjects teachers under 40 years of age were more likely to have post A-level qualifications that related to the subjects they taught than older teachers.

In most subjects, Grammar schools had higher proportions of teachers with post A-level qualifications relevant to the subjects they taught than in other types of school.

In more than half of the subject categories, schools with the smallest numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals had higher proportions of teachers with relevant post A-level qualifications than those with the highest numbers.

Across all subjects there were higher proportions of teachers with degrees in their taught subjects in the exam years (years 9, 11, 12 and 13) compared to the non-exam years (years 7, 8 and 10).

Parental involvement in children's education survey (BMRB) DCSF

Research Brief 034

[Back to contents list](#)

The 2007 parental involvement in children's education survey investigated the extent and variety of parents' involvement in their children's schooling and was based on interviews with 5032 parents of children who attended state school, aged 5 to 16. The findings from the 2007 survey were compared with those from similar surveys undertaken in 2001 and 2004.

Key Findings from the survey:

Around half (51%) of parents felt 'very involved' in their child's school life, a noticeable increase from 29% in 2001, and 38% in 2004. In common with previous years, work commitments were perceived as the main barrier to further involvement.

There was a moderate shift in parents' attitudes away from a child's education being the school's responsibility, towards it being mainly or wholly a parent's responsibility. This shift occurred mainly between 2001 and 2004, but continued in 2007. Still, almost half (45%) saw education as an equal school-parent responsibility. Non-white parents were more likely to emphasise the parent's responsibility over that of the school's.

Nearly three quarters (73%) of parents said it was 'extremely important' to help with homework, which was similar to the previous surveys. Women (76%), those from a Black background (82%) and those in lower Social Grades (as characterised by their occupations) (76%) were more likely to say this. Around a fifth of respondents said that their child attended a supplementary or complementary school or homework club.

Parents were generally very positive towards information provided by the school such as information about their child's progress (86% said their child's school provided clear information on this) and the school being welcoming to parents, (92% said it was). Parents considered that communicating with schools through 'informal discussions with school staff' was the most useful way of finding out about a child's progress. This followed a noticeable decline since 2001 in the number who said parents evenings were the most useful method (from 43% in 2001 to 19% in 2007).

Effective teaching of inference skills for reading – a literature review

DCSF research brief 031 (NFER)

[Back to contents list](#)

This literature review looked at research evidence on inference skills for reading, including the skills that constitute inferencing and how to teach them. The ability to make inferences is in simple terms, the ability to use one or two or more pieces of information from a text in order to arrive at a third piece of information that is implicit. Inferencing skills are important for reading comprehension, and also more widely in the area of literary criticism and other approaches to studying texts. The National Curriculum lays much emphasis on the skills of inference, especially at Key Stages 2 and 3.

Key findings from the review

The ability to draw inferences was found to predetermine reading skills: that is, poor inferencing causes poor comprehension and not vice versa.

Different researchers identified many different kinds of inference; however, there was no general consensus about the number of types of inference, or how they should be named.

The research evidence reviewed suggested that, in order to be good at inferencing, pupils need to: be an active reader who wants to make sense of the text; monitor comprehension and repair misunderstandings; have a rich vocabulary; and have a competent working memory.

Inferencing skills were found to be facilitated by: having a wide background knowledge; sharing the same cultural background as that assumed by the text.

Although the characteristics of good inferencers have been identified, there was limited research evidence to suggest how teachers could best improve the inferencing abilities of their pupils. Available research evidence pointed to the importance of teachers modelling of inferencing e.g. thinking aloud their thoughts as they read to pupils; vocabulary building both aurally and in reading; and making explicit the structure of stories; and discussion of texts in curricular areas outside literacy.

No evidence was directly found on which strategies were most effective in teaching inference skills to pupils of different ages or abilities. On the subject of pupils' age, it was apparent that inference could be seen in children of all ages and could even be practised with pre-readers using picture books. This suggested that inferencing could be practised outside the domain of reading with pupils of all ages and that one way of cultivating these skills in young readers and reluctant readers was to do it in discussion, orally. However, at the same time the research indicated that pupils are most receptive to explicit teaching of inference skills in their early secondary years.

A systematic review of the use of ICTs in the development of pupils' understanding of algebraic ideas (University of York – TDA maths EPPI-Centre review group, IOE, London)

[Back to contents list](#)

This systematic review commissioned by the TDA looked at how ICT could contribute to school age pupils' understanding of algebraic functions and under what conditions that understanding developed. Thirty three studies were mapped in the first stage of the review and 14 studies were included in the in-depth review.

