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Policy Tracker – Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in March 2016



Main talking points

Some major developments this month and not just in the Budget with announcements on school funding and school system reform, further updates on the apprenticeship levy and the FE sector area reviews, and proposals for a new QA system for HE let alone hints about a potential HE Bill. Full listing below.

Key headlines from the month

- Phonics. New roadshow to share best practice announced
- KS1/2 assessments. New guidance issued by DfE
- School places for 2016. Secondary places announced this month, primary next month
- School day. The Chancellor outlines funds for an extended day for some
- School funding. Initial consultation launched on a national fair funding formula
- School system. Timescale for full academisation set
- Academies. Petition and marches being lined up against mass academisation plans
- Northern Powerhouse schools. New strategy announced in the Budget
- MATs (1). Dedicated MAT performance tables included in White Paper
- MATs (2.) Education Committee announces new Inquiry into MATs
- Legacy GCSEs, AS, A'. Ofqual publishes resit arrangements
- A' level maths. Ofqual to undertake research on comparability of assessment materials
- 16-19 maths. New review to help improve quality and take-up included in Budget
- Ofqual. Education Committee pre-approves new Chief Regulator
- Ofsted. Issues latest schools inspection update
- Inspections. Consultation to follow on removing separate grade for quality of teaching
- Careers. Careers and Enterprise Co announces names of Investment Fund winners
- Qualified Teacher status. Current accreditation system to go in favour of school-based one
- Mentoring. The PM confirms £12m to support new mentoring scheme for young people
- Apprenticeships. 30,000 new places pledged under this year's Nat App Week
- Apprenticeship levy. 10% monthly top-up from next year announced in the Budget
- Institute for Apprenticeships. Shadow CEO announced

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- AELP. New Chief Exec confirmed
- Area reviews (1.) FE Minister updates Chairs and Principals
- Area reviews (2.) Government confirms some restructuring funds
- SFA funding. Providers get their allocations for 2016/17
- HE funding. HEFCE announces latest budget allocations
- HE Bill. Government signals intent to include in this year's Queen's Speech
- HE agencies. QAA, HESA and JISC agree to work together as new M5 Grouping
- EU students. Criteria for financial support extended from 3 to 5 years for 2016/17
- HE QA. HECE sets out revised quality assurance proposals
- State pension. New review launched which could have an impact on eventual retirement ages

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

- **Reviewing post-16 education and training institutions.** The government updates its area review guidance with criteria to be used for restructuring support and lessons learned so far
- **The Teaching Excellence Framework.** The BIS Committee publishes the results of its five month inquiry into assessing quality in HE welcoming the TEF but expressing concern about timescales
- **The Importance of Teachers.** The think tank Policy Exchange with ASCL collate a series of essays on different aspects of the profession and call for more flexible work practices
- **Schools and High Needs Funding Reform.** The government starts the process of transforming school funding by launching initial consultation on a national fair formula and high needs provision
- **The road most travelled?** The Private Equity Firm Impetus highlights the low road many disadvantaged 16-19 yr olds travel as they struggle to improve their English and maths quals
- **The Future Growth of Degree Apprenticeships.** Universities UK marks National Apprenticeship Week by reporting on the important role of Degree Apprenticeships
- **Budget 2016.** The Treasury unleashes the big Red Book of spending plans, economic forecasts and formal announcements that always accompany the Chancellor's Budget statement
- **Educational Excellence Everywhere.** The Education Secretary gets a chance to set her own mark as she outlines plans to 'free-up' schools, accredit teachers and spread excellence
- **DfE Strategy 2015-2020.** The Dept sets out its overall vision and strategy for the remainder of this Parliament highlighting 12 priorities covering standards, systems, skills and social care
- **Revised operating model for quality assurance.** HEFCE publishes its proposals for a revised quality assurance system for HE to be implemented from 2017/18
- **Appointment of the Chief Regulator of Ofqual.** The Education Committee reports on its hearing and recommendations for the new Chief Regulator of Ofqual
- **Financial health of the higher education sector.** HEFCE issues its latest report on the publicly funded part of the HE sector noting that while things are 'sound,' significant variations exist

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- **Local Enterprise Partnerships.** The National Audit Office publishes its report onto LEPs highlighting issues of capacity, transparency and value for money as demands on them have increased

Speeches of the month

- Sajid Javid's 2 March Mansion House **speech** outlines six priorities for supporting British industry including a renewed focus on workplace training and adult learning
- Sir Michael Wilshaw's 4 March ASCL **speech** highlights the challenges facing many school leaders and adds a few more of his own
- Nicky Morgan's 5 March ASCL **speech** calls on school leaders to support the government's school reform plans and argues that things are moving in the right direction
- Nick Gibb's 9 March 'Best in Calls' Summit **speech** highlights the steps being taken through the government's reform programme to help schools become engines of social mobility
- Sajid Javid's 14 March 'Shard' **speech** helps launch this year's National Apprenticeship Week
- George Osborne's 16 March Budget **Statement** sticks to the government's economic plan but focuses heavily on the next generation with a number of announcements for schools and young people
- Nicky Morgan's 17 March King's College **speech** launches the next stage of school reform as she outlines the thinking behind the government's latest education White Paper

Quotes of the month

- *"It will be voluntary for schools. Compulsory for pupils."* The Chancellor on proposals to extend the secondary school day
- *"My school careers adviser told me that I should set my sights no higher than an entry-level job at Radio Rentals."* The BIS Secretary of State on how apprenticeships can take you higher
- *"I would emphasise that the review process represents a one-off opportunity for post-16 providers to put themselves on a strong footing for the future."* The FE Minister on the last ditch saloon for FE
- *"I'm very worried about this."* Former Education Secretary David Blunkett on how the local devolution arrangements for managing adult skills are shaping up (or not)
- *"This is what has made our education reforms so transformational-they are devo-max in the truest sense of the word."* The Education Secretary on the self-improving school system
- *"Ofsted has been a powerful determining factor behind positive change. It focused minds in no other way."* The Chief Inspector on the power of Ofsted

Word or phrase of the month

- *'The demography of destiny.'* The Ed Secretary's vivid phrase to describe regional attainment gaps

Steve Besley

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