



# 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

*Policy Tracker on what happened in November 2016.* Policy Watches are intended to help colleagues keep up to date with national developments. Information is correct at the time of writing and is offered in good faith. No liability is accepted for decisions made on the basis of information given.



# Pearson

## 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

*Policy Tracker on what happened in November 2016.* Policy Watches are intended to help colleagues keep up to date with national developments. Information is correct at the time of writing and is offered in good faith. No liability is accepted for decisions made on the basis of information given.



# Pearson

- **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

*Policy Tracker on what happened in November 2016.* Policy Watches are intended to help colleagues keep up to date with national developments. Information is correct at the time of writing and is offered in good faith. No liability is accepted for decisions made on the basis of information given.



# Pearson

- 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

Head of Policy [@SteveBesley](#)

*Policy Tracker on what happened in November 2016.* Policy Watches are intended to help colleagues keep up to date with national developments. Information is correct at the time of writing and is offered in good faith. No liability is accepted for decisions made on the basis of information given.