Key findings from the review:

Pupils achieved general gains of understanding in algebra when using one type of ICT.

Pupils successfully used visualisation with graphing software to fit graphs to datasets, to solve equations and to transform functions.

Pupils working in a computer environment reached higher levels of thinking and were able to explain their thinking better than pupils working in a paper and pencil medium.

Lower attaining pupils preferred to work arithmetically with tables of values and only later move to integrate the tables of values with computer-generated graphs.

Pupils had difficulty moving between symbolic, tabular and graphical forms when solving equations.

Pupils did not always know how to use the technology, interpreted ambiguities in the output or exercised critical judgment when using some of the advanced calculators.

Small group and interactive working with teachers enabled ICTs to be used more effectively.

Pupils using ICT out of school were better able to use it effectively within school.

The national evaluation of On Track phase 2 - Reducing risk and increasing resilience – how did On Track work? DCSF Research Brief 035 (Policy Research Bureau)

[Back to contents list](#)

This is the final report from the second phase (March 2003-April 2006) of the national evaluation of On Track, a multi-component initiative which operated in 24 areas of high crime and high deprivation in England and Wales. The aim of the programme was to reduce the propensity of youth crime and anti-social behaviour for children aged 4-12 and their families. The evaluation included monitoring and tracking of 1,100 On Track services and 17,000 service users, longitudinal surveys of primary and secondary school staff and pupils in On Track areas, as well as a longitudinal cohort study which compared On Track area residents with similar families in non On Track areas.

Key findings from the evaluation:

On Track was primarily a multi-agency, cross-sector programme with partners drawn from education, social services, youth offending services, health and local councils.

Overall, home-school partnerships accounted for the greatest proportion of On Track services (33%), and by the second phase of the evaluation in some areas On Track was almost entirely school-based.

Referrals to On Track projects came from a variety of routes, and overall education agencies were the largest single source of referrals comprising 35% of all referrals.

Three quarters of all service users were children (53% girls), and almost a quarter were parents (mostly mothers – 88%).

Across the programme as a whole, nearly seventeen thousand children and parents (16,761) were recorded as users of On track in the second phase of the evaluation.

Children in On Track areas and those using On Track services reported increasing warmth and praise from parents over time, and a decrease in hostility and criticism. Primary aged children were most likely to report these findings.

In the primary school range, both children and their parents reported increased communication (talking time together) over time, and younger children were reported as reading more often with parents.

Overall, there was no clear impact of On Track on school truancy and exclusions rates. However, there was some indication that for primary school children and for children and young people in a booster sample of high-need families that temporary exclusions had dropped over time. Results were also mixed for the impact of On Track on bad behaviour and bullying at school.

Older children's attachment and enjoyment of school showed significant positive changes over time including increased involvement and participation at school.

Teacher resignation and recruitment study (NFER)

[Back to contents list](#)

The Local Government Association commissions an annual survey of teacher retention in primary and secondary schools. The recently published 2007 survey (data collected in 2006) was based on responses from 3602 secondary schools and 6505 primary schools, and the findings were compared with those from the previous year.

Key findings from the survey:

In 2006, the turnover rate for full-time permanent teachers was 9.8%, which was a drop from 11.0% in the previous year. The highest turnover in recent years was 13.2% which was the turnover rate for this group in 2001. In primary schools in particular, the turnover rate decreased, down from 10.2% in 2005 to 8.9% in 2006.

The area with the highest turnover for primary schools in 2006 was Greater London. In these schools, 10.9% of full-time permanent teachers left to work elsewhere. For secondary schools, the region in 2006 with the highest turnover rate for full-time permanent teachers was the South East (13%).

In terms of subjects taught, ICT had the highest turnover rate with 30.1%. The lowest turnover (6.1%) was in Art, Craft or Design. Other subjects varied between 6.2% and 23.3%. Teachers aged 40 to 49 were least likely to leave, with turnover rates for this age group of 6.3% for primary and 7.1% for secondary. The highest turnover rates were for teachers aged 60 or over, as many of these teachers retired.

Nearly half of the full-time permanent teachers in all schools who resigned in 2006 moved to another position within the local authority. A fifth of those who left during that year retired from the teaching profession altogether. The remainder moved to other education jobs or jobs in other areas of employment, gave family reasons for leaving or did not give a reason.

