

What's happening in the news this week?



Let's have a look at this week's poster!

18th - 24th September 2023



**Is a school more than
just a building?**



Let's look at this week's story

More than 100 schools across the UK have been affected by a potentially dangerous concrete used in their construction between the 1950s and the mid-90s. The crisis has left some school staff struggling to find temporary teaching accommodation and forced many pupils to begin their academic year learning online. It's not just schools affected; more than 30 hospitals are also believed to be at risk, according to experts.



Learn more about this week's story [here](#).
Watch this week's useful video [here](#).
This week's Virtual Picture News [here](#).



How does it make me feel?



sad	angry	happy	confused	excited	worried	shocked	afraid
despondent disconsolate dismal doleful downhearted forlorn gloomy melancholic miserable woeful wretched	aggrieved annoyed discontented disgruntled distressed exasperated frustrated indignant offended outraged resentful vexed	beaming buoyant cheery contented delighted enraptured gleeful glowing joyful	addled baffled bemused bewildered disorientated indistinct muddled mystified perplexed puzzled	animated elevated enlivened enthusiastic exhilarated exuberant thrilled	agitated anxious apprehensive concerned disquieted distraught distressed disturbed fretful perturbed troubled uneasy	astonished astounded disconcerted distressed dumbfounded horrified staggered startled stunned surprised	alarmed apprehensive daunted fearful frantic horrified petrified terrified

This week's story looks at events related to ...





Read through the information below, which explains more about why some schools were unable to open at the start of the new school year.

Why have some schools not reopened?

At the start of September, more than 100 schools discovered they contained a potentially dangerous form of concrete called RAAC.

The schools affected have been told to make changes and put safety measures in place.

It has meant that thousands of pupils have been moved into temporary classrooms while work is carried out.

Most schools haven't been affected and the government has written to heads of affected schools.

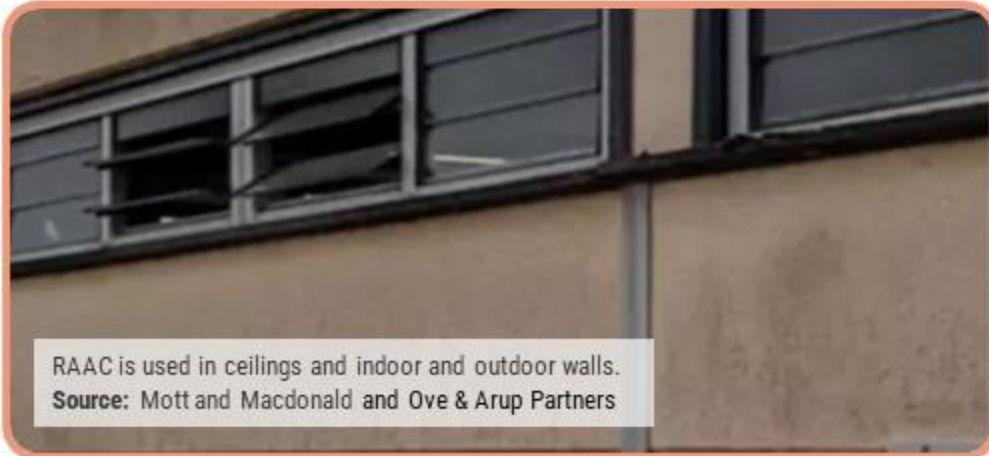


Source: Mott and Macdonald and Ove & Arup Partners

What's the cause of the problem?

RAAC, which stands for reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete, is a light form of concrete, used in many buildings between the 1950s and mid-1990s. It's not just found in schools; it's also used in a lot of other public buildings like hospitals and police stations.

It was only after many buildings had been built with this concrete that it was discovered that the material may lose strength over time and so the government has been monitoring the risks.



RAAC is used in ceilings and indoor and outdoor walls.
Source: Mott and Macdonald and Ove & Arup Partners

How do you imagine the children and teachers at the schools might have felt when they heard the news?



Look at the resource below, which shares some examples of things you might find in a classroom.

Digital technology such as computers, tablets, cameras, interactive whiteboards.



A range of books.



A sink.



Good quality resources and other equipment.

Displays.



Furniture.



Teachers, teaching assistants and children.



Rules and expectations.

Do you have any of these things in your classroom?



Look at the resource below, which shares some images of different school buildings.



I started primary school in 1987. My teacher used a blackboard and chalk when we were learning and the register was taken with a book and a pen. We had tables and plastic chairs, which I remember felt very modern at the time. We sometimes watched educational programmes on the school TV that was wheeled on a stand into our classroom. I think it was around 1990 when we got a computer. We had one for the whole school to share. My school is no longer a school, it is someone's house!



