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Policy Eye



Highlights of week ending Friday 10 November 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

Strategies, teachers and sixth form students top the news this week.

The very word 'Strategy' is enough apparently to send some people heading for the hills but there are two important ones that the world of education has been waiting for for some time and which were the subject of updates this week. The first of these is the Industrial Strategy and the second the Careers Strategy.

The Industrial Strategy was first issued as a Green consultation Paper back in January this year. The political world has spun round somewhat since then but the ten pillars of the Strategy, seen as its essential architecture and comprising such features as skills, infrastructure, location, and innovation remain pretty enduring and just as pertinent, if not more so, today.

The Strategy featured heavily at the CBI's Annual Conference this week where both Party leaders came to offer their thoughts. The Prime Minister confirmed that the Strategy will be published before the month is out, that it will be set in the context of economic needs post Brexit and that the government's role will include setting frameworks and investing in infrastructure and skills, including T levels, science and new technologies. In his address Jeremy Corbyn offered a hand of friendship to business, highlighted the issue of productivity and promised a Labour government would invest in R/D, new technologies and people.

They haven't been the only ones this week addressing the Industrial Strategy; the CBI, Lord Heseltine and the think tank Localis, have also been there. Some common themes are evident and include: a growing awareness of the importance of artificial intelligence on labour market trends; universal handwringing about poor productivity; more devolvement to the regions but also with some central drivers; and of course funding. Over to you Mr Chancellor perhaps.

The other long awaited Strategy is that of Careers but perhaps Christmas really is coming here. Certainly the Skills Minister confirmed as such in a speech this week and even went on to outline the four building blocks being used to build the Strategy. These include: using proven benchmarks; employer engagement; tailored support; and data. She, the Minister, may well say more in her speech to the AoC on Tuesday.

Next, teachers, many of whom will be hoping that the Chancellor has something to offer them in his Budget shortly but where there've some interesting reports this week. All are listed below and include notably the EEF on lesson observations, the Royal Society on computing and Becky Allen on workloads.

Finally sixth form students in schools and colleges, a group of learners who have been squeezed in terms of cuts for some time. This week's survey report, ahead of the Autumn Budget, reveals the full impact.



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Top headlines this week

- 'Sixth forms at the bottom of a funding chasm, warns new report.' ([Monday](#))
- 'Milton reveals four pillars of new careers strategy.' ([Tuesday](#))
- 'Student Loans Company sacks Chief Executive.' ([Wednesday](#))
- 'T levels could enshrine 'low esteem for FE,' warns Oxford academic.' ([Thursday](#))
- 'Government urged to act over Computer Science GCSEs.' ([Friday](#))

People/organisations in the news this week

General Policy

- [New industrial strategy](#). The Prime Minister claimed that the government's forthcoming Industrial Strategy White Paper would help set a new post-Brexit vision for the country of a more productive economy, embracing technological change and globally focused when she addressed the CBI Annual Conference
- [Common ground](#). Jeremy Corbyn also addressed the CBI Conference where he claimed that there was a lot of common ground between Labour and business particularly in the shared desire to raise productivity, under investment and living standards
- [One giant leap](#). The CBI also offered its thoughts on a future Industrial strategy, one based around people, infrastructure and innovation, and aimed at leapfrogging competitors rather than just trying keep up with them
- [Hezza Strategy](#). Michael Heseltine set out his proposals for an Industrial Strategy in a response Paper to government outlining eight initial steps including the re-focusing of government around wealth creating activity, increased devolution and the publication of an annual Competitiveness White Paper
- [Local powers](#). The cross party think tank Localis called for local strategic authorities to be given greater powers to determine their own labour market approaches including control of adult education budgets, more flexible use of the apprenticeship levy and the creation of a Local Skills Development Fund
- [Lecture notes](#). The Resolution Foundation published the slides from David Willetts' recent Royal Statistical Society Lecture on living standards and inequality in the UK
- [National Numeracy](#). Booby Seagull, former University Challenge captain and among other things now a budding maths teacher, suggested that maths was 'a beautiful subject' as he added to the blogs on the National Numeracy website spelling out the importance of maths for all