The recruitment rate for all full-time teachers in 2006 was 12.3%, which was similar to the rate in 2005 which was 12.8%. However, for part-time teachers the recruitment rate fell 3.6 percentage points between 2005 and 2006 to 10%.

Gross wastage, defined as the percentage of the whole teaching population who left the maintained sector decreased from 6.6% in 2005 to 5.7% in 2006. Net wastage, which is the difference between the gross wastage and the new recruits, fell in 2006 compared to 2005. In 2006, there was a net gain of 0.3%, compared to a net loss of 0.2% in 2005.

Comparison of literacy progress of young children in London schools: a Reading Recovery follow up study (Institute of Education, London)

[Back to contents list](#)

This study assessed the impact of Reading Recovery (RR) on the poorest six year old readers in 42 schools across five London boroughs at least a year after receiving the intervention. Their progress was compared with similar pupils who had not used Reading Recovery.

Reading Recovery is an early literacy intervention programme designed for children who have literacy difficulties at the end of their first year at primary school.

Key findings from the study:

Prior to receiving Reading Recovery participating pupils had literacy levels below those of a 5 year old. In the year of the main study (2005-6), those children who received Reading Recovery achieved significant gains in all assessments compared with those who did not. At the end of the year, the literacy achievement of children who had received Reading Recovery was in line with their chronological age, and the comparison group was 14 months behind.

At the end of Year 2 the children who had received Reading Recovery in Year 1 were achieving within or above their chronological age band on all measures and were still around a year ahead of the comparison children in schools where Reading Recovery was not available.

The gender gap that was noticeable amongst low attaining pupils in comparison schools, with boys lagging behind girls, was not evident in Reading Recovery schools.

Writing achievement showed a significant difference between RR and comparison children. At the end of Year 2, the children who had received RR were able to write twice as many correctly spelled words as those children who were in the comparison group.

Responding to the Rose Review: schools' approaches to the systematic teaching of phonics (Ofsted)

[Back to contents list](#)

This Ofsted report looked at schools' responses to the Rose Review of the teaching of early reading and the subsequent guidance from the Primary National Strategy on the systematic teaching of phonic knowledge and skills to children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The study aimed to ascertain the extent to which a sample of schools understood and were acting upon the key concept of 'fidelity to the programme', identified in the Rose Review as an essential aspect of successful phonics teaching. The study was based on visits to 20 schools, a survey of 43 schools and analysis of inspection reports.

Key findings from the study:

The Rose Review had been read by the schools in the study and its findings had provided a stimulus for discussion and a lever for change.

Schools with long-established phonics programmes reviewed and improved their provision in response to the review, in particular the frequency and pace of their phonics sessions.

Schools understood the concept of 'fidelity to the programme'. They were working faithfully within the structure of their chosen programme and teaching phonemes and graphemes in the specified order.

The relationship between the phase of the Letters and Sounds programme and the age of the children varied from school to school. For example, some older children in the schools which had only recently introduced systematic phonics had gaps in their phonic knowledge and so were working on an early phase. Nevertheless the programme was being followed in the correct order.

Children enjoyed the regular phonics lessons which they received as part of a systematic programme and gained satisfaction from putting their learning into practice in their reading and writing.

Teachers had been 'surprised by the joy' shown by children as they mastered phonic skills.

A 'virtuous circle' has been created: children's increasing command of the skills had led to staff expectations being raised which, in turn, improved the pace and demand of teaching and leading to further success.

The clear structure of Letters and Sounds and the well written handbook helped staff to feel confident about teaching phonics, even when they were inexperienced.

The skills of staff were developing well, although occasionally there was a lack of accuracy in enunciating phonemes, some uncertainty in the use of terminology, and some insecurity about assessment.

Local authorities had provided some training and support but most training had been provided 'in house', led by teachers with expertise in systematic phonics teaching, or based on the Letters and Sounds handbook.

The impact of early reading interventions delivered by classroom assistants on attainment at the end of Year 2 (McGill University, Canada and London Borough of Sutton) *Article published in British Educational Research Journal v34 (3) June 2008*

[Back to contents list](#)

This small-scale study based on 55 pupils in nine schools investigated whether an early phonological reading intervention delivered by teaching assistants had an identifiable impact on pupil outcomes 16 months after the intervention, at the end of KS1. The KS1 results of pupils whose phonic skills (as measured by nonsense word decoding ability) improved after the intervention (the 'responders') were compared to the KS1 results of pupils who did not appear to receive any immediate benefit from the intervention (the 'non-responders').

