

2011/1

31 January 2011

Policy Tracker - 'Keeping track of what happened in the world of education for January 2011'.

Main talking points

Despite the Prime Minister's assertion that the first part of the year would be all about jobs and growth, it's been schools and the economy that have been making the running over the last month. Schools because over the last few weeks, they have seen the 2010 'league' tables published, the English Bacc applied, the review of the National Curriculum launched and another major piece of legislation in the form of the Education Bill get under way. The economy, which continues to be characterised by different weather imagery, 'stiff headwinds' and so on, because it has been badly buffeted over the last few weeks by a series of disappointing figures on unemployment, inflation and lack of growth respectively. The Chancellor is blaming the weather

Key headlines from the last month

- Free Schools. First 8 move close to approval, 27 waiting in the wings
- EBacc. Achieved 'retrospectively' last year by 15.6% of pupils in England
- School buildings. 6 councils challenge the Government over the scrapping of BFS
- Academies. 407 now open and claims that tipping point has been reached
- UTCs. Lord Baker sets his sights on up to 70 such colleges over time
- A levels. Debate resurfaces about the timing of exams
- 16-19. Extra £91bn found for buildings and provision
- Post-16. Select Committee launches new inquiry into participation
- EMAs. Opposition lose the motion for a rethink by 59 votes
- 18-21. Changes allow young people to work for 8 weeks without loss of benefits
- Uni applications. Applications 2.5% up on last year but differences amongst age groups
- Teacher Training. Cuts in numbers for secondary, increase for primary
- Local Authorities. Final funding settlement for 2011/12 agreed, average cuts of 4.4%
- LEPs. Granted £4m to support research
- Interns. Campaign growing for a basic £2.50 per hour wage
- Economy. Not only no sign of growth but 0.5% contraction over the last quarter
- Unemployment. Up 49,000 in the last quarter to 2.5m, 951,000 for 16-24 yr olds

Reports/Publications of the month

- [*'Shrinking the Quango State.'*](#) The Public Accounts Committee takes a dim view of the way in which the Government has gone about quango reform
- [*'Technology and Innovation centres: a prospectus.'*](#) The Technology Strategy Board call for expressions of interest for this new elite network announced last year
- [*'League Tables.'*](#) This year's results come complete with controversy about the application of the EBacc and pioneering new data exposing individual school spend
- [*'Successful Science.'*](#) Ofsted report on science education in recent years and find lessons more enjoyable and success rates up but improvements needed at primary level
- [*'Modern languages.'*](#) Ofsted report on developments in language teaching over the last three years and find a stronger picture in primary.
- [*'The Graduate Market in 2011.'*](#) The annual High Fliers research hints at an improving market with three-fifths of employers looking to increase graduate recruitment in 2011
- [*'Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England.'*](#) The minimum requirements for intermediate, advanced and higher level frameworks are published at last
- [*'National Curriculum Review Call for Evidence.'*](#) Phase one of the Review gets under way with 37 questions on the core and wider curriculum

- [‘The Academies Programme.’](#) The Public Accounts Committee cast their eye over sponsored Academies and find much to praise but concerns that the Dept might be stretched
- [The Education Bill 2011.](#) 10 Parts, nearly 80 clauses, enshrining much of the White Paper but with interesting asides on Academy provision, apprenticeships and HE fees

Speeches of the month

- *David Cameron's 6 Jan economic growth speech* identifies 3 criteria for growth: sorting out the economy; creating a strategy; ensuring growth is balanced across the country
- *Nick Gibb's 7 Jan North of England Conference speech* sets the context for school reform for the year and highlights the importance of the recent White Paper in this
- *Michael Gove's 11 Jan Education World Forum speech* reflects on the lessons that can be learned from the recent McKinsey Report on how other countries raise performance
- *Tim Loughton's 13 Jan BETT speech* look at some of the challenges facing schools as technology develops in the future
- *David Cameron's 17 Jan RSA speech* highlights missed opportunities in the past as part of the reason why he's so keen to press on with public service reform now
- *Ed Miliband's 15 Feb Fabian Society speech* starts to distance the Party from the past and to position it in the future as *"the voice and vehicle of progressive change"*
- *Geoff Russell's 19 Jan CBI/EDI speech* spells out how the funding system is changing to create a more responsive skills system
- *Michael Gove's 20 Jan National Curriculum speech* explains why the National Curriculum is in need of a major overhaul
- *Richard Lambert's 24 Jan valedictory CBI speech* calls on the Government to develop a clearer vision for economic growth in the future
- *David Cameron's 27 Jan Davos speech* makes the case for holding firm on the economic path set out by the Coalition

Quotes of the month

- *"2011 is going to be a difficult year as we take necessary steps to sort things out."* David Cameron offers a rather bleak New Year message
- *"We became too technocratic and managerial."* Ed Miliband reflects on where New Labour went wrong
- *"In times of austerity the sector must do more with less, not less with less."* The Chief Executive of the Skills Funding Agency sets the tone for the FE sector
- *"This is a movement not just a few experimental schools."* Lord Baker senses something big stirring as 14-19 technical schools start to take shape
- *"It's too long...patronising towards teachers...decidedly thin on actual knowledge."* Michael Gove explains why another review of the National Curriculum is needed

Word or phrase of the month

- *"Heavy lifting."* According to the Prime Minister, we'll all be doing a lot of this in the coming year

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Policy Tracker on what happened in January 2011

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