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



Main talking points

As this latest monthly summary shows, education has spent much of the last month pushing on with developments in a number of key areas including around schools, apprenticeships and HE but now finds itself wondering how things will shape up in the wake of the Referendum result. A watching game beckons until early autumn

Key headlines from the month

- School places. 88.4% of primary, 84.1% of secondary applicants get their preferred 2016 places
- KS3 tests. Chief Inspector calls for their return as a way of stretching pupils
- E.Midlands schools. Ofsted raises concerns about performance levels
- School inspections. Ofsted report continuing North-South divide in latest inspection data
- Multi-academy trusts. Education Committee hears Ofsted and RSC views
- Ofsted. New Chief Inspector goes through scrutiny process
- School Improvement. ASCL and CUREE hook up to offer a new support partnership for schools
- Education Policy Institute. The CentreForum think tank takes on a new name to focus on education
- SEND. Key survey reveals pressure on the special needs system
- Capital funding for schools. NAO to investigate and report back this winter
- Regional School Commissioners. New support tier of Deputies emerges
- Sixth Form Colleges. Nearly 2/3 lining up a move to academy status
- Teacher training places. The National College invites bids for places in 2017/18
- FE Commissioner. To step down later this year
- Sainsbury review of tech ed. Government still hoping to release next month
- Apprenticeship Levy. Minister confirms slight delays but broadly on course
- CITB. Announces consultation on how its levy could work with the government's
- Institute for Apprentices. Shadow Chair and Shadow Chief Operating Officer appointed
- DAP. Newcastle College gains full taught degree awarding powers
- EU students. Funding committed for current and 2016 entry students
- Post referendum HE. Minister issues calming statement
- Unpaid interns. Tory peer introduces a Private Members Bill to limit the practice

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

- **The Problem Solvers.** Former government adviser Charles Leadbeater highlights 4 elements needed to create a more dynamic education system in a new report for the Pearson Open Ideas series
- **Future schools funding and costs.** The Reform think-tank examines school funding and while acknowledging ring-fencing, concludes other pressures will result in a 5.5% overall per pupil cut
- **Schools and Immigration.** Data crunchers School Dash examine the impact of EU immigration on England's schools and find that while the picture varies locally, performance rates generally improve
- **Believing in Better.** The Sutton Trust publishes the latest in its series of reports into the aspirational attitudes of young people and finds them shaped by background and gender from an early age
- **Case for the creation of the OfS.** The BIS Dept follows up its HE White Paper reforms by setting out the respective business cases for the Office for Students (OfS) and UK Research and Innovation
- **Glass Ceilings: Access to A' levels in England.** The New Schools Network reports on its survey of A' level provision suggesting some of the more disadvantaged areas may be missing out
- **Equality Reports.** UCAS publishes a mass of data on undergrad applications by gender, background and ethnic group putting institutional trends into the public domain for the first time
- **The 2016 Student Academic Experience Survey.** HEPI and HEA publish the results of their latest annual survey showing continuing high levels of student satisfaction but concerns about costs
- **The childhood origins of social mobility.** The Social Mobility Commission publishes new research showing some improvement but equally continuing gaps between different socio-economic groups
- **Training new teachers.** The Public Accounts Committee publishes a challenging report on the DfE's planning and management of teacher training calling for better oversight and evaluation generally
- **Digital Skills Crisis.** The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee raises concerns about poor skill levels and lack of training as it calls for the government to publish its Digital Strategy
- **An Alternative White Paper for HE.** The Convention for HE group of academics raises concerns about the HE reforms and the threat of a US system as it publishes an alternative White Paper
- **Enrolments and Qualifications at Alternative Providers.** The HE Statistics Agency offers some initial data on undergrads enrolled and qualifications achieved at alternative HE providers in 2014/15
- **Employer views on the apprenticeship levy.** CIPD publishes the results of its survey and calls for a delay in the levy introduction to address concerns about quality and investment
- **Workforce data across the FE sector 2014/15.** The Education and Training Foundation publishes the latest findings showing a further drop in workforce numbers and increase in part-time working
- **Making Mathematics Accessible to All.** The OECD reports on school provision of maths across member countries and finds that advantaged students often get a richer diet than disadvantaged ones
- **Steps forward, steps backward.** The Centre for Market Reform of Education publishes a collection of essays on how far the HE reforms take us forwards or backwards suggesting a bit of both
- **New Blood.** The FE sector is encouraged to recruit leaders from outside the sector and attract fresh thinking and new blood in a new report commissioned by the AELP and 157 Group
- **School census details.** The DfE reports on the findings from the latest school census data showing an increase in pupil numbers over the last year with particular pressure on some primary schools

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- **Academy school performance.** The NFER offers the latest analysis of academy school performance from over the last year finding little statistical evidence of it outperforming state schools
- **Perceptions of A levels, GCSE and other qualifications.** Ofqual publishes the latest in its series of annual surveys on how qualifications are perceived, showing little change in attitudes over the year

Speeches of the month

- **Matthew Hancock's 7 June Keith Joseph Memorial Lecture** looks at the impact of digitalization and argues that far from being a disruptive force, it can be transformative as well for social mobility
- **Jo Johnson's 9 June HEPI speech** calls on the sector to embrace the current HE reforms which, he argues, can bring benefits to universities and students alike
- **Matthew Hancock's 15 June National Digital Conference speech** returns to the theme of digitalization and the potential of both disruption and opportunity that it carries
- **Sir Michael Wilshaw's 23 June Festival of Education speech** fingers five culprits deemed responsible for failing to improve the lot of disadvantaged children

Quotes of the month

- "We should be proud of the fact that in these islands we trust the people with these big decisions" – David Cameron puts his best spin on the Referendum result as he announces his resignation
- "It will not be plain sailing in the days ahead" – the Chancellor sets the compass
- "I have enjoyed working closely with you and holding the government to account as Shadow Education Secretary" – Lucy Powell starts her resignation letter on a positive
- "Are we stuck in a new Middle Ages? Or, are we hurtling towards a dystopian future?" – Cabinet Office Minister Matt Hancock questions where we are in the technological revolution
- "Currently too many systems demand that students acquire the knowledge that assessment systems mandate" – education adviser Charles Leadbeater on changing the tyranny of assessment
- "I know that you will be a standard bearer. I hope that you will be a turbulent priest too" – education commentator John Dunford suggests some role models for the proposed new Chief Inspector
- "Words like crusader and warrior are ones we need to be careful about" - the new Chief Inspector is anxious not to be pigeon-holed
- "One psychologist has said that women tend to feel confident only when they feel practically perfect in every way like Mary Poppins" – the departing Chief Exec of the GDST on the 21st c pressures on girls

Word or phrase of the month

- "A little delay." The Skills Minister's response when asked what happens to some of the skills reforms. We may hear it quite a lot in the coming months

Steve Besley

Head of Policy @SteveBesley

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