Key findings from the study:

The results of the small-scale study suggested that there were some identifiable longer term benefits of the intervention for those pupils who demonstrated improved phonic skills immediately after the intervention (the responders). However, the responders were still below the national average in most KS1 tests.

Statistically significant differences between the responders and non-responders were found in the teacher assessments at the end of KS1 for reading, mathematics and science, and in the KS1 tests of reading, reading comprehension and spelling, but not writing.

In all cases the responders demonstrated higher achievement than the non-responders. Overall, though, even the responders as a group did not match national averages in reading or science KS1 teacher assessments, suggesting they were still behind age-related expectations. The proportion of responders reaching the expected level in mathematics was, however, similar to the national average.

On the formal KS1 tests, there were no significant differences between the responders and national average attainment on the reading task or the writing task, but the responders were below average on the reading comprehension and spelling tests.

Role models, school improvement and the ‘gender gap’ – do men bring out the best in boys and women the best in girls? (CEM Centre, University of Durham) published in British Educational Research Journal v34 (3) June 2008

[Back to contents list](#)

This study investigated whether teacher gender had an identifiable impact on pupil outcomes (for boys and girls) in Year 6. The study was based on approximately 9000 Year 6 children in 1997/98. Data on these children were drawn from the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) Project run by the CEM Centre at Durham University and included attainment tests in reading, mathematics and science, tests of non-verbal ability and English vocabulary, and assessments of attitudes to subjects and school in general. Multilevel modelling was used to identify any impact of teacher gender whilst controlling for other variables.

Key findings from the research:

There was no evidence that teacher gender influenced pupil outcomes on any attainment measure, for boys or girls.

On the attitude measures, an association between gender and outcomes was seen only for attitudes to school, where children (boys and girls) who had female teachers had more positive attitudes, although the size of the effect was relatively small.

This project investigated the experiences of KS2 pupils in using technology for learning and sought their views on how technology could enhance learning in the future. The study was commissioned by BECTa and was based on data collected from five primary schools including a survey of 612 pupils and pupil-led focus groups comprising 131 of pupils.

Key findings from the research:

All pupils in the study reported having access to a computer in school, with nearly nine in ten respondents reporting having access to a computer that they could use outside of school.

Despite ready access, primary pupils' engagement with ICT tended to be unsophisticated, especially within the school setting. Learners reported that their school internet use most often consisted of schoolwork-related activities such as information and picture retrieval. Home internet use was dominated by online games and, to a lesser extent, chatting and emailing.

In terms of non-internet activities, use of computers in school was reported to involve mainly the writing-up of work, making presentations and, for older pupils, spreadsheet and database use.

At home children used computers mostly for games and digital photography. Creative and collaborative uses of 'Web 2.0' applications (such as social networking, wikis and blogs) were not prevalent either inside or outside school, with passive consumption of online content the dominant mode of engagement for most pupils.

Pupils reported that their most engaging and desirable use of ICTs was playing computer games. Conversely their least preferred uses of ICT related to school work.

Older children were more likely to report perceived learning gains from ICT use at school and home which the researchers suggested may be reflective in the increased seriousness of school ICT use as children progressed through Years 3 to 6. For instance, activities such as online learning, database and spreadsheet use increased as children got older, whilst activities such as online gaming, chatting, making pictures and using digital cameras were reported by the children as decreasing with age up to Year 6.

Nearly three-quarters of pupils indicated that they had thought about how to stay safe when using the internet, with a majority claiming to be aware of ways that they could keep themselves safe. However, when asked to provide specific examples of such e-safety practices only one third of pupils were able to cite a valid answer.

Becta has published the third in its series of e-books on emerging technologies for learning. This series looks at how emerging technologies can impact on education and learners. The publications are not intended to be a comprehensive review of educational technologies, but offer some highlights across the broad spectrum of developments and trends

This latest publication includes the following articles:

- Growing up with Google - what it means to education (Diane Oblinger, EDUCAUSE)
- Mobile, wireless, connected - information clouds and learning (Mark van't Hooft, Kent State University)
- Location-based and context-aware education - prospects and perils (Adam Greenfield, NYU)
- Emerging trends in serious games and virtual worlds (Sara de Freitas, SGI)
- 'If it quacks like a duck...' - developments in search technologies (Emma Tonkin, UKOLN)
- Interactive displays and next generation interfaces (Michael Haller, Upper Austria University of Applied Sciences)

<u>Schools and sustainability – a climate for change?</u> (Ofsted)

[Back to contents list](#)

This inspection report assessed the extent to which schools were teaching their pupils about sustainability and the progress they were making towards meeting the expectations of the Government's *National framework for sustainable schools*. The report was based on visits to 41 primary and secondary schools.

