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## Policy Eye

Highlights of week ending Friday 23 November 2018



(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.

Birmingham seems to have been the place to be this week with both the annual Colleges' Conference and the Schools and Academies Show taking place at respective venues there and attracting a host of leading commentators and in some cases Ministers to navigate the transport system and offer their thoughts.

As for education generally, we're moving into the busy pre-Christmas schedule. It's a schedule this week that has seen the government [publish](#) its response to its consultation on 2-year degrees confirming that it intends to move ahead on the idea given Parliamentary approval on fees. The HE Policy Institute has published an important [report](#) on where student fees really end up, Ofsted has released a useful [report](#) on that unsung area: Level 2 provision, Ofqual has released more [data](#) on the summer exams along with a [report](#) on inter-subject comparability among some A' level subjects, TeachFirst has published a new [strategic plan](#) and the Education Secretary issued the [remit letter](#) for the Pay Review Board for teachers' pay for 2019 with apparently a further remit letter to follow.

Further afield, as Brexit developments trundle on, the employer's organisation, the [CBI](#) held its Annual Conference which was addressed by both the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition and where skill needs were much in contention. The government [reported](#) on its consultation on setting up a Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, [Parliamentary Committee](#) Inquiries took in special educational needs, Academy accounts, the Careers and Enterprise Co, the sale of student loans, and intergenerational fairness. And finally, the National Audit Office produced a useful [summary report](#), stuffed with facts and figures, on the work of the DfE while the Children's Commissioner has [reported](#) on service provision for children with mental health needs, also lots of facts and figures, some quite dispiriting.

A lot to catch up on therefore but this week's mention goes to FE, not often in the limelight but where the annual Colleges' Conference is often an important gathering point for reflections on this key sector.

Affection, and in most cases respect, runs deep for colleges, the Shadow Education Secretary for instance kickstarted her career through a college course. Their work maybe unsung but it touches people of all backgrounds in a way that few other services do and yet as a rather hurried Skills Minister explained, love is not all you need, you also need strong standing and robust reputations. Fortunately, funding apart, there have been many positive noises around such things for FE this week. Some have come from the reports published by the DfE during the week such as that from the FE Commissioner and some from platform speeches such as that from the Chief Inspector but arguably the vision set out by the AoC Chief Executive, a combination of pragmatism and passion, has set the right tone for the sector for the future. It's now down to the Spending Review to add the all-important funding to be able to deliver it.



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## Top headlines this week

- 'Not a lot DfE can do on recruitment crisis warns Teach First.' ([Monday](#))
- 'Labour vows to scrap GCSE resit policy.' ([Tuesday](#))
- 'Hinds wants next teacher pay deal to boost recruitment.' ([Wednesday](#))
- 'Half of university tuition fees spent on teaching.' ([Thursday](#))
- 'Apprenticeship assessment 'car crash' looms.' ([Friday](#))

## People/organisations in the news this week

### General Policy

- [Not a bad deal](#). The Prime Minister addressed the CBI Annual Conference where she argued the case for the Withdrawal Agreement on goods, services and immigration and called on business to help develop skills and opportunities for the future
- [Joint Venture](#). Carolyn Fairbairn, CBI Director General called for government and business to work more closely together on matters like skills and immigration policies, key issues for many businesses
- [Under the microscope](#). The National Audit Office (NAO) published the latest of its scrutiny reports on individual government departments, in this case the work of the DfE over the past year with a range of useful facts and figures on such things as dept spending, rising pupil numbers, student loans and Ofsted grades awarded
- [Data developments](#). The government reported on latest developments around the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, indicating how it was moving forward following consultation, with a new Board, new Issues Paper and next year a new Strategy Paper
- [Mental health provision](#). The Children's Commissioner reported on the provision of mental health services for children in England pointing to slow progress, a system facing overload and long waiting times with issues such as eating disorders facing particular difficulties
- [Industrial strategy](#). The government announced that UK industries have secured an important contract to build components for a major new European satellite project thereby boosting the space industry deal set out in the Industrial Strategy
- [Building bridges not walls](#). UNESCO published its latest global education monitoring report focusing on the links between education and migration and displacement, noting that growing numbers have added pressures on provider systems with some learners being denied access to education opportunities, yet finding rewarding stories of success and an increase in countries committing to help