Heather

**Can you describe the similarities and differences between these school buildings?
Which would you describe as historic, modern, or futuristic?**



**Is a school more than
just a building?**

Reflection



Schools are made up of both things we can see, and things we can't; the pupils there to learn, the buildings and classrooms that they work in, and the care, vision and values that the community shares.





Mutual Respect and Tolerance

There are many different people in school. Each of us is unique and special.

I understand and respect that not everyone is the same as me and that we all need to be treated as individuals.

Protected Characteristics



School is a place where we can learn about our diverse world. It is also a place where we can feel safe to be who we want to be.

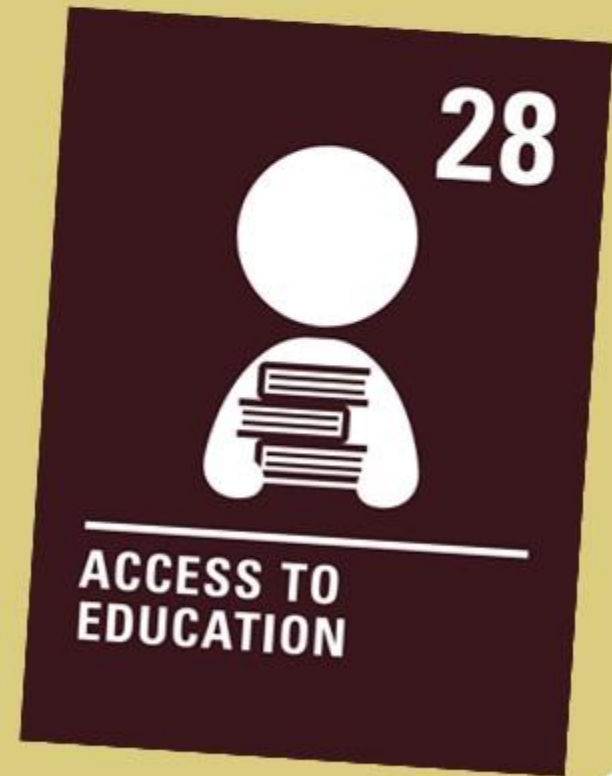




UN Rights of a Child



Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible.



Useful vocabulary



Concrete

A building material made by mixing cement, sand, small stones, and water.

More than 100 schools across the UK have been affected by a potentially dangerous **concrete** used in their construction.

Construction

The action of building something, typically a large structure such as a bridge, building etc.

More than 100 schools across the UK have been affected by a potentially dangerous concrete used in their **construction**.

Crisis

A time of difficulty, danger or confusion.

The **crisis** has left some school staff struggling to find temporary teaching accommodation.

Experts

People who are very knowledgeable about or skilful in a particular area.

It's not just schools affected; more than 30 hospitals are also believed to be at risk, according to **experts**.

Monitoring

Regularly checking something's development or progress and sometimes commenting on it.

It was only after many buildings had been built with this concrete that it was discovered that the material may lose strength over time and so the government has been **monitoring** the risks.

Temporary

Lasts for a limited time; not permanent.

The crisis has left some school staff struggling to find **temporary** teaching accommodation.

Can you use them in your writing this week?

Picture News



Is a school more than just a building?

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- Look at this week's poster image and read through the text about this week's story. Do you know if there are any schools in your local area that have been affected?
- Look at the information found on the assembly resource, which explains more about why some schools were unable to open at the start of the new school year. How do you imagine the children and teachers at the schools might have felt when they heard this news?
- Watch this week's useful video, which explains more about the RAAC problem. Talk about how, for the schools affected, this is a difficult situation. How would you feel about having parts of your school out of use or even not being able to return to school and having lessons online instead?
- Thinking about the wider purpose of a school, share your thoughts on your definition of what a school is. Consider what it is beyond the building and walls.
- Share what your school means to you.

Reflection

Schools are made up of both things we can see, and things we can't; the pupils there to learn, the buildings and classrooms that they work in, and the care, vision and values that the community shares.

Picture News



KS1 focus

What features make a good classroom?



- Explore your classroom. If possible, wander around and look at the different parts of your classroom, e.g., the walls, the furniture, the reading corner. Can you describe your classroom?
- Look at resource 1, which shares some examples of things you might find in a classroom. Do you have any of these things in your classroom?
- Our classrooms are places that we use when we are at school to help us learn. What do you think makes a good classroom? Which of the features mentioned in resource 1 is the most important and which is the least? Would you learn well without a chair to sit on and a desk to work at?
- Focus on the people that are in our classrooms. How important do you think they are? Make a list of how your friends and teachers help make a good classroom, e.g., make you feel safe, make learning fun, help and encourage you.
- Look at some of the resources and equipment you have in your classroom. Are there some items you prefer to use than others? Does everyone like using the same items? We all learn differently so we won't all find the same equipment and resources useful, that is why our classrooms have a variety of different resources!
- If you could add something to your classroom that you think would help you learn, what would it be?