Key findings from the report:

In most of the schools visited during the survey, there was little emphasis on sustainable development and limited awareness of national and local government policies for this area.

The schools' promotion of sustainable development through National Curriculum subjects tended to be inconsistent and uncoordinated.

In the majority of schools, sustainable development was a peripheral issue, often confined to extra-curricular activities and involved only a minority of pupils.

A small number of the schools placed considerable emphasis on sustainable development. In these cases, teaching was good, lessons were stimulating and pupils took an active part in improving the sustainability of the school and the wider community.

The primary schools in the study tended to be more successful than secondary schools in promoting sustainability, particularly in terms of using their grounds as a resource for learning about it.

Schools were more successful in developing pupils' understanding of local rather than global issues of sustainability.

The effects of the school environment on young people's attitudes towards education and learning (NFER)

[Back to contents list](#)

Partnerships for Schools (PfS), is responsible for delivering the Department's secondary school renewal programme, Building Schools for the Future (BSF). This study commissioned by PfS, aimed to assess the impact of the first new school built as part of BSF on pupils' attitudes towards education. The research comprised surveys of Year 7 and 8 year olds and their tutors prior to the opening of the new school building and then again several months later after the new school was opened, by which time the pupils were now in Years 8 and 9.

Key findings from the research:

There was evidence to suggest that pupil attitudes towards school were more positive after the move into the new buildings. In particular the proportions of pupils:

- who said that they felt safe at school most or all of the time increased from 57 to 87 per cent
- who said that they felt proud of their school increased from 43 to 77 per cent
- who said that they enjoyed going to school increased from 50 to 61 per cent
- who perceived that vandalism was at least 'a bit of a problem' in their school decreased from 84 per cent of respondents to 33 per cent
- who perceived that bullying was a big problem decreased from 39 per cent of students in the 'before' survey, to 16 per cent in the 'after' survey
- who expected to stay on in the sixth form or to go to college increased from 64 per cent to 77 per cent.

The researchers noted that it was not possible to attribute a causal link between the improved attitudes of the pupils and the move to the new school building, but the numbers and levels of positive findings did suggest an association between the move to the new surroundings and improvements in pupils' outlooks regarding their experience of school and their expectation for the future.

Transforming schools with ICT (Schools ICT strategy working group, Wales)

[Back to contents list](#)

The Welsh Assembly commissioned a report to assess current use of ICT in schools in Wales. The study included school case studies of good practice; a survey of LAs; analysis of inspection evidence; and data drawn from other current Welsh Assembly schools research.

Examples of good practice in the use of ICT included:

- Use of interactive whiteboards and other ICT equipment such as microphones to support collaboration and engagement of all learners;
- Use of websites or learning platforms (e.g. Moodles) to engage pupils and make resources available beyond the classroom and school day. In some cases, teachers used blogging and chat tools to enable teaching and learning to continue beyond the lesson. Others were making use of podcasts and wikis;
- Use of SMS text messaging to encourage more creative writing among boys;
- Creative use of technology such as Digital Blue cameras to enable learners to review and evaluate their work in PE (as well as more 'conventional' use of digital cameras for art and media projects);
- Use of videoconferencing to support links between small schools and for sharing tuition and learning resources between sixth forms and colleges;
- Specialist technology was being used to support learners with additional needs including support for inclusion activities; and
- Provision of ICT training including e-safety training for both parents/carers and learners.

2. Latest statistical reports

Pupil Characteristics and Class Sizes in Maintained Schools in England: January 2008 (DCSF)

[Back to contents list](#)

This statistical report covers pupil characteristics and class sizes in maintained schools in England and includes provisional data on free school meal eligibility, ethnicity, first language and special education needs together with a range of class size information. The latest statistics are for January 2008 and update those previously released on 26 April 2007.

Key findings from the report:

In January 2008 the full time equivalent (FTE) number of pupils in state funded primary, secondary and special schools stood at around 7.3 million, the same as in 2007, with both the primary and secondary sectors showing a decrease.

Provisional figures indicate a decrease in the proportion of pupils in state funded schools known to be eligible for free school meals.