### HE

- [Foot on the accelerator](#). The government confirmed, following recent consultation, that it was hoping to make two-year accelerated degrees available from next year assuming it could get Parliamentary approval on increasing the fee level
- [Impact assessment](#). The government published an impact assessment outlining the rationale, options and risks associated with two year degrees



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- **TEF review.** The government confirmed that the independent review of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF,) provided for under the 2017 HE Act, will be led by a small team headed up by the LSC's Dame Shirley Pearce and report back next summer
- **KEF consultation.** Wonkhe reported on the build-up to the forthcoming consultation on the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF,) helping to explain not only the concept but some of the emerging documentation behind it
- **Sale of student loans.** The Public Accounts Committee reported on its Inquiry into the initial sale of student loans which took place last December raising a cash value of £1.7bn seen by the Committee as 'too little' given a face value of nearly double that
- **Where's the money?** The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) published a new report using case study and survey evidence to show how universities spend tuition fee income, suggesting that just under half goes on the direct costs of teaching and most of the rest on things that can benefit students such as IT and mental health support but calling ultimately for more transparency generally on fee trails
- **Graduate internships.** The Sutton Trust examined the issue of graduate internships finding nearly half of those under 24 had done at least one, generally unpaid and often only available through the grapevine leading the Trust to recommend a fairer recruitment process and the adoption of the minimum wage
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- **Grade inflation.** The Times Higher examined the rise in the number of top degrees awarded ahead of a forthcoming report from Universities UK, suggesting that the percentage rise in recent years at least has been concentrated in particular subject areas such as computer science, business and admin, and subjects allied to medicine
- **Unconditional offers.** Education leaders from universities and some schools penned an open letter to The Times calling for reform of the system of unconditional offers
- **The Rise of the Dual Professional.** GuildHE published a new report using case study evidence from among its members showing how valuable dual professionals – those who teach while also maintaining professional practice 'outside' – can be, marrying subject expertise with outside experience
- **Project report.** Impetus PEF reported on its lengthy partnership with IntoUniversity which over the past decade and more has helped and funded access to university for over 30,000 young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and which is planning to expand into more areas in the coming years
- **Brexit and us.** Professor Shearer West, V.C. at Nottingham University, blogged about how the university was helping staff meet some of the challenges of Brexit, for example paying the registration fee for all EU staff and families who wish to stay under the settled status scheme

## FE/Skills

- **AoC Annual Conference.** The Association of Colleges (AoC) hosted its Annual Conference attracting a host of leading speakers and commentators and where the Chief Executive outlined a new vision for the FE sector built around 4 Ps (profile, purpose, politics and prestige)
- **The new inspection framework and FE.** Ofsted Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman addressed the AoC Conference where she praised the work of many colleges and recognised the funding challenges they



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were working under before outlining the changes to the proposed new inspection framework and highlighting messages from the L2 report published that morning

- **Reporting in.** The FE Commissioner published his Annual Report for the year up to July 2018 showing how his team's wider remit was helping more colleges make improvements where needed, with the introduction of Diagnostic Assessments seen as particularly valuable
- **Staff survey.** The DfE published the findings from its latest survey of college staff completed earlier this year showing  $\frac{3}{4}$  of staff on permanent contracts, most aged 45+ with a good deal of experience, workloads and salaries cited as concerns and recruitment and retention in some areas a worry
- **Learners and Apprentices survey.** The DfE published its accompanying learner survey for 2018 showing that the sector serves a pretty wide age range of learners, many from more disadvantaged areas and many living quite complex lives but generally all pretty positive about the benefits and results of learning
- **National Leaders of Governance.** The DfE updated its guidance on governance for FE and Sixth Form Colleges and appointed a small group of experienced governors and clerks to lend support to colleges on governance matters where needed
- **Chair support.** The Education and Training Foundation launched a new training programme for Chairs of College Governing Bodies that will be delivered and supported by the Saïd Business School
- **Outcomes for disadvantaged students.** The DfE published some research looking at outcomes and subsequent progress for a group of disadvantaged (defined as previously eligible for free school meals) who took GCSEs in 2005, finding most concentrated in FE, on lower-level qualification routes and with lower rates of earning progression than non-disadvantaged students
- **Level 2.** Ofsted reported on its research into Level 2 provision finding a mixed bag often with limited recognition of the needs of students and of what might be most useful in terms of local progression, calling among other recommendations for a further review of GCSE English/maths resits and better use of data to inform progression