Reflection

There are many features in our classrooms that help us learn. We are lucky to have such a variety of resources and equipment and people!

Picture News



KS2 focus

How might schools look different in the future?



- Think about your school. How many classrooms do you have? Do you have a playground, school field, hall? Can you describe the building? Can you make a list of some of the resources and equipment you use every day?
- Have you ever visited any other schools? How do they compare with yours?
- Look at resource 2, which shares some images of different school buildings. Can you describe the similarities and differences between these school buildings? Which would you describe as historic, modern, or futuristic? Can you find out when your school was built? How does it compare with the images on resource 2?
- Schools have changed over time. From their building design to the resources and equipment that are used in them. Read through Heather's comment. What is different about her experience of school? How many computers do you have? Do you have a blackboard? What is the same?
- As long as there have been schools, there have been teachers. Do you think this is likely to change in the future? Why?
- Can you think of any new changes since you started school, e.g., equipment/resources, furniture, outdoor area, decorating? Why might these changes have happened?
- Predict what you think school might be like next year, in five, ten, and fifty years!

Reflection

Our schools are constantly changing and evolving as technology advances, fashion changes and society modifies. However, there are some things that have remained the same – the people in the building!



KS2 follow-up ideas

Option 1

Interview an adult at home or in school to find out their experience of school. Prepare your questions first considering the following:

- The building.
- The school staff.
- The subjects learned.
- The equipment and resources.
- The behaviour management systems.
- The timetable.
- The uniform.

Once you have interviewed your adult, share the responses with each other and discuss the similarities and differences between their experiences and your own.

Option 2

Design a school of the future! Think about:

- What shape and colour will the building be?
- What will the outdoor space look like?
- What digital technologies will there be?
- How many classrooms will you have?
- What other facilities will you have?
A swimming pool, a virtual reality classroom, an outdoor classroom, an environment area?
- How do you think your school will be powered?
Will it be self-sufficient?

Draw and label a diagram of your school of the future.

Challenge – Write a diary entry to describe a typical day in your school of the future.



KS1 follow-up ideas

Option 1

Think about your school.

- What do you like about school?
- Is there anything you dislike?
- Do you have a favourite lesson?
Why is it your favourite?
- Which adults work in your school?
What job do they do?
- Which resources or equipment do you enjoy using most?
- What makes your school special?

Use pictures, words and sentences to share how your school makes you feel and what it means to you. Perhaps you could display your work.

Option 2

Some schools have closed because of the material that has been used to make them.

- What materials can you see in some of the structures you have in school?
- Do you have brick walls?
- Is your fence wooden or metal?
- Can you see anything else made from wood?
- Is there anything made from glass? Why might glass have been used?

The materials used to build our schools are often strong and sturdy.

- Can you make a strong and sturdy building using resources in your classroom e.g., Lego, wooden blocks, K'NEX, Stickle Bricks?



This week's useful websites

This week's news story

www.bbc.com/news/education-66681702

This week's useful video

What is RAAC?

www.youtube.com/shorts/66yqi_eDXks

This week's Virtual Picture News

www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss

This week's vocabulary

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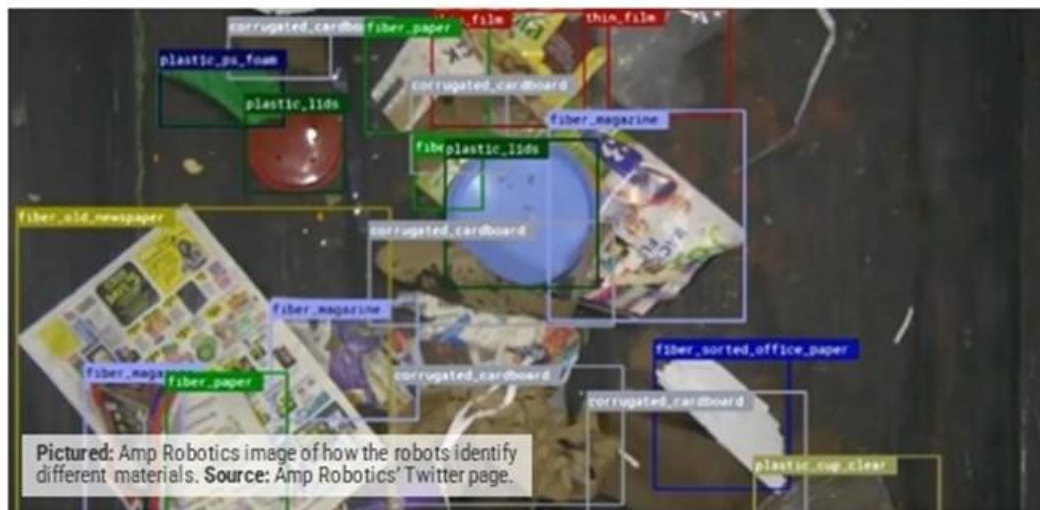
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Smart Sorting Robots



