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## National Round-Up

**EDUCATION:** Encouraging pupils to argue and debate in class can help boost their results in English, maths and science, according to research. Getting primary school children to explain their answers and reason with their classmates can help youngsters to make more progress in these core subjects, it suggests. A total of 78 primary schools in England with higher-than-average numbers of poorer

children took part in the trial of "dialogic teaching", published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). Around 2,500 nine and 10-year-olds were given lessons in which they were encouraged to explain their answers and reasoning, and to debate, discuss and argue with others about them. An independent evaluation of the initiative found that the youngsters who took part made on average two

months more progress in English and science than a similar group of pupils who did not take part - the control group. In addition, poorer youngsters who took part in the programme made two months more progress in maths, while, in general, the children who took part made around a month's more progress in the subject than the control group.

**HOUSING:** Nearly one in

three homes green-lit to be built in England during the past five years have not been completed, Shelter has found. More than 320,000 homes have not been built despite having been granted residential planning permission, according to analysis by the housing charity, which said ordinary working families are bearing the brunt of the issue of "phantom homes". An estimated 68% of homes

with planning permission have been completed over the past five years, Shelter calculated. It said the problem is particularly acute in London, where around one in two homes with permission have not been built. But the Home Builders Federation (HBF) said housing supply has shown significant growth and planning delays mean permissions can take years to process.