## Schools

- **School funding.** Luke Sibieta of the Institute for Fiscal Studies provided a valuable primer on education funding, outlining what's happened in recent years and where some of the pressure points are
- **Teachers' Pay 2019.** The Education Secretary issued a remit letter for the Schools Teachers' Review Body to consider teachers' pay for 2019 with a further remit letter to follow as part of the government's recruitment and retention strategy
- **Teachers' pay 2018.** The Education Policy Institute examined the cash available for this year's pay award and concluded that given the operational decisions made particularly on pupil numbers, some schools, especially in poorer areas, may struggle to meet the costs while others could receive a surplus
- **Primary reforms.** Nick Gibb, the Schools Standards Minister, reported on the government's reform programme for primary schools, arguing that after a challenging start it was now showing dividends with more state schools performing highly
- **Inter-subject comparability.** Ofqual reported on its recent work looking into the application of grading standards in science and modern foreign language A' levels, concluding after extensive national and international research that no change was needed to grading standards but that work would continue with Awarding Organisations to ensure confidence is retained in the future



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- **Inspection Update.** Ofsted issued its latest update for schools highlighting a number of issues and changes of particular importance to inspectors such as pupil segregation and safeguarding and confirming that from next summer the new electronic evidence gathering tool will be adopted for all school inspections
- **Our next chapter.** TeachFirst outlined the next 'chapter' in its development with the launch of a strategy built around four principles (workload, progression, pay and flexibility) and intended to get more teachers into disadvantaged communities through such schemes as Reconnect to Teaching which supports 'exiled' teachers back into the classroom
- **Joining the classroom.** The DfE announced further support to help top graduates, mid-career changers and others consider joining the teaching profession, offering £10.7m to three organisations (Now Teach, Cognition Education, and The Brilliant Club) to help lead the drive
- **Employability skills.** Education and Employers, the Edge Foundation and the National Education Union reported on a joint project looking into the sorts of skills and competencies valued by employers and how these are being developed in schools
- **SEND support.** The TES reported on the Education Committee session on special educational needs and disabilities where witnesses called for more support for schools and councils and in particular for a national template for EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plans)
- **Replacing the P scale.** The DfE announced that it intended to develop a new approach to assessing pupils with complex needs, moving from 2020 from the current model of 1-4 P scales to broader '7 aspects of engagement' model
- **Supporting Exams Officers.** Ofqual published the transcript from its recent webinar with Exams Officers which covered such details as Ofqual's approach to regulation, late entries and access arrangements and views on mobile phone policies

## Tweets(s) of the week

- "#AoCconf @HelenaKennedyQC states 'Once you've breathed in a sense of failure, it's very hard to get rid of it' - @AnneHaigSmith
- "Degree apprenticeships could be the jewel in the crown of technical education, @halfon4harlowMP suggests 50% of university students should be doing them" - @MaryCurnockCook
- "Great books enable us to see through a 'glass darkly'...they use language and invention to give us a glimpse of universal truths...And great curriculums give all pupils the chance to read and understand the stories, poems and plays that best do this" - @SarahHubbardHMI
- "Parents are wrestling with the messages the stories send their children – is it acceptable for the Prince to kiss Sleeping Beauty, given she's sleeping?" - @Monster\_Dome
- "My 2 kids, with every other kid in @GlasgowCC schools, are to be given iPads to bring home. But what then? They currently share 1 with another sibling and are only allowed access at weekends. Is it 'their' iPad? I regard this as the state interfering with family life" - @GordinaB

## Other stories of the week

- **Trust me, I'm a teacher.** Teachers came in third in this year's Ipsos Mori Veracity Index of the most trusted professions. The poll has been running for nearly forty years and some professions such as



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doctors and nurses have always polled highly while others such as estate agents and journalists have tended to poll poorly. Doctors and nurses have again topped the poll of the most trusted profession for 2018 with teachers coming in just behind them in third place and with politicians and journalists again faring badly. Two interesting trends this year are the drop in trust in TV news readers and priests but the rise in trust in bankers.

