

Hot Breakfast special

Education 2015



Current policy picture

- Over 80% of Coalition Agreement ambitions 'progressed,' activity now switching to 2015 and beyond
- Economy 'healing' but public expenditure cuts set to continue to 2017/18 and continuing concerns about extent of recovery
- Established reform template (smaller state/provider efficiency/focus on output not input) with education part of a 3-pronged Gov priority axis
- Education reform directed at raising school performance, securing HE funding and developing employer-led skills training system (in that order)
- Benefits yet to be realised, 'stagnant' performance of parts of education system cited in series of recent national/international Reports
- Government moving to secure Gove reforms, Lib-Dems distancing, Labour looking for new narrative but overall sense of policy sterility
- Current challenges include:
 - Performance levels in core subjects
 - Attainment gaps both regionally and socially
 - Skill levels/employability of young people
 - The merits of a fully qualified profession
 - Skills supply needed for economic recovery
 - Long-term sustainability of HE funding
 - Overcoming a sense of constant policy upheaval
- Five key areas for 2015

1. Schools

- *'78% of schools good or better but great gaps in performance.'* Ofsted.
- Significant diversification of school system but issues around costs, performance and accountability.
- Academy blueprint likely to remain, cross Party consensus behind UTCs but Free School model vulnerable.
- Labour currently pledging to extend Academy freedoms to all schools (with new accountabilities and requirements to partner) but not supporting more Free Schools.
- Conservatives devolving oversight of school system to RSCs, Labour plumping for Directors of School Standards.
- LA traditional functions continuing, big challenges currently over school places and school performance, many other services now commissioned.
- Teachers granted new freedoms but suffering change fatigue. Gov shifting training to schools, Labour pitching for a fully qualified/updated profession
- Current issues include:
 - Nature of local accountability
 - Partnerships, chains and models for self-improvement
 - Impact of new accountability and inspection arrangements
 - Parent power through choice (Gov) intervention (Opposition)
 - Reform of school governance
 - The case for a Royal College for Teaching

2. Young people and skills

- Long-standing weakness in English system, politically sensitive, noticeable build-up in pre-election activity. Current target group: *'the other 50%'*.
- Gov working through Wolf programme of a simplified qual system focused on core learning for 14-16, criteria-based applied and technical routes for 16-19 and 'progressive framework' of traineeships and apprenticeships for work-based route.
- Labour keen to re-create Diploma-type 14-19 framework through Bacc system incorporating core quals, Eng/maths, project, PSD + careers guidance; equally committed to apprenticeship framework.
- Current position following latest announcements:
 - Cons: Tech Bacc perf measure, UCAS style application system for 16 yr olds, audited careers provision, JCP support, earn or learn welfare model
 - Labour: Nat Bacc exit qual, Extended Jobs Guarantee, basic skills tests, welfare requirements, living wage
- Current issues include:
 - Demise of universal careers service
 - Levels of English and maths
 - Low take up of work-based routes
 - Poor recognition of employability skills
 - Lack of coherent school-work transition system
 - Impact of punitive welfare arrangements

3. FE

- Hugely diverse sector, poorly understood but vital provider of skills training from disaffected 14+ yr olds to high-level prof updating.
- A sector covering 390+ colleges teaching 2m adults, 850,000 16-18 yr olds + 496 training providers with brand extended into SFC, UTC.
- Government policy aimed at freeing up colleges and college system to enable better responsiveness to market/learner needs under the 2Rs banner.
- Number of change mechanisms being used including: funding (24+ loans,) accountability (progression, destination, earnings) and structural (elite tier, centres of excellence, social enterprises).
- Labour keen to re-focus sector around essential skills training with fully qualified staff and accredited provider status (ITEs) delivering employer derived training.
- Current issues include:
 - Declining skills budget, FE seen as poor relation in funding terms to HE
 - Ability to fuel skills pipeline required for economic recovery
 - Lack of defining pedagogy
 - Impact of new outcome measures
 - Being able to meet diversity of need
 - Current political enthusiasm for rebranding parts of the sector

4. The skills system

- Traditionally regarded as over-complex and prey to constant re-structuring.
- Current approach seeing shift from state planning through state funding and state agencies to employer-needs driven through pilots and partnerships with access to direct/private funding and able to commission training where needed.
- Government strategy set out in 2010 Local Growth White Paper, 2011 Growth Plan and 2012 Industrial Strategy. Mix of key sectors, future technologies, local demand drivers coming together to determine need and stimulate growth but hampered by lack of synergy, low business lending, confusing local structures.
- Range of 'stimulating' mechanisms including: City Deals, Enterprise Zones.
- Labour equally keen to see employers granted lead role currently looking to enhance local growth model through revamped LEPs, City-Regions and a Regional Committee of Ministers but blighted by a historic tendency to over-manage.
- Current issues include:
 - Size of Single Local Growth Pot
 - Changing nature of the labour market
 - Complexities at sub-regional level
 - Poor 'line of sight' between employer need, provider offer, qual outcome
 - Patchy nature of economic recovery

