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Policy Tracker – Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in September 2018



Main talking points

'Back to school' month and with it an outpouring of reports and other activity. These have included growing concerns about a squeeze on creative subjects, an MPs report on Ofsted, the launch of the tender process for the first T levels, the build-up of a new campaign around FE, the release of key reports on EU migration and international students, and further discussion on access to HE, all topped off with the OECD's latest annual big picture analysis of how education is performing across member countries

Key headlines from the month

- KS2 SATs. DfE data shows gap growing between best and worst performing authorities
- Primary school accountability. DfE makes only a few changes ahead of expected reform
- School admissions. 2 reports reveal tactical approaches used by some parents
- School accountability. NAHT Commission calls for changes in new report
- Assessment. LKMco and Pearson launch 18 month project on impact on workloads
- SEND. NAHT survey points to funding crisis in special needs provision
- Arts subjects. Latest reports suggest being squeezed in many state schools
- RE. Independent Commission proposes new name and entitlement
- Computer science GCSE. British Computer Society reviewing
- National Reference Test 2019. Ofqual confirms the dates as between 25 Feb and 8 March 2019
- Inspections. MPs raise concerns about Ofsted being able to meet targets in a new report
- T levels. Government launches Wave 1 tender process
- T level panels. Government announces names for 9 new panels
- Apprenticeships. IfA launches statutory review of digital apprenticeship standards
- ESOL. Government invites bids for new integrated communities ESOL programme
- Colleges. Campaign group launches new 'Love Our Colleges' manifesto
- International students. Migration Advisory Committee recommends retaining migration target
- Visas and Permits. The Russell Group and Universities UK publish proposals
- Access and participation. Office for Students issues new set of proposals for consultation
- Uni entry. UCAS reports record numbers of 18 yr olds accepted but overall drop of 3%
- Post-18 review. Final report may be delayed

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

- [An upgraded post-18 education system](#). The Association of Colleges (AoC) publishes a set of proposals for 're-balancing' the system around a stronger technical route and reforms to HE finance
- **Keeping children safe in education**. The DfE amends and updates its statutory guidance for schools and colleges for young people under the age of 18
- **Key Stage 2 performance data 2018**. The DfE publishes data on performance by each local authority in this year's SATs showing an increase in the gap between the best and worst performing
- **Training the leaders of tomorrow**. The Collab Group of colleges reports on its discussions with Barclays about the importance of developing skills and talents as much as specific qualifications
- **T level industry placements**. The DfE publishes its recent commissioned research into industry placement finding most employers willing to help T level students but looking for support as well
- **New Student Visas**. Universities UK calls on the government to create a new visa to allow international students to work in the UK for up to two years after graduation
- **Primary school accountability in 2018**. The DfE makes a few changes for 2018 such as re-introducing rolling three-year averages, ahead of further announcements later this year
- **Implementation of Technical Qualifications**. Ofqual reports on its consultation on regulation and issues a further consultation on some of the more detailed aspects under Conditions and Guidance
- **Code of Good Governance for independent training providers**. AELP and FETL publish the final version of their code of good governance based around seven good practice themes
- **NQTs Annual Survey**. The DfE publishes the results from its latest commissioned survey of newly qualified teachers suggesting most were happy with their training and preparation
- **A plan for the new economy**. The IPPR think tank publishes the final report from its Commission on economic justice, emerging with a 10-point plan covering skills, productivity and investment-led growth
- **The Arts in Schools**. The Cultural Learning Alliance highlights the importance of creative and arts subjects in the school curriculum for both current and future generations
- **Empty Promises**. The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) reports on concerns about the lack of funding and support for provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities
- **Ofqual People Strategy**. Ofqual explains how it will recruit and support the best people from all walks of life to help deliver a world-class qualification system
- **Score Card 2018**. The Fair Education Alliance issues its latest annual score card highlighting a lack of progress in closing attainment gaps and calling for whole child education and world-class teachers
- **Integrated Communities English Language Programme**. The government invites bids for its new £6m ESOL programme, due to start next April and targeting the most isolated learners
- **Student Unions in the UK**. The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) traces the development of student unions highlighting potential new roles and responsibilities evolving from the new Age of the Student
- **Ofsted's inspection of schools**. The Public Accounts Committee challenges current inspection arrangements in the light of Ofsted's reduced budget

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- **Regulating access and participation in English higher education.** The Office for Students calls for a more ambitious approach in new consultation with provider targets and regular reporting
- **Estimating returns to p/t undergraduate degrees.** The Open University reports on the returns accruing from completing a p/t degree in your mid-30's
- **Profiling Female Engineering Apprentices.** The Institute of Mechanical Engineers argues that more needs to be done to attract females particularly from the age of 15 who may delay career choices
- **A national plan for RE.** The Commission on Religious Education issues its final report calling for the subject to be renamed Religion and Worldviews and built around a broader core entitlement
- **HE Policy Handbook 2018/19.** GuildHE publishes the latest edition of its handbook intended to brief Student Union officers about the latest policy changes in the world of HE
- **Education at a Glance 2018.** The OECD publishes its annual compendium of performance across member countries with the UK having among other things some of the youngest teachers
- **Arts in Schools.** The groups campaigning to protect arts subjects particularly in state schools, publish a new advocacy toolkit to support campaigners championing such subjects
- **Impact of international students in the UK.** The Migration Advisory Committee proposes some changes to Tier 4 arrangements but disappoints many by recommending sticking with current targets
- **Essential digital skills.** The government updates its framework of digital skills for adult learners
- **National Assessment arrangements.** The Education Secretary outlines the arrangements for the transfer of responsibilities to Capita for the 2020 to 2024 test period
- **Prevent monitoring in HE in England.** The Office for Students (OfS) publishes the latest version of the monitoring framework around the Prevent duty for higher ed providers in England
- **Staying Ahead.** The HE Commission adds its voice to growing concerns about government policy towards international students and lists 12 proposals including changes to Tier 4
- **Parent Power 2018.** The Sutton Trust revisits its report of five years ago suggesting that the system still enables more advantaged parents to get their first choice and calls for a number of changes
- **Secondary choice in England.** The Education Policy Institute examines how parents choose their secondary school in England and finds that while many get their first choice, some groups miss out
- **Unlocking social mobility.** The 5% Club, the employers group helping young people with training opportunities, calls for fairer funding, levy changes and stronger contacts with schools and colleges
- **Improving school accountability.** The NAHT Commission publishes its proposals calling among other things for a new role for Ofsted, more use of comparative data and changes to some measures
- **Wider picture on school accountability.** The NFER reports on its evidence research into how other education systems apply school accountability and the implications that emerge
- **Guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions.** The DfE publishes its guidance for 2018 following the announcement of the latest pay award in July
- **HE Power List 2018.** Wonkhe launches its latest annual listing of the 50 movers and shakers in the world of HE with new players and agencies particularly prominent
- **Education spending in England in 2017/18.** The Institute for Fiscal Studies publishes the first of its annual audits highlighting in particular significant cuts to 16-18 and FE provision

