

2013/2

28 Feb 2013

## Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in February 2013

### Main talking points

A busy month for schools with an orderly retreat sounded around some of the proposed changes to the Key Stage 4 exams system and further consultation launched on both the emerging National Curriculum and a more balanced secondary school accountability framework. For FE the month saw Lord Heseltine give evidence on the case for a single funding pot for adult skills, Sir Michael Wilshaw defend Ofsted's reporting of FE, consultation on a proposed FE Guild draw to a close and a mixed bag of stats on apprenticeship starts, youth unemployment and the Work Programme released. For HE, debate continued about numbers and future funding while HEFCE started the process of cutting the ever slimmer grant cake ready for 2013/14

### Key headlines from the month

- Children and Families Bill. Now published and with new SEN arrangements included
- School improvement. Ofsted sets out how it intends to inspect LA provision
- National Curriculum. Latest proposed Programmes of Study for KS1-3 published
- GCSE English. Wales declares separate approach to grading
- Maths. Further research highlights concerns about international performance
- GCSEs. Back in place but subject to 'radical' reform
- A levels. HE continue to come out against the standalone AS
- 14-19. Both Labour and Lib-Dems seek further views
- School accountability. New criteria for secondary schools put out for consultation
- Ofsted. Regional directors announced, School Data Dashboard launched
- FE Guild. Rapid fire consultation draws to a close
- 24+ Learning Loans. Further details on loan facility conditions issued
- QCF. SFA identifies lists for cull of low number qualifications
- Skills system. BIS Committee examine Heseltine proposals
- HE funding. HEFCE start to apportion funds for 2013/14
- Apprenticeships. New starts up 13.9% on previous year but dips at pre-19
- Employer Ownership Pilot. Bidding for Round 2 now under way
- Work Programme. Further criticisms from the Public Accounts Committee

### Reports/Publications of the month (in order of publication)

- [Confusion in the ranks](#). The Sutton Trust examine different global league tables and show how they can give differing views on school performance
- [Statistical First Release DS/SFR17](#). The latest quarterly figures show that more than half a million people have started apprenticeships over the last year
- [Youth unemployment](#). Series of Research Papers from BIS assess how important particular training programmes and qualifications can be for young people
- [Consultation to establish a Guild for the Learning and Skills Sector](#). The Guild Development Project Team seeks views on the purpose and potential of a dedicated sector body
- [A good education for all](#). Ofsted launches its consultation on proposals to inspect local authority school improvement services
- [The Postgraduate Premium](#). The busy Sutton Trust highlight the value of postgrad degrees and worry that access to such qualifications is being narrowed on the basis of cost
- [Reforming Key Stage 4 qualifications consultation](#). The DfE reports on responses to the EBacc consultation and confirms its latest position
- [Reform of the National Curriculum in England](#). The DfE seeks further thoughts on some of the guiding principles behind the new National Curriculum

- [Secondary School Accountability Consultation](#). The DfE poses 9 pertinent questions as it seeks to develop a new accountability framework for secondary schools
- [Educating tomorrow's engineers](#). The Science and Technology Committee express concerns about the impact of 14-19 developments on the development of future engineers
- [The Pupil Premium](#). Ofsted completes a second survey on how schools are spending the money and finds an increasing number of good case studies
- [Beyond 2012: outstanding PE for all](#). Ofsted finds too much talk and not enough action is hindering flourishing sports activity in some schools
- [Work Programme outcome statistics](#). The Public Accounts Committee report on the DWP's Work Foundation programme and finds painfully slow progress being made
- [The mathematics skills of school children](#). The Institute of Education examine international test results and notes performance in England dipping between the ages of 10 and 16
- [Review of 2013/14 School Funding Arrangements](#). The Dept checks on arrangements for 2013/14 and lists some of the potential areas of concern and change for 2014/15

### Speeches of the month

- Michael Gove's 5 February SMF [speech](#) offers a vigorous defence of his qualification reform policy and argues that it provides the real progressive agenda now
- President Obama's 12 February State of the Union [speech](#) emphasises the importance of educational opportunity and affordability
- Ed Miliband's 14 February Bedford [speech](#) highlights the importance of skills as part of his One Nation economic reform programme

### Quotes of the month

- *"I cannot envisage circumstances where Government support for those things will be reduced in the next spending round."* Vince Cable draws up the ramparts around his Dept as the Treasury sharpens its knife
- *"The regime there now is, there is no age limit on fee loans."* David Willetts encourages the older generation to keep on learning
- *"I have decided not to make the best the enemy of the good."* Michael Gove tells the House why he has decided not to move ahead with EBCs and exam system change
- *"We need a revolution in vocational education and apprenticeships."* Ed Miliband confirms the importance of vocational education to Labour's Skills Taskforce Review
- *"Tonight, I'm announcing a new challenge to redesign America's high schools so they better equip graduates for the demands of a high-tech economy."* President Obama includes a number of education announcements in his annual State of the Union Address
- *"I will be a bit like King Lear touring the country, meeting with these eight regional directors and finding out what is happening."* Sir Michael Wilshaw tells the Education Committee how Ofsted's new regional tier will operate

### Word or phrase of the month

- *'Rhetorical afflatus.'* What the Secretary of State thinks the current National Curriculum has too much of
- *'Bending spending.'* How Michael Heseltine thinks funds should be stretched
- *'Festina lente.'* What one MP advised Michael Gove to do. ( *'make haste slowly'* for non EBacc graduates)

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