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



Main talking points

The most obvious talking point this month has been the Ministerial changes and the creation of an all-through Education Dept but as these listings below show, many familiar problems have not gone away.

Key headlines from the month

- 2016 Key Stage 2 results. Initial data shows 53% of pupils meeting expected standard
- 2017 Yr 7 resits and multiplication tests. Put on hold
- Enquiries and appeals. Ofqual confirms some changes will be delayed, some will go ahead this summer
- ‘Shanghai’ maths. Government prepares to push ahead for over half primary schools
- Schools’ financial health. DfE issues range of new guidance
- School funding. Current arrangements to remain as funding reform put back to 2018
- Free Schools. The Cameron government announces a further 31
- Church of England. Issues new Vision for Education indicating an intention to open more schools
- Multi-academy trusts. Government, EPI, Sutton Trust publish separate challenging reports
- Deputies. The NAHT reports on how Assistant Heads and Principals are managing workloads
- Initial Teacher Training. DfE accepts the latest three reports on strengthening ITT
- Postgrad Teacher Training. UCAS publishes the profile of 2015 recruits
- Teacher Training routes. The IfS examines the costs of different routes
- Careers guidance. Education Committee issues latest critical report
- New Ofsted chief. Gets the nod ...eventually
- Functional Skills. Consultation under way on revised literacy and numeracy standards
- English and maths. The EEF and J.P.Morgan offer funds to help 16 yr olds
- Apprenticeships. Ofqual sets out its approach to regulating end – point assessments
- FE Area Reviews. Education sub-committee to hold an inquiry this autumn
- FE Prevent. Ofsted reports that not all providers are fully implementing requirements
- Tuition fees. FT suggest 2/3 of UK students will never pay off their debt
- Outreach. OFFA launches plans to help monitor the impact of HE outreach activities
- HE and Research Bill. Passes its Second Reading by 36 votes

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

- **Careers education and guidance.** The Education and Skills Sub – Committee publishes a further critical report on careers, calling for a more coordinated and structured approach
- **Reimagining the future of FE and Skills.** The RSA and FE Trust for Leadership publish a collection of essays variously offering a brave new world for the FE sector
- **Too important to be left to chance.** The All Party Parliamentary Group highlights the challenges facing adult education in a commissioned report
- **School Teachers' Review Body.** The Review Body issues its latest report recommending a 1% pay uplift for teachers from this Sept and additional flexibilities over pay for schools
- **Developing an Insolvency Regime for FE.** The BIS Dept launches consultation on developing insolvency procedures for FE and Sixth Form Colleges given the lack of current arrangements
- **School performance in multi-academy trusts and local authorities.** The Education Policy Institute compares 2015 school performance between MATs and LAs and finds little to choose between them
- **Passports to Progress.** The think tank SMF, in a report supported by Pearson, points to an increase in young people taking voc quals notably BTECs but notes that barriers still remain
- **Progress 8.** The DfE updates its guidance for 2016 and indicates likely changes for 2017 and 2018
- **Annual report and accounts.** The Skills Funding Agency publishes its 2015/16 report and accounts showing how its met its five core objectives and highlighting some of the challenges ahead
- **Standard for teachers' professional development.** The Expert Group which has been examining this issue over the last year sets out a new standard based around five core principles
- **GCSE, AS, A level reforms in England.** Ofqual and the DfE publish an information pack to help schools explain the changes to students, parents and anyone else interested
- **The Digital Economy.** The 'old' BIS Committee publishes its report on the digital strategy calling on the government to get on and publish the details and address some of the post Referendum issues
- **Stagnation Generation.** The Resolution Foundation launches its work into intergenerational issues as the millennials face the prospect of being economically worse off than previous generations
- **The Lost Boys.** Save the Children issues a report showing that even when they start school, boys, especially from a disadvantaged background, are twice as likely to be behind girls in language skills
- **Underrepresentation of white working class boys in HE.** The think tank LKMco highlights a number of barriers including cultural perceptions and good guidance in a new report on this issue
- **Beyond the Plateau.** The IPPR think tank publishes a commissioned report making a strong case for a new advanced Teaching Institute to help raise the status of teaching and school leaders
- **Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK 2016.** The Institute for Fiscal Studies reports on changing trends where the so-called new poor are those in vulnerable, low income homes
- **CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2016.** The latest annual survey highlights the importance of high-level and employability skills as the economy adjusts following the Referendum vote

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- **Unleashing Greatness.** The World Economic Forum publishes a new commentary Paper listing nine key features that can help ‘unleash’ innovation in education
- **Divergent Pathways.** The think tank Education Policy Institute examines how the disadvantage gap plays out through school key stages but notes that some primary schools manage to help close it
- **Changing the subject.** The Sutton Trust publishes commissioned research from Education Datalab on how some schools embraced the EBacc with positive results for many disadvantaged students
- **Through the lens of students.** UCAS’s survey of 2015 applicants finds many clear about the pros and cons of going to uni but that a clear ambition early on helps gain entry to a ‘selective’ uni
- **University Funding explained.** Universities UK sets out to explain how it all works
- **Annual Qualifications Market Report 2014/15.** Ofqual publishes all the facts and figures in its annual report on the qualifications market showing a slight drop in the number of certificates awarded

Speeches of the month

- Theresa May’s **13 July Number 10** speech made on the steps of No 10 Downing Street as she assumes the mantle of the premiership, promises a Britain that works for everyone
- George Osborne’s **18 July 2016 Margaret Thatcher Lecture** reveals him committed to the cause and highlighting three principles (on the economy, compassion, internationalism) for his successor
- Sir Michael Wilshaw’s **21 July UTC speech** spells out the pros and cons of UTCs and what more they need to do if they are to become a recognized feature on the education landscape

Quotes of the month

- “I believe we have made great steps, with more people in work than ever before, with reforms to welfare and education, increasing people’s life chances, building a bigger and stronger society, keeping our promises to the poorest in the world, and enabling those who love each other to get married whatever their sexuality” – David Cameron eyes his legacy in his resignation speech
- “When we take the big calls, we’ll think not of the powerful, but you” – Theresa May addresses the wider electorate on the steps of Downing Street
- “We’re not behind and we’ll complete happily by March 2017” – the FE Commissioner reckons the area reviews are on course
- “Her education at Oakwood Comprehensive School, Rotherham, surely prepares her better than most (Education Secretaries)” – John Dunford welcomes the latest Education Secretary
- “The first thing I’ve found is this area is much, much more complicated and interconnected than I thought” – Ofqual’s new Chief Executive gets to grip with the world of qualifications

Word or phrase of the month

- “Possibility Thinking.’ The RSA called for more of this in a report on the FE sector this month but arguably it’s applicable across the whole of education

Steve Besley

Head of Policy @SteveBesley

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