



# Pearson

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



### Main talking points

A huge number of reports this month including: the latest financial statement from government, global trends in maths and science, apprenticeship developments and the financial health of the HE sector

### Key headlines from the month

- Maths/Science trends. 10 and 14 yr olds perform above the international mean in latest TIMSS survey
- More Than a Score. A new pressure group of parents, teachers, and others against testing
- Mental health. National Child Development Study finds joining Scouts and Guides can help
- GCSE grading. Ofqual launches a new campaign to help raise awareness of new scale
- Digital skills. Google offers free training as it seeks to roll out virtual reality technology in schools
- The arts. Government pledges £300m + to help spread music and the arts in schools
- Exam data. Ofqual publishes data on 2016 exam entries, late entries and special considerations
- Coasting schools. Government suggests 804 schools may be in scope
- Grammar schools. Government confirms additional capital funding
- School improvement. Government announces more funds
- Teachers. New Now, Teach body seeks to recruit mid-career professionals
- Initial teacher training. Latest stats indicate a 2% drop in recruits especially in some EBacc subjects
- Careers compass. New benchmarking tool for schools launched
- Judicial review of school sixth forms. AoC challenge prompts local back down of new school 6th form
- Eng/maths. Government consults on whether Early Years staff need them at GCSE level
- Area Reviews. Government publishes a series of reports from the first two waves
- FE finances. Departing Commissioner confirms drop (76 to 40) in number of colleges in difficulty
- FE reforms. Sir Vince Cable joins with the NUS to undertake review of impact of sector reforms
- Collab Group. Gains its 34<sup>th</sup> member
- Association of Colleges. Launches an extensive review
- LEPS. Government pledges additional funding through latest round of Growth Deals
- Degree apprenticeships. Government announces results of latest bids for funding
- HE finances. HEFCE reports an uncertain outlook for some universities

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

- **Effective Primary Teaching Practice.** The Teaching Schools Council lists four headline features (leadership, teacher CPD, resources, vision) in a new report
- **The Northern Powerhouse.** The House of Library explains all, including origins, concept and cost, in a briefing Paper
- **Children and Young People's Writing in 2015.** The National Literacy Trust's latest annual survey published this autumn reports a drop in the number of children writing regularly outside school
- **The Parent Factor.** The charity National Numeracy highlights the important role parents can play in helping children with their maths in a new report on maths in schools
- **The State of Speaking in Our Schools.** LKMco and Voice 21 examine the state of oracy in schools and find a fairly patchy picture with opportunities often crowded out by other activities
- **Winter is Coming.** The Institute for Fiscal Studies publishes its regular pre - Autumn Statement Briefing concluding that the Chancellor faces a £25bn black hole in the public finances
- **Another Brick in the Wall.** Civil liberties group Big Brother Watch reports on the use of classroom software management raising questions about how far it's being used to 'snoop' on students
- **Coasting schools.** The DfE publishes provisional figures for how many schools, primary and secondary, could fall into scope this year based on results over the last three years
- **Standards and Testing Agency Review.** The government publishes the results of its review into the Agency citing a number of issues that need addressing to help restore morale and direction
- **Class differences.** The Sutton Trust examines attainment gaps in different ethnic groups finding disadvantaged Chinese, Bangladeshi and African children displaying notable signs of improvement
- **Technical and Further Education Bill.** The House of Commons Library outlines the key features and reactions to the proposed TFE Bill as it begins its passage through Parliament
- **Apprenticeship technical funding guide.** The Skills Funding Agency sets out the nitty – gritty of how the apprenticeship funding system should work from the introduction of the levy next May
- **Earning and learning: making the apprenticeship system work for 16-18 year olds.** The IPPR think tank calls for the phasing out of L2 apprenticeships in favour of a new, pre-app programme
- **The skills we need and why we don't have them.** The Policy Exchange think tank adds its voice on apprenticeship developments calling for a much greater emphasis on quality and standards
- **Financial health of the HE sector.** HEFCE publishes its latest overview of the financial health of the sector and future projections suggesting an increasingly uncertain environment
- **The effects of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.** Kings College London and the NUT examine the impact of the changes at KS4 and conclude its all added to the burdens on teachers and stresses on pupils
- **Time to Deliver.** EPI and the Commission on Children and Young People's Mental Health call for a new focus on mental health with more training, accountability and support
- **HE Bill.** The government sets out how the proposed new Office for Students (OfS) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will work together following the passage of the HE Bill