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- [International students](#). The FT reported that the government might yet be encouraged to change its mind about including such students in the net migration targets as universities have been urging for some time
- [Paying for research](#). The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) published a working report showing the extent to which research was being supported by cross subsidizing income from international students and teaching generally and calling for additional funding in the forthcoming Budget



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- **On the Horizon.** Universities UK highlighted the importance of the current Horizon 2020 EU funded research programme, noting how far UK institutions were leaders in this and calling for greater clarity on future funding and support post Brexit
- **Predicting the future.** Charlotte Malton from the Britain Thinks research institute, contributed to Wonkhe's HE Futures series, noting the dangers involved in trying to predict and thereby plan for particular jobs of the future but acknowledging the importance of particular skills that will remain important in the future
- **Million Plus.** Dr Greg Walker was announced as the new Chief Exec of MillionPlus, the group of modern universities, taking over from Pam Tatlow from January 2018

FE/Skills

- **Save our sixth forms.** The Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA) led a call for additional funding for 16-19 year olds, ahead of the Autumn Budget, outlining survey figures showing that many colleges were having to cut courses, support and cloths generally
- **Next steps for ITBs.** The government published an update on its review of Industry Training Boards (ITBs) outlining that both Training Boards, Construction and Engineering, will carry on but undertake further development work while the government will issue a priorities letter early next year
- **Apprenticeship response.** The Education and BEIS Committees published the government's response to their (pre-election) inquiry into apprenticeships which acknowledged some of the issues around for instance the levy and quality provision but confirmed its commitment to creating a 'world class' system
- **Residential standards.** The government launched a consultation on proposed revised minimum standards for those 16 – 18 yr old learners, often with disabilities and other difficulties, who require residential accommodation

Schools

- **Four handles.** The Skills Minister spelt out the four core features of the forthcoming careers strategy (quality benchmarks, employer engagement, tailored advice, access to data) when she addressed the Careers Education and Guidance Summit
- **Full SP.** The government published the latest set of facts and figures with useful data on schools, education and training, qualifications and funding for the UK for 2017
- **Keeping the cap.** A number of MPs signed an Early Day Motion calling on the government to maintain the 50% discrimination cap which prevents faith free schools from selecting more than 50% of their pupils and potentially thereby creating single faith schools
- **Explaining how it is.** Dr Becky Allen offered a thoughtful and well received analysis of the pressures facing teachers in the annual Caroline Benn Memorial Lecture incorporating a number of suggestions such as extended lead in times for policy changes, for reducing the burden
- **Lesson observations.** The Education Endowment Foundation published the results of a funded survey into structured observations of English and maths teaching in a number of English secondary schools concluding that it made no difference to exam results
- **No simple answer.** The leadership charity, Ambition School Leadership, published the results of its commissioned work into what makes for top performing multi-academy trusts (MATs,) identifying 19



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trusts which had performed well against five features but with no obvious simple set of factors for indicating why or how

- **Counting the cost.** The National Association of head teachers (NAHT) offered a simple explainer of the new national funding formula
- **Computing in schools.** The Royal Society highlighted a number of concerns about the current state of Computing education in schools including a lack of trained teachers, patchy take-up, gender imbalances and limited support, calling among other things for a tenfold increase in funding over the next five years
- **21st c SRE.** The government appointed a new adviser to help provide support and development with Sec and Relationship Education (SRE)
- **Safeguarding.** The House of Commons Library published a briefing Paper on safeguarding in schools in England outlining responsibilities and accountabilities under the latest legislation
- **English.** Ofsted's National Lead for English reflected on some of the messages that have emerged from Ofsted's recent curriculum review for the teaching of English
- **PSHE.** The NAHT called for this to be made statutory in all schools as part of the support for RSE (Relationship and Sex Education)
- **NCS guidance.** The government listed seven key steps for schools and colleges to follow in implementing the National Citizen Service
- **Early Years.** The Education Policy Institute (EPI) reported on the latest research on the Early Years workforce noting that while recent reforms had focused on the qualification levels of the workforce there were wider issues such as low pay and poor conditions that were proving a turn-off for many