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- **What work do young non-graduates do?** The Office for National Statistics (ONS) finds many in basic jobs, others in skilled trades, some in customer service roles and 12.5% in graduate jobs
- **School governance in 2018.** The National Governance Association along with the TES publish the results from their latest survey showing funding and teacher recruitment among the top concerns
- **Curriculum and the new inspection framework.** Amanda Spielman, Ofsted Chief Inspector, reports on Ofsted's research into how schools go about designing their curriculum
- **EEA Migration in the UK.** The Migration Advisory Committee publishes its final report on EU migration calling for managed migration with an emphasis on the higher skilled
- **Love our Colleges.** The groups campaigning for better support and funding for colleges launches a four-point manifesto ahead of a week of action planned for mid - October
- **Solving the UK's productivity puzzle in a digital age.** The consultancy firm McKinsey calls for increased digital skills, quicker digital adoption and more investment to help improve productivity
- **Targeted tuition fees.** The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) examines the case for targeted free tuition in cases of particular disadvantage suggesting it could have some benefits in the UK
- **Improving secondary science.** The Education Endowment Foundation offers seven practical-based guidelines including structured modelling and feedback
- **Patterns and trends in UK HE 2018.** Universities UK publishes its latest annual report on how the HE sector is shaping up with demand from UK 18 yr olds still high but other trends emerging
- **Mental wellbeing, reading and writing.** The National Literacy Trust reports that primary age children who enjoy reading and writing have better levels of mental wellbeing than those who don't
- **Digital experience survey.** JISC publishes the results of its latest survey into how students in UK colleges and universities use and apply technology in their learning
- **Perceptions of vocational and technical qualifications.** Ofqual publishes the results of its latest commissioned survey into how employers and others view a range of vocational qualifications

Speeches of the month

- The Home Secretary's **3 September 'Keeping our Children Safe' speech** outlines a range of measures to tackle child sexual exploitation online
- The Universities Minister **5 September Universities UK speech** highlights the key role the higher ed sector may need to play as the country develops beyond Brexit
- Nick Gibb's **8 September ResearchED Conference speech** looks at the importance of evidence-based research to the current debate on knowledge v skills
- Layla Moran's **15 September Lib-Dem Conference speech** attacks the current testing and accountability regime in schools and calls for better support for teachers
- John McDonnell's **24 September Conference speech** sets out Labour Party plans to allow workers places on company boards and to consult on a more democratic model of public services
- Angela Rayner's **24 September Conference speech** outlines Labour Party plans to end the academy and free school programme, create a teacher supply service and ensure lifelong learning

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- Jeremy Corbyn's **26 September Conference speech** includes a large chunk on improving public services with improved childcare support and services as part of this

Quotes of the month

- "I'm not just asking for change, I'm demanding it" – the Home Secretary challenges online companies to tackle online child abuse
- "I'm sorry but this is just plain wrong" – the Education Secretary responds to Labour Party proposals to end the academies and free schools programme
- "What is very significant is that today is the start of term for the first cohort who will be able to take T levels in 2020" – the Skills Minister launches the procurement process for T levels at the start of the month
- "On exams, there has always been exam pressure. It is, I think, an inevitable thing that if you are going to have exams of what you've learned at school. That is going to be a period of greater stress for young people than other times" – the Education Secretary responds to GCSE mental health concerns
- "I don't want a rigid system that says you're not going to be a grade A student so we need to off-roll you" - the Shadow Education Secretary promises to tackle pupil off-rolling in schools
- "We urgently need a strong political figure at senior ministerial level to oversee the skills agenda and work across the depts of education, business and employment as well as the CBI and chambers of commerce to ensure key stakeholders work together" – Sir Michael Wilshaw on what should be in Labour's National Education Service
- "If there is a problem with students in the target, it is the target itself rather than the inclusion of students in that target" – the Migration Advisory Committee explains why it is not recommending taking international students out of the net migration target
- "You cannot disenfranchise 450,000 teachers from talking about education" – ASCL general secretary Geoff Barton reacts to new DfE guidance on teacher roles and responsibilities
- "Like getting blood out of a stone" – recent survey research showing what happens when parents ask their children what they get up to at school

Word or phrase of the month

- 'Cicero curriculum.' A curriculum that provides for culture, creativity and rhetoric, as practiced by some schools and advocated strongly by those backing the campaign for more creative subjects in schools

Steve Besley

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