5. HE

- Globally important sector going through significant period of transformation as a result of significant funding (fees,) strategic (private, global,) learning (online, p/t) and structural (different market, different student relationship) changes.
- Government attempt to put funding on sustainable footing and students at the heart of the system has seen limited change to student numbers and market but significant concerns emerge about long-term funding viability and future of some areas of provision.
- Demand remaining high, graduate premium remaining valuable, graduate market starting to pick up but sense that traditional pathways and traditional learning models beginning to need to change.
- Labour keen on high-level voc route, 2 yr degree programmes, employer sponsorships, stronger regulation and student protections, positioning reform of fee system within cost of living context, initial principles established, major announcement later.
- Current issues include:
 - Potential for adjustments to current fee system
 - Impact of gradual lifting of the cap on student numbers
 - Demands for a new regulatory/quality assurance model
 - Visas and the importance of the global market
 - RAB and the Treasury burden
 - Access and accountability within a more open market

The world as the politicians are planning it

	Conservatives	Labour	Lib-Dem
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •More demanding qual system, emphasis on measurable outputs •3 routes @16-19 leading to Tech Bacc • New accountability benchmarks • Professional standards and PRP for teachers •Devolved management of new school system to RSCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Standards-based approach to qual reform • Fully qualified, licensed profession •L3 Nat Bacc with employer accredited work exp and personal skills •Devolved management of entire school system to local DSS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •'World Class' 14-19 system with equality between routes, improved careers system, pre apprenticeships, Eng/ma/ICT to L2
FE/Adult Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gradual adoption of employer-led apprenticeships •Development of Traineeship route •Responsive qual system •Skills training handed over to employers •Local market determinism •New intervention procedures •Reform of 16-25 system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •3 part rebuild of voc system: apprenticeships; FE system; 14-19 employability •Support for L3 apprenticeship model, employer owned •Licensed ITEs focusing on int/technician/core skills •New employer-led partnerships •City region/LEP devolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Extension of pupil premium •Support for Heywood Review •UCAS system for apprenticeships, maintenance loans, improved careers system as part of strengthened 16-24 offer
HE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Retaining current fee regime + differentials •Focus on STEM and WP •Gradual opening up of market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Revising fee approach •Potential interest in high-level voc route and Poly system •Market regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Full scale fee review BUT after 2015 •Single HE regulator •Visa changes

Building up to 2015

- New momentum emerges at 2013 Annual Party Conference season.
- All Parties on 'war' footing, undertaking series of Policy Reviews and Commissions.
- Party fortunes linked heavily into management of the economy; welfare and immigration.
- Secret dating for Coalition partners emerging.
- Current key phrases: 'squashed bottom,' 'squeezed middle,' 'hard working people of Britain,' 'little black book of policies,' 'Waitrose woman'.
- Education currently only the 4th E (behind the Economy, Europe, Energy).
- Timeline:
 - Spending Review (June 2013)
 - 2014 Budget (March 2014)
 - European Parliament elections (May 2014)
 - London Borough and some Metropolitan and Unitary Authority local elections (May 2014)
 - Submission of Policy Commission proposals (June 2014)
 - Possible cabinet reshuffle (Summer 2014)
 - Further policy drafts (Summer 2014)
 - Final Conference round (Autumn 2014)
 - Manifestos (March/April 2015)

Key things to look out for this year

- Further pointing work on the new qual system. For schools: GCSE grading, regulation; AS/A accreditation; VQ listings. For FE: App standards; UKCES and NOS; new Ofqual rules; vMOOCs and online learning; open database.
- Big heave on English and maths. For schools: Shanghai method; Hubs; Core Maths; Specialist Schools. For FE: new staff requirements; bursaries; centres of excellence; performance measures; funding incentives.
- Final modelling of new accountability system. For schools: secondary readiness; Progress 8; Level 2; destination data. For FE: destination; progression; earnings changes.
- Sharper application of funding rules. For schools: MFG; programme sizes; rates @18. For FE: link with outcomes; monthly caps, extended funding rules; reliance on employer/learner contributions.
- Political arm wrestling over system reform. For schools: RSCs; Blunkett outcomes; parent-power; chains and partnerships. For FE: ITE v GFE; elite v social enterprise; LEP/FE axis.
- Tough talk on performance. For schools: PISA effect; qual profession; Royal College; inspection model. For FE: R and R; FE Commissioner; CAVTL and ETF developments; Teach Further; new teacher standards.
- Continuing concerns about underachievement. For schools: KS1/KS3 testing; Ed Committee; EEF; Pupil Premium; careers. For FE: Social Mobility Commission; 2nd chance opportunities; employability; progression and earnings.
- Sharpening policy divide between the major Parties.