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## Policy Eye



### Highlights of week ending Friday 28 July 2017

*(Welcome to Policy Eye, a weekly service from Policy Watch offering a regular round up of UK education headlines and stories from over the previous 7 days.)*

#### The week summed up

Two stand-outs this week. First, a welcome seasonal slowdown in the number of reports and announcements issued and second the emergence of an education roadmap for the new academic year.

Let's start with this week's reports and announcements, fewer in number with the holiday season underway but yet with some notable developments. Potentially the most significant has been the commissioning by the government of a detailed inquiry into the effects of immigration on the UK economy. The job has been handed over to the Migration Advisory Committee who have been asked to report back by September 2018. It may, as some have suggested, be leaving things a bit late but it's an important issue for education not least because of the long-term implications for EU staff and students, for skills and training and for the economy generally. The CBI and Universities UK have both given the review a guarded welcome.

Among the other reports and announcements this week, many people will be interested in some research from Ofqual on how the changes to re-marking and appeals for exams went last year as well as in the government response on how much is being spent on explaining the grade changes at GCSE. Links to both stories below. Also worth noting this week has been the announcement by the Lords Economic Affairs Committee that it intends to pick up where the Conservative manifesto left off by holding a review of tertiary funding. Lords' Committee Reports in this area have been quite significant in the past.

Second that roadmap, or at least a summary of how things now stand on some key issues following the blitz of information from over the last couple of weeks.

For schools, the EBacc targets have now been set, the introduction of the national funding formula confirmed, arrangements for this year's performance tables published and the teacher's pay award announced. Things to look out for this autumn include: Ofsted's important report on how effectively the curriculum is working; ASCL's independent panel report on primary assessment and accountability; an NAO report on the teaching profession; publication of the provisional secondary school table results and perhaps even a new National Careers Strategy.

For FE, the last knockings of the area reviews are being worked through, pathfinder T-levels have been put back a year and new support programmes for teachers and leaders announced. Things to look out for this autumn include: a White Paper on the Industrial Strategy; a Prospectus, potentially, for Institutes of Technology and consultations and a summit on T-levels. For HE, the Minister has scotched further debate on fees, announced piloting of subject-level TEF and confirmed an early start for the Office for Students (OfS.) Things to look out for here this autumn include a consultation on OfS regulatory functions, an NAO report on Alternative Providers, and UCAS's End of Cycle report on this year's uni entry trends.

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## Top headlines this week

- 'Almost three-quarters of public think teachers work too hard, survey shows.' ([Monday](#))
- 'Growth mindset does not predict academic achievement, study finds.' ([Tuesday](#))
- 'Number of unqualified teachers rises 62% since 2012.' ([Wednesday](#))
- 'Academies overspend income by £280m.' ([Thursday](#))
- "Sector unites to export FE and make UK a global leader" ([Friday](#))

## People/organisations in the news this week

### General Policy

- [Immigration Review](#). The government commissioned a major year-long review of the impact of EU migration on the UK economy with particular reference to skills, training and future industrial needs as part of an emerging three-stage strategy on immigration post-Brexit
- [White Paper coming](#). The Business Secretary confirmed that the government is still looking to publish a White Paper on the Industrial Strategy later this year, in a speech in the Midlands where he announced some immediate developments around smart energy and electronic vehicles
- [Taylor Report](#). Rachel Reeves MP, the new Chair of the Business Committee confirmed that one of the first reviews the Committee would take on would be to look at the gig economy and in particular the recommendations for this in the recent Taylor Report
- [Millennials and modern working practices](#). The IPPR think tank reported on how some of the changes in the modern labour market such as job insecurity, low pay, delayed pension rights and so on were in danger of creating health and wellbeing issues for many younger people
- [National LGBT survey](#). The government launched a survey inviting LGBT people living in the UK to tell them about their experiences along with any issues they faced as part of its work on improving equalities policies
- [Impact of Brexit on Cities](#). The Centre for Cities along with the Centre for Economic Performance examined the impact of a hard and a soft Brexit on cities in Britain in the decade after Brexit offering a city by city listing of how each might fare with the extent of a skilled workforce being one of the factors

### HE

- [Trends in HE](#). Universities UK published its latest data-fuelled picture of the changing nature of HE over the last decade covering the latest trends in student population, staffing, funding and technology
- [Foot on the accelerator](#). The Guardian carried an article examining some of the issues involved in moving to accelerated or 2-year degrees as proposed recently by the HE Minister, arguing that cost, system change and learning impact were all potential problems



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## FE/Skills

- **Skills funding.** The House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee launched a call for evidence for a new Inquiry it was intending to hold in the autumn into the financing of post-16 skills training including apprenticeships, T-levels and further and higher ed options
- **Tech costs.** The DfE published a commissioned report into how some other countries funded their post-16 tech provision with most relying on a mix of state funding and employer levies
- **Yorkshire first.** FE Week reported that a group of Colleges in W. Yorkshire have agreed to line up their adult education budgets and work with the Combined Authority to meet local skill needs in advance of any formal Devo deal
- **Funding bands.** The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) confirmed some revisions to apprenticeship funding bands for new starts from August and October
- **Lacking in guidance.** The Industry Apprentice Council (IAC) raised a number of issues, particularly around a lack of careers guidance and about the nature of end point assessments, coming out of its latest survey of manufacturing and engineering apprentices
- **On parade.** The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) in conjunction with the Gatsby Foundation announced that the scheme to train up armed service personnel to work in FE will formally start in September with the Universities of Portsmouth and Brighton contracted to provide the training