- **Let's hear it for the boys.** This week has seen the latest annual International Men's Day, November 19 to be precise; International Women's Day is of course earlier in the year on March 8. This year, as part of the former, an event was held, supported by the Chair of the Education Committee among others, to consider how to raise achievement and prospects among boys leading to the release of a 14-point action plan ranging from more positive role models to men's wellbeing.

## Quote(s) of the week

- "I want every business leader here to think hard about what opportunities your company can offer to a young person to join your team for up to three months" – the Prime Minister calls on business leaders to offer T level industry placements in her speech to the CBI Annual Conference
- "And what has been proposed so far won't work; the idea that anyone earning less than £30,000 can't contribute to our economy for instance" – the CBI's DG raises some concerns about proposed immigration and skills policies
- "The degree study options offered by many universities remain moribund" – the HE Minister announces government intention to allow for accelerated degrees
- "We do not advocate an outright ban. Instead, we propose that if unconditional offers are made to students before they receive their exam grades, then the student should not be compelled to accept them until after they have received all offers of a place" - university and school leaders call for changes to the system of unconditional offers
- "A one-off campaign is not enough on its own" – the Skills Minister praises the Love our Colleges campaign but argues that wider traction is needed if more funding is to be forthcoming
- "A good step" – OECD Director of Education Andreas Schleicher on T levels
- "These are students with unrealized potential" – Ofsted reports on the lot of Level 2 students
- "We are ramping it up" – the joint leader of the National Education Union (NEU) points to more strike action by teachers
- "Between the kitschiness of the cover message is a treasure trove of wonder" – the TES reviews Bobby Seagull's new book on the Magic of Numbers

## Number(s) of the week

- 11. How many 'active' workstreams the DfE has which could be affected by Brexit, according to a summary report by the NAO
- £73,000. The average overall costs of educating a child in England, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IfS)
- £473bn. How much the overall student loan portfolio is expected to have totalled by March 2049, according to figures in a new report from the Public Accounts Committee



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- \$398.15bn. How much the global E-learning market is reckoned to be worth by 2026, over double what it was last year, according to a report from Research and Markets organisation
- £5,500. The savings to be made in tuition loans by students taking a two as opposed to a three year degree course, according to figures quoted by the government
- 25.6%. How many 'free school meal' pupils aged 15 in 2012/13 went on to higher education by age 19 in 2016/17 compared to 43.3% of non-free school meal pupils, with the gap between the two hardly changing, according to new data from the DfE
- 45,314. The number of apprenticeship starts across the whole of the public sector for 2017/18, representing 1.4% of the workforce, according to new government figures
- 82% and 73%. How many college principals and leaders had worked in industry before becoming an FE leader, according to the latest staff survey from the DfE
- 24%. How many FE learners were self-funded either through loans or own funds over the last year, according to the latest learner and apprentice survey from the DfE
- 8. How many colleges have faced Formal Intervention over the past year, down from 20 in the previous year, according to the FE Commissioner's latest Annual Report
- 170,000. How many 16-18 yr olds take L2 courses compared to about 900,000 who take L3 courses, according to new research from Ofsted
- 4.2%. The proportion of entries for 2017/18 GCSEs that were late entries, an increase of nearly 1%, according to new figures from Ofqual
- 391,130. The number of approved access arrangements for the 2017/18 exams, down 0.5% on the previous year, according to new figures from ofqual
- 49%. How many young people surveyed reckon that their education has not prepared them for the world of work, according to a YouGov survey commissioned by the CBI
- 39%. How many 11-16 year olds have spent some of their own money on gambling over the last year, according to a new report from the Gambling Commission

## What to look out for next week

- HE Policy Institute Annual Lecture (Tuesday)
- House of Lords to discuss school funding (Thursday)