Tweets(s) of the week

- "Have tuition fees had their day? @amcgettigan thinks Govt will look at imposed price differentials across subjects #WonkFest17" - @AndyWWestwood
- "I want a school to experiment with an 8-4.30 day. Lock the doors either side. Don't allow books out. What wouldn't get done? @drbeckyallen" - @miss_mcinerney
- "@CBltweets, @drechsler_paul. We need to eat, sleep and drink productivity for our economy" - @Eme_DL

Other stories of the week

- **Off school.** There's been a lot of comment recently, both for and against the local council who urged parents to 'get a grip' and not keep little Johnny of Jamila off school at the first sign of a winter sniffle. This week Lucy Denyer, Features Editor at the Daily Telegraph gave it both barrels, arguing that being sent to school every day, whatever, when she was young, helped build up resistance to common ailments in later life. A paywall link to her 'Parents, stop being so pathetic' story is [here](#)
- **Bah humbug.** In a week when some of the leading retail shops have been releasing their Christmas ads and some schools perhaps starting to consider their Nativity plays, it's emerged that too much Christmas music can be bad for your health. According to one psychologist, overdosing on 'All I want for Christmas' can ultimately dull the brain. The story is [here](#)



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Quote(s) of the week

- “The government will be publishing our Industrial Strategy White Paper later this month” – the PM confirms that the Industry White Paper is on its way
- “It is at least the tenth attempt in my memory”- Lord Heseltine tries to count the number of Industrial Strategies in his lifetime
- “It will enable the government to produce a clear programme for T level students and set out their progression into higher education” – the Skills Minister answers a question in Parliament about the government’s proposed higher-level tech review
- “Remember you are not at any other uni where students do drink a lot and do have what they regard as a good time” – a Cambridge’s tutor’s advice to new students provokes mixed reactions
- “Teaching is suffering from a workload crisis that nobody seems to want or will take responsibility for” – Becky Allen addresses the role of teaching today in the annual Caroline Benn lecture
- “The message I would send to teachers is to be audacious” – Ofsted’s English Lead on some of the messages that emerge from the inspectorate’s recent curriculum review
- “There was no evidence that schools which did more observations had better pupil results” – the latest survey on structured lesson observations fails to endorse
- “In my case, I did not allow my children to use electronic gadgets until they were aged 13” – the House of Lords discusses growing up with the internet, with peers offering the benefit of their own experience
- “Humpty Dumpty may seem old-fashioned but children who can sing a song and know a story off by heart aged four are better prepared for school” – the Chief Inspector on the importance of nursery rhymes

Number(s) of the week

- £*6.3bn. How much was spent on education in the UK in 2016/17, a 2.3% real terms reduction on what was spent four years ago according to the latest data from the government
- 2,539. How many referrals there were from education under the Prevent Strategy in 2015/16, more than any other sector according to latest Home Office figures
- £1.3bn. How much a future Labour government would invest in R/D in its first two years according to a speech by Jeremy Corbyn at the CBI Annual Conference
- 35%. How many employers cite a lack of long-term vision as the biggest challenge to a successful industrial strategy, according to a survey by the CBI
- £31.9m. How much income universities earned from skills, apprenticeship and adult provision in 2016/17, a big increase according to figures reported by the TES
- £200. The amount of per student extra funding needed (taking it is up to £4,200 per student) to avoid further cuts to courses and support, according to a campaign being led by the Sixth Form Colleges Association
- 35. The number of member organisations now in the Collab Group
- 5%. How much the teacher unions are asking by way of a pay rise for teachers for 2018, according to an open letter from six unions to the Chancellor



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- 16% and 8%. How many secondary age boys and girls respectively undertake the recommended amount of exercise a day, according to a survey by Youth Sports Trust and Women in Sport

What to look out for next week

- AoC Annual Conference. (Tuesday, Wednesday)
- Skills Show. (Thursday – Saturday)
- RSA's 'Beyond Education By Numbers' event. (Thursday)