## Schools

- **Explaining GCSE grade changes.** The Schools Minister confirmed in a written response in Parliament how much money was being spent on ensuring the grade changes to GCSE were understood (£50,000+ by DfE, £400,000 by Ofqual)
- **Exam and assessment marking research.** Ofqual published a number of pieces of research on the changes into the procedures for re-marking and appeals introduced last year and how these had been adopted
- **The first cut.** The Policy Exchange think tank invited suggestions on where cuts could be made to school budgets that wouldn't harm the curriculum suggesting that top heavy management structures and unnecessary activities such as 'Mocksteads' could be obvious candidates
- **Soft drinks levy.** The Local Government Association (LGA) called on the government not to divert funds from the sugar tax into general school funding but to continue to use it to fight child health and obesity
- **QTs.** Labour has pointed to a rise, indicated in the annual survey of school workforce figures, in the number of unqualified teachers working in schools today arguing that recent changes have made the situation worse
- **Closing the gap.** Education Datalab added further detail on its work on long-term disadvantage suggesting that raising attainment for this particular group provides particular challenges
- **Cyber training.** The Dept for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) announced a new scheme, due to launch this autumn, to help provide young people aged 14 – 18 with the appropriate cyber security skills needed to deal with the sorts of attacks that have been witnessed recently
- **No such thing as.** The government confirmed in a written response that it would not be implementing its manifesto commitment to free primary school breakfasts although it will be investing in a breakfast club programme



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- **Mental health issues.** The Education Policy Institute followed up its earlier work in this area by issuing a new report highlighting in particular, concerns about the quality and extent of inpatient provision for children and young people with mental health problems
- **Staying afloat.** Swim England launched a new report for the start of the schools holidays showing that a lot of children were leaving primary school unable to swim, and making a number of recommendations including new Top-Up programmes, rewards and incentives as a result

## Tweets(s) of the week

- “UK universities were only interested in three letters – my A’ level grades. In the US they wanted to know about me” - [@tes](#)
- “When they give honorary degrees at Cambridge speeches are in Latin. Apparently it’s de rigeur for dons to laugh conspicuously at funny bits “ - [@edanderson101](#)
- “If you know nothing about the true story behind the film Dunkirk, chances are you go to university” - [@2010LeeHurst](#)

## Other stories of the week

- Chips with everything. It is the summer season when all kinds of stories emerge to seize the headlines. One futuristic story that emerged this week was of a US tech company which is taking technology a step further by inviting its staff to be microchipped. The chip is inserted under the skin between the thumb and forefinger and allows employees to log on, use the copier, pay for food in the restaurant, open security doors and so on with a simple wave of the hand. The company claims it’s the future and that ID passes are a thing of the past. We have been warned. The story is [here](#)
- Message on a London Underground notice board this week. ‘Summer. The time when parents realise just how grossly underpaid teachers actually are’

## Quote(s) of the week

- “A short term strategy is a contradiction in terms” – the Business Secretary on the importance of having a long-term focus to its Industrial Strategy
- “A brilliant location for talent because of its universities, its strength in engineering and science and its reputation in fashion” – Amazon justifies its faith in strengthening its workforce in London
- “The biggest challenge to have reared its head over the past ten years or so has little or nothing to do with inequality – it is the massive squeeze on incomes right across the population” – Paul Johnson, Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IfS) offers his thoughts as the gender pay gap row rumbles on
- “For those who do not go to university, is the system of further education and vocational training funded fairly?” – the Chair of Lords Ec Committee launches a new inquiry by posing a question that many people in the sector already know the answer to
- “The data is not of sufficiently high quality to meet the needs of users” – the Office for Statistics Regulation questions the accuracy of figures on foreign students staying on after their uni courses have ended



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- “Schools that once got by on a single head and one or two deputies now have extended leadership teams managing sprawling initiatives” – the think tank Policy Exchange challenges the costs of extended management teams in schools
- “I wonder if it’s ever occurred to you that when ministers do naff tricks with money, one of the things we take away from it is that you tried to take us for fools” – author Michael Rosen continues his pen letter to Education Secretaries
- “We felt it was only right and proper to reward our teachers with the savings we have made” – one Academy Trust decides to offer its teachers 2%

## Number(s) of the week

- 1.7%. The latest forecast for the UK economy for the rest of the year from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) slightly down on its previous forecast of 2%
- 54%. The number of people surveyed in the latest Ipsos Mori Economic Optimism Index who think the UK economy will get worse in the coming months as opposed to 14% who thought it would get better
- 180,000. The number of tech workers from the EU over the last couple of years, many of whom are considering their futures post-Brexit according an article in the FT
- 5.9%. The (median) gender pay gap for the DfE according to its latest published data
- 1,900+. How many written responses to its Industrial Strategy the government received, according to the Business Secretary
- 48%. The number of apprentices who found out about what was needed through their own online research rather than through any schools career guidance according to the latest survey from the IAC
- 110. How many ex armed service personnel the Education and Training Foundation is hoping to recruit for its Forces for FE Teachers training programme this autumn
- £19.21bn. How much Academies spent in 2015/16, according to latest figures from the DfE, £280m above income
- 5% How many teachers working in state schools in England do not have a formal teaching qualification according to analysis from the Labour Party
- 31%. How many children leave primary school unable to swim or without basic water safety skills according to a new report from Swim England
- 73%. How many people in a poll by the TES think it’s important that a teacher can be funny

## What to look out for next week

- Summer recess until 5 Sept