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Policy Eye



Highlights of week ending Friday 21 September 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.

Some important organisations, best known by their initials, feature prominently this week. They include: the IfS, IMF, NEF, MAC, HEPI, ONS, RSA, LKMco, Ofsted, AoC and NGA.

If it helps, the first three (the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the International Monetary Fund, and the New Economics Foundation) have been reporting on funding, the next three, (the Migration Advisory Committee, HE Policy Institute and the Office for National Statistics) have been looking at some important facts and figures, the next two (the RSA and the think tank LKMco) have launched special projects while the last three (Ofsted, Association of Colleges, and National Governance Association) have their own stories to report. They're all listed below but here's some headlines.

Of the financial reports this week, one in particular stands out for education and that is the IfS [report](#) on education spending in England. It is the first detailed audit of how the money is apportioned for different stages of education and is intended to be the first of a series of reports supported by the Nuffield Foundation; it is literally gold dust for the education world. The focus this time was very much on the college sector and the headline in the TES pretty much said it all: 'FE the big loser in education spending.' This won't have come as a surprise to many in FE but the fact that such a respected body has pitched in with the evidence at a time when colleges are gearing up for a week of action in October is significant.

On to the stats reports. One was from the [ONS](#) on what jobs young non-graduates do, largely routine jobs apparently although 12.5% are in graduate jobs; one was from the [HE Policy Institute](#) looking at targeted free tuition and the other was from the [Migration Advisory Committee](#). This set out the facts and figures on EU migration along with recommendations for government for the future. The headline message, which hasn't pleased everyone, was to scrap free movement from the EU after Brexit and shift to a system which favoured higher skilled workers. We now await a government White Paper.

Next those two projects announced this week, both school orientated. In an important move, ahead of the Timpson report due later this year, the RSA launched a new [project](#) looking into Pinball Kids, kids excluded from school. Elsewhere the think tank LKMco launched an 18 month [project](#) with Pearson looking at innovative ways in which schools are reducing workload associated with assessment.

Finally, a couple of pointers from the last group of bodies mentioned. First, for anyone wanting to understand the issues behind the current 'Love Our Colleges' campaign, the [four-point manifesto](#) says it all. And second, the [comment piece](#) by Ofsted's Chief Inspector on the issues of curriculum design and how to meet the needs of range of learners offers a thoughtful stimulus for many school leaders.



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Top headlines this week

- 'FE college finances face double whammy.' ([Monday](#))
- 'Two-thirds of secondaries can't find maths teachers.' ([Tuesday](#))
- 'Oxford spends '£108,000' to recruit each extra low-income student.' ([Wednesday](#))
- 'Record numbers of students through Clearing as universities scramble to fill places.' ([Thursday](#))
- 'Universities warned over potentially misleading claims.' ([Friday](#))

People/organisations in the news this week

General Policy

- [EEA migration in the UK](#). The Migration Advisory Committee followed up its report last week into international students by reporting on EU migration in the UK, highlighting many of the positives in terms of skills and education and recommending among other things managed migration, a lifting of the cap on skilled workers through Tier 2 but no change for the lower skilled apart perhaps from seasonal agricultural workers
- [Lib - Dems on education](#). Layla Moran, the Lib – Dem's education spokesperson issued a further rallying cry for the scrapping of SATs, league tables and Ofsted in her Conference speech, along with a wider look at independent and grammar schools and better support and investment for special needs and teachers
- [The life of Rayner](#). The Education Guardian interviewed Shadow Education Secretary Angela Rayner ahead of her major Conference speech next week in which she will outline further details about the Party's proposed National Education Service
- [Education spending in England 2017/18](#). The Institute for Fiscal studies published the first of what's intended to be an annual audit of education spending in England focusing in this instance on 16-18 and FE provision where it revealed significant budget cuts over the past decade
- [The IMF on the UK economy](#). The International Monetary Fund reported on its latest assessment of the UK economy suggesting UK growth of about 1.5% this year and next but raising a no-deal Brexit and poor levels of productivity as the major challenges
- [Weighing up the options](#). The New Economics Foundation considered the options facing the Chancellor ahead of next year's Spending Review, modelling 3 scenarios: basic, maintaining things and improving outcomes, suggesting for instance that schools would need a 2.5% p.a. increase just to maintain things
- [Measuring poverty](#). The Social Metrics Commission, an independent group of experts, outlined a new measure of poverty that took in both assets and living costs and which generated a more focused picture of poverty in the UK, showing for instance some 4.5m children currently living in poverty
- [More on jobs of the future](#). The World Economic Forum released its comprehensive report on jobs of the future peppered with references to new technology, robots and artificial intelligence, highlighting the importance of constant upskilling but suggesting a new net positive for a number of jobs
- [Solving the UK's productivity puzzle](#). The consultancy firm, McKinsey set out to examine the issue for a digital age and argued that three steps were needed for the UK: developing workforce skills, accelerating digital technologies and supporting investment and exports