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- **Marking consistency metrics.** Ofqual reports on some technical work intended to create potential new metrics to assure the quality of marking in the future
- **Remaking tertiary education.** Alison Wolf returns to the issue of sub-degree provision in a report for the Education Policy Institute calling for a strengthened, government prescribed system
- **Social Mobility Commission Report.** The Commission publishes its latest annual 'state of the nation' report finding little evidence of improvement and suggesting further reforms are needed
- **Lifelong learning manifesto.** The University Alliance group calls for better advice and guidance, better collaboration and more flexible funding as it publishes a new position paper
- **Room to improve.** The Education Policy Institute (EPI) examines Ofsted gradings over a period of time and finds disturbing evidence that schools in disadvantaged areas often receive a lower grade
- **Progress gaps in priority areas.** The newly formed 'Ambition School Leadership' group reports on how far behind disadvantaged pupils often are in the newly designated opportunity areas
- **Time to share.** The DfE and Ofsted publish a Memorandum of Understanding about sharing sensitive information about safeguarding
- **Autumn Statement 2016.** The Treasury publishes the full set of documents released to accompany this year's Autumn Statement
- **Economic and Fiscal Outlook.** The Office for Budget Responsibility publishes its 270 page handy guide to how things are looking on the country's economic and fiscal horizon
- **A Northern Powerhouse Strategy for Schools.** The government publishes the results and recommendations from the review by Sir Nick Weller into secondary schools in the North
- **Getting ready for work.** Ofsted reports on how the school system is preparing young people for the world of work and finds things hindered by a lack of strategy, co-ordination and prioritisation
- **Trends in Maths and Science Study.** The latest international study shows our 10 and 14 year olds performing well in maths and Science assessments where once again East Asian countries dominated
- **Area review reports.** The government finally publishes a series of reports and recommended actions from the first two waves of area reviews in the FE sector
- **Academies Annual Report.** The DfE publishes the latest (2014/15) annual report to Parliament with a pile of facts and figures on how the Academy and Free School system is shaping up
- **The apprenticeships programme.** The Public Accounts Committee reports on its inquiry into apprenticeships calling on the government to develop a wider range of success measures
- **A tale of eight regions.** The National Foundation for Educational Research publishes its latest report on the changing school system highlighting regional variation in the development of Academies
- **Conditions and guidance on the new GCSE grading scale.** Ofqual consults on the terms of the Conditions, requirements and guidance that will be used to implement the new GCSE grading scale

## Speeches of the month

- Sir Michael Wilshaw's **2 November FASNA speech** casts a long glance over the English education system, its strengths and weaknesses concluding that many pupils are still being poorly served

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- Lord Sainsbury's **16 November AoC speech** runs through the thinking behind his recent report on technical education and why he considers it so important
- Rob Halfon's **17 November AoC speech** sets out five priorities for FE in the shape of prestige, skills, social justice, quality and strong leadership/financial stability
- The Prime Minister's **21 November CBI speech** calls on government and business to work closely together to make Brexit a success and sweetens the pill with a softer tone on worker reps on boards
- The Chancellor's **23 November Autumn Statement speech** is seen as low key by many and offers little for education as it focuses on getting the economy 'match fit' for the future
- Sir Michael Wilshaw's **25 November Education Policy Institute speech** offers a valedictory review of the changes brought into Ofsted under his tenure and some of the challenges that still lie ahead

## Quotes of the month

- "The public mood is sour and decision-makers have been too slow to respond" – the Social Mobility Commission chair offers rueful prognosis of the current environment for policy making
- "We are very disappointed that the careers strategy long-promised by government has still not been produced" – the Chairs of the Education Committee chastise the government over its careers policy
- "Across the sector we are seeing greater variation in financial performance, with increasing divergence across the key financial indicators" – HEFCE takes the financial pulse of the HE sector
- "The generation of students we've got coming through in the last few years is the first generation that's been tested every year since they were in nursery school" – the President of the AoC reflects on Generation Test
- "That would be the Holy Grail" – Schools Minister Nick Gibb searches for an 11+ test that is tutor-proof
- "It's one of the top performers in Europe. That is something to celebrate and be proud of" – the boss of the TIMSS assessments praises the performance of England's 10 and 14 yr olds in the latest tests
- "England's education system is a bit like its football team – better than many but hardly top notch" – Sir Michael Wilshaw finds there's still a lot to play for
- "It's not the job of a school leader to necessarily be popular. There are times when you have to court unpopularity" – NAHT's Russell Hobby on life at the top
- "Clever people don't need to work that long" – a former government adviser offers his views on teacher workload
- "One thing that amazed me when I entered teaching was how much homework appeared to be entirely mad" – school behavior adviser Tom Bennett reflects on the homework challenge

## Word or phrase of the month

- Post-truth. A term to describe arguments based on emotion rather than fact, an emerging feature of political debates this year and now recognised as a catch phrase by the Oxford Dictionary. As far as is known, its not been used yet as an excuse for a lack of homework

## Steve Besley

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