Pictured: Amp Robotics image of how the robots identify different materials. **Source:** Amp Robotics' Twitter page.

Tech startup company, Amp Robotics' smart sorting robots (also named Sorty McSortface and Sir Sorts-a-Lot), operate in 80 recycling facilities in the USA. The ingeniously named machines have massively improved recycling procedures at the centres. The robot waste pickers identify and sort recyclables with extreme accuracy (up to 99%); they can even recognise SKU numbers (stock keeping unit - a unique number combination used by retailers to identify and track products).

One robot can pluck out juice cartons and plastic bottles that can be reprocessed from the conveyor belt of waste products. At the same time, the other searches for contaminants in the stream of paper products headed to be recycled at the fibre mill. The robots use mechanical claws and AI to sort tons of recyclables in minutes, meaning it is much more cost-effective for items to be recycled and not sent to landfill. **Can you think of any other sorting jobs this technology could be used for?**

Peanut - the World's Oldest Chicken!

Peanut, who is 21 years old and from Michigan, USA, was officially recognised as the world's oldest living chicken earlier this year. She lives on a small farm, where she was almost thrown away two decades ago before she hatched! Retired librarian Marsi Parker Darwin, who lives on the farm, found a 'rotten looking' abandoned egg and luckily heard a small 'cheep' coming from inside. She gently peeled back the shell to discover a tiny chick, who couldn't break out on her own as she didn't have an egg tooth. Marsi lovingly hand-reared the tiny bantam hen, who now lives with her daughter in Marsi's living room in a wire

coop next to the window, so she has a view. 'She's a friendly character and she pretty much gets along with everyone, including our dogs and cats,' said Marsi, who considers the record-breaking bird to be part of her family. Marsi added, 'Peanut is a sassy little chicken, if she doesn't get her blueberry yoghurt in the morning, I definitely hear about it! I hope to share Peanut's message that even if you're rejected or might feel like a misfit, you can still find someone to bond with and have a long, productive life.' **Did you know that chickens could live to be over 20 years old?**



Pictured: Peanut, the world's oldest living chicken. **Source:** Guinness World Record's Twitter page.



Book Vending Machine

Students and teachers at Bradfield's Academy in Chatham, Kent, have been talking about their school's book vending machine. Pupils can earn tokens to use to purchase books as appreciation for their efforts and engagement in English lessons. Sherie McCormick, a teacher at the school, said, 'We believe in the power of reading, and it must be accessible for all. Reading helps to improve concentration, expand vocabulary, inspire creativity and spark imagination. It also helps our students to improve their self-esteem. It is the foundation of education and a great leveller that fosters cultural, social and emotional growth.' The school say that they are trying to combat the

cost-of-living crisis, which they believe has made books a luxury item. 31% of students surveyed by the school said they did not have access to books at home! The machine has been funded by the publishing company CPI and the Co-op. The Fortis Trust, which the academy is a member of, Tweeted, 'Reading for education & pleasure is encouraged across the trust, and this book vending machine will help students continue their love of reading at home.' The vending machine has been very popular with students and the school aims to continue making a range of books available this way.

Do you think that a book vending machine at school is a good idea?



Pictured: The book vending machine at Bradfield's Academy. **Source:** Fortis Trust Twitter page.

Last week's topic:

What can we learn from new adventures?



I think that new adventures can challenge you and help you to become a stronger person.

Otis

I think travelling the world and meeting lots of different people and seeing lots of new places would be so exciting. Learning about them all will give you so much knowledge to use in the future.

Neave

Going on adventures and travelling to every country would be amazing but I would like to take my friends and family with me.

Theo

Let us know what you think about this week's news?



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TAKEHOME



Is a school more than just a building?

In the news this week

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Things to talk about at home ...

- Share your thoughts on this week's news. Are you aware of any local schools or hospitals that have been affected?
- For those pupils resuming learning online from home, how do you think they might feel?
- Considering school buildings, how do you believe they might change in the future? Can you think of any ways to improve school buildings or classrooms?

Please note any interesting thoughts or comments

Share your thoughts and read the opinions of others

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