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- [Regulating online platforms](#). Ofcom announced it would hold a conference early next year for UK and international regulators to consider issues around regulating online platforms and social media networks

HE

- [Welcome noises](#). The HE Minister Sam Gyimah welcomed universities and students to the start of a new academic year calling in particular on universities to ensure support was in place for student mental health and welfare
- [Latest UCAS figures](#). UCAS published an update on university acceptances through UCAS one month on from A' level results day, showing a record number of 18 yr olds in England accepted and an increase in EU and non EU applicants but an overall drop of 3% on 2017 figures
- [Movers and shakers](#). Wonkhe published its Power List for 2018, listing the top 50 movers and shakers in HE, with new bodies and 'experts' particularly prominent, including the Chair of the post -18 review in there at No 4
- [European Skills Permit](#). The Russell Group set out proposals for a new European Skills Permit enabling both eligible students and workers to study and work in the UK post Brexit for at least five years
- [Is means testing the answer?](#) The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) examined the case for targeted free tuition in a new report which looked at models in different countries, concluding that such a system could have potential in the UK in cases of particular disadvantage
- [Dreaming sighs](#). Alan Rusbridger, former editor in chief at The Guardian and current Principal of Lady Margaret Hall Oxford outlined some of the some current issues and debate around entry to Oxford in a fascinating article in Prospect magazine
- [Talking up universities](#). The Guardian announced it was setting up a new website to cover off news, updates and opinions on higher education
- [Because it's worth it?](#) The moneysavingexpert website reported on its survey among different age groups about the costs and value of going to university finding a similar level of 40%+ positive response from those aged under 25 and those aged over 65 who'd been to uni
- [In the small print](#). Which? reported that a number of universities were still flouting advertising standards in some of their claims with six in particular cited
- [Time to stand up](#). Chris Husbands, VC at Sheffield Hallam University, highlighted the crucial role universities play in both civic and economic terms and called for a more positive agenda to be set around the sector in a comment piece for the Education Guardian
- [A great mis-sell?](#) Guardian columnist Aditya Chakraborty challenged the role of universities as a vehicle for social mobility and questioned some of the costs involved in going to uni in a leading article in the Education Guardian

FE/Skills

- [Cut to the bone](#). The Institute for Fiscal Studies highlighted significant budget cuts over the last decade to both 16-18 and adult provision in its new report on education spending in England, amounting to an 8% fall in spending per 16-18 student and a 45% real terms fall in the total adult education and apprenticeship budget since 2010/11



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- [Love Our Colleges](#). The group campaigning for better funding, understanding and support for colleges and which includes the AoC, NUS, ASCL, TUC and others published a four-point manifesto incorporating a 5% increase in 16-19 funding for each of the next five years and a lifetime learning entitlement to fund training for adults yet to achieve a Level 3
- [What do non-graduates do?](#) The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported on the jobs and earnings of young non-graduates in the UK, finding 17.3% in 'elementary' jobs such as warehouse work, 16.9% in skilled trades, 14% in care and customer service roles, and 12.5% working in graduate jobs
- [Apprenticeship funding](#). The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) called for 16-18 yr old apprenticeships to be fully funded along with L2/3 for apprentices aged under 25 as part of a package of proposals following the latest announcement on delays in transition to the Apprenticeship Service
- [Auf wiedersehen Minister](#). Julia Belgutay, FE reporter for the TES, reported on the German training system as the Education Secretary headed off on a fact finding mission intended to guide developments here

Schools

- [Pinball Kids](#). The RSA launched a 12 month project into kids excluded from school, so-called Pinball Kids, with a roundtable that identified five core issues: funding; curriculum reforms; school; accountability; school system reform and behavioural policies
- [Making Waves](#). The think tank LKMco launched an 18 month project working with Pearson to look at the relationship between assessment and workload which will seek six of the most innovative approaches in schools and monitor them over a year to see what lessons might be learned
- [Curriculum by design](#). Amanda Spielman, Ofsted Chief Inspector, reported on phase 2 of the inspectorate's research that's helping prepare for a new inspection framework next year, looking this time at how schools go about putting together their curriculum
- [The life of an exams officer](#). A school Exams Officer outlined in a blog for Ofqual about the demands of the job which obviously reach peak pressure during the exam season but which nowadays tend to roll on throughout much of the rest of the year as well
- [What's worrying school governors and trustees?](#) The National Governance Association (NGA) along with the TES published its latest annual survey of what's worrying governors/trustees with perhaps unsurprisingly funding, staff recruitment, and support for children in need among the top concerns
- [Improving secondary science](#). The Education Endowment Foundation published a new report looking at ways of improving secondary science built around 'seven practical recommendations' including the structured use of modelling, practical work and feedback
- [Computer Science](#). Schools Week reported that the British Computer Science was reviewing computer science GCSE following concerns about the focus of the qualification and its take-up