In January 2008 some 223,430 (or 2.8 percent of) pupils across all schools in England had statements of SEN. The proportion of pupils with statements of SEN is similar to the proportion in 2007.

In January 2008, the average size of classes taught by one teacher in primary schools was 26.2, the same as a year earlier.

The average size of classes taught by one teacher in state funded secondary schools was 20.9, which represents a decrease from 21.2 a year earlier

To access details for all DCSF statistical reports go to:

www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/

3. Research digests for practitioners

<u>How do specialists best support teachers' professional development?</u> (GTCe's Research Of the Month)

[Back to contents list](#)

Knowing what makes continuing professional development (CPD) effective is important both to teachers planning their own professional development and to schools wanting to build self-sustaining professional development and learning skills and aptitudes whilst getting value for money/resources invested.

This digest of research for practitioners looks at the findings from a review of research which set out to unpack what specialists contribute to CPD and how they do it – in contexts where there is evidence of a positive impact on pupil learning. The review's findings were derived from 19 studies which the reviewers judged as offering the most relevant and trustworthy evidence.

The reviewers noted how the specialists invested much time and effort in the design, delivery and support of CPD programmes and activities. They looked for studies that explored the impact of CPD on both students and teachers. The specialists introduced the teachers to new knowledge and approaches. But they also supported teachers over time in using their new knowledge to develop their skills and make changes to their practice.

Specialists helped teachers to use their new knowledge in practice in a number of ways. These included:

- modelling the new ideas in a classroom setting
- supporting the teachers to make changes through sustained mentoring and coaching, and
- helping teachers to collaborate with and support one another.

The reviewers concluded that for CPD to be successful it was important that specialists paid as much attention to adult learning and to teachers' needs, as to the transmission of new and 'expert' knowledge about classroom teaching and learning.

When teachers were supported by specialists in this way, they learned new approaches to teaching, more about their subject, and more about pupil learning. This in turn helped them to enhance their pupils' engagement, confidence, attitudes, and performance.

To read the full digest and implications for practice:

http://www.gtce.org.uk/research/romtopics/rom_cpd/038throleofspecialistsincpd/

Getting going: generating, shaping and developing ideas in writing (DCSF)

[Back to contents list](#)

This practical publication brings together a review of research and tried and tested classroom approaches for supporting the productive skills in English – speaking and writing in order to help schools improve pupils' progress across all Key Stages.

The booklet includes the following sections:

- The relationship between speaking and writing
- What we know about writing practice – what we've been doing well and where the sticking points are
- Implications for the pedagogy and assessment of writing
- The likely impact of a greater emphasis on productive skills

4. Places for practitioners, teacher educators and students to find research

[Back to contents list](#)

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

The Research Informed Practice Site www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/research

Sponsored by The Innovation Unit in partnership with the DCSF, 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 Of the Month www.gtce.org.uk/research/romtopics

Research Of the Month 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. ROM is sponsored by the General Teaching Council for England.

Teaching Training Resource Bank 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.dfes.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

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/

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

Educational evidence portal (EEP) www.eep.ac.uk

eep – the educational evidence portal is an online resource dedicated to and for educational professionals and lay people. It brings together research and evidence from multiple sources into one searchable database therefore cutting down the need to search on different sites. eep is funded by CfBT education trust.

5. Forthcoming events

[Back to contents list](#)

National Teachers' Conference: English

In their own words - Helping children to say and write what they think

Wednesday, 2 July 2008, London

This one day conference provides an opportunity for teachers, heads of department and LA advisers to update their subject knowledge and discuss the latest key issues in the teaching of subject English. This event includes a mix of lectures and practical hands-on sessions that will offer ideas and intervention strategies which can be utilised in the process of helping secondary school pupils to say and write what they think and feel 'in their own words'...Workshops include improving boys' writing and improving teachers as writers themselves.

This is a priced event, and as part of the registration fee, participants will receive copies of resources for use in their classrooms and English Departments. The event is informed by a review of research on improving the progress of struggling young writers and practical strategies for supporting their development of generating, marshalling and shaping of their ideas in writing. Copies of this publication will be given to participants at the event.

Presenters include:

Sue Hackman, Chief Adviser on School Standards at the DCSF
Elaine Millard, Visiting Professor, Birmingham City University, Chair of NATE
Jonathan Rooke, Senior Lecturer at University of Winchester
Frank Cottrell Boyce, Screenwriter and novelist

For more information or to book a place contact: 01706 831002,
sales@philipallanupdates.com