Tweets(s) of the week

- "I'm in Germany this week to learn more about how they educate their young people to have the practical skills they need to support a highly productive economy" - [@DamianHinds](#)



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- “We need to have a national conversation about FE. Always seems to get left behind in funding decisions and policy debates” - [@lukesibieta](#)
- “Today’s 65 quid has so far bought me the following insights: - if your lesson is boring you are inviting bad behaviour; - if you talk too much you are inviting bad behaviour; - the most you can talk at children is their age plus 2 minutes”- [@Prunilla_McTat](#)
- “As the Swiss Ambassador once said to me ‘create a simple apprenticeship system with employers, colleges and trade unions. And then leave it alone for a hundred years... ..something you will never do in the UK’ -[@AndyWWestwood](#)
- “Today’s top governance tip, tip toeing when entering a school hall when you’re wearing noisy shoes is always a good idea. Echoooo !” - [@dogpaws23](#)
- “I asked a group of new students the other day what they thought a Pro Vice-Chancellor does....there was a little bit of looking at the floor...then...straight faced one of them says “drink lots of coffee? Kudos” - [@Ross_Renton](#)
- “The joy of working from home is that you get to answer the door every 45 minutes as the extent of your wife’s online shopping habit is unveiled” - [@mrdavidwhitley](#)

Other stories of the week

- [Being 18 in 18](#). Last week, the Office for National Statistics published the first of a series of articles looking at the post-millennial generation, those born at the start of this century and now reaching adulthood. The rise of digital technology since 2000 has perhaps been the biggest factor in their lives but overall, they drink less, smoke less and exercise more, hence the sobriquet Generation Sensible.
- [Top ten emerging technologies of the year](#). They’re fairly clinical in nature but these are the top ten ‘disruptive’ technologies likely to have the greatest impact on our lives in future and selected by a panel of experts for the World Economic Forum recently. They include: personalized medicine; sophisticated digital helpers; and lab-grown meat

Quote(s) of the week

- “Advancing a student’s education is not the only commitment you must make to them as they make the life-changing decision to study with you” – the HE Minister urges University Vice Chancellors in England to look out for the welfare of their students as the new term begins
- “I don’t see an out of work brickie at the moment and the sparkies are doing really well” – the Shadow Education Secretary extols the virtues of learning a skill
- “So I will bring to the Spring Conference detailed proposals for the Individual Learning Account, to finance training and retraining all through life” – Sir Vince Cable promises to look at ILAs as a way of financing adult training in his major Conference speech
- “In recent times the ‘Exam-atollahs’ have run riot through our schools” – the Lib-Dem’s education spokesperson, Layla Moran condemns the current exam system in her Conference speech
- “It was Blair who fed the university sector its first steroids by pledging that half of all young Britons would go into higher education” – Guardian columnist Aditya Chakraborty challenges the policy expectation of large numbers of young people going to uni



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- “The curriculum is not the timetable” – Ofsted Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman reports on Ofsted’s research into how schools construct their particular curriculum
- “Heads care about every child: what they cannot do is afford to provide pastoral services for all of them” – education commentator Laura McInerney gets to the bottom of pupil exclusions
- “Anyway, one to think about” – Ed Sheeran raises concerns about the decline in music in state schools

Number(s) of the week

- 1.1%. The UK GDP growth forecast for 2018 from the British Chambers of Commerce, downgraded from 1.3% previously
- 2.7%. The UK inflation rate for August, up 0.2% on the previous month and the highest for six months, according to the latest official figures
- 12.1%. How many people in the UK are living in poverty and have been for at least two of the last three years, according to a new report from the Social Metrics Commission
- 58m. How many new jobs may well be created over the next decade arising out of new technology according to a new report from the World Economic Forum
- 1%. How much more could be added to annual productivity growth in the UK over the next decade if there was speedier adoption of digitalization according to McKenzie and Co
- 426,730. How many UK applicants have now been accepted through UCAS for a place at university this year, down 3% on last year
- 71%. How many school governors surveyed said funding was the biggest challenge they faced, according to the latest survey by the National Governance Association and the TES
- £4,700, £6,200, £5,700, £28,000. The funding per primary, secondary, FE and HE learner respectively last year, just some of the important figures to be found in the Institute for Fiscal Studies’ report on education spending in England
- 26%. The number of people surveyed who think more should be spent on education, citing it as the second highest priority behind spending on health according to the latest British Social Attitudes Survey

What to look out for next week

- Labour Party Conference (Sunday Sept 23 – Wednesday Sept 26)