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Policy Tracker – Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in April 2019



Main talking points

It's been a busy month for teacher union conferences where exam pressures, teacher workloads, funding and health issues have been among the topics raised and where Jeremy Corbyn's call to scrap the current system of SATs attracted considerable media attention. The month has also seen consultation close on Ofsted's proposed new inspection framework with a huge response reported and Ofqual issue its latest survey of perceptions of qualifications. Special needs funding, pupil off rolling, college oversight and the financial health of universities have each been the subject of important reports during the month while government headlines have included the launching of a new widespread Edtech strategy, a major summit on gang crime, a new consultation on internet safety, the listing of the first 12 Institutes of Technology and moves to ensure EU teachers will be able to have their qualifications recognised to work in the UK

Key headlines from the month

- Multiplication tables check. DfE issues guidance for this summer's pilot
- Off register. The government consults on a new system of registration for home schooling
- Perceptions of qualifications. Ofqual publishes its latest survey report
- Qualifications taken abroad. Ofqual issues new reporting rules
- Exam papers. Pearson launches new microchip security arrangements
- EdTech. The government launches a new encompassing strategy
- High needs funding. The Education Policy Institute sets out the issues
- Ofsted. Huge response reported as consultation closes on its new inspection framework
- Teaching Vacancies. DfE launches new free website
- Teachers. Government confirms procedure for EU teachers to have their qualifications recognised
- Pension increases. Government commits to help state schools and colleges for next year
- Functional Skills. Pearson and AQA specs now approved
- Digital Skills. New skills unveiled for use from 2020
- Institutes of Technology. The government confirms the first 12
- College oversight. DfE publishes new, strengthened policy
- Unconditional offers. Education Secretary calls for action to end unacceptable practices
- New courses app. Minister launches latest course information tool for undergrads
- HE financial health. The Office for Students confirms it as 'reasonable' but not uniform

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

- **College Oversight: Support and Intervention.** The DfE updates its oversight policy for colleges particularly around financial health with new triggers for prevention and intervention
- **More Than A Job's Worth.** LKMco and Founders4Schools report on how to build careers education and support from early years provision through to higher education
- **Consultation on a new duty to helping tackle serious violence.** The Home Office launches consultation on making teachers and others accountable for reporting children at risk
- **Multiplication Tables admin guidance.** The DfE issues guidance as some schools prepare to pilot the multiplication tables check with their Year 4s this summer ahead of rollout next year
- **A charter for real jobs and apprenticeships.** The University and College Union (UCU) publishes a new Charter for apprenticeships with an emphasis on quality jobs for young people
- **Children not in school.** The government consults on the creation of a legally required register for children not being educated in school with councils required to offer help when needed as well
- **Realising the potential of technology in education.** The government launches a new EdTech strategy intended to help tackle ten listed challenges including admin, assessment and CPD
- **Financial sustainability of HE providers in England.** The Office for Students (OfS) reports on the financial health of HE providers in England pointing to a 'reasonable' but cautious diagnosis
- **Post-16 education and apprenticeship levy funding.** The Campaign for Learning and NCFE publish a collection of essays on issues around devolved funding for post-16 provision
- **High Needs Funding.** The Education Policy Institute outlines many of the key issues around high needs funding which faces increasing pressure from growing demand and expectations
- **Exploring leadership in FE colleges.** The Social Market Foundation reports on the changing nature and demands of college leadership with a second report to follow on how leaders can be supported
- **Perceptions A', AS and GCSE qualifications in England.** Ofqual publishes the results of its latest annual survey showing continued broad confidence in the quals, their marking and grading
- **Requires Improvement.** The (new) think tank EDSK calls for Ofsted to scrap inspection grades and spend more time looking into pupil behaviour and the quality of the curriculum
- **Corporate Plan 2019-2022.** Ofqual publishes its latest Corporate Plan highlighting work on moderation, malpractice, student anxiety and technical provision among others set for 2019/20
- **Apprenticeship technical funding guide 2019/20.** The Education and Skills Funding Agency publishes the latest version of its apprenticeship funding guide with recent changes incorporated
- **Online Harms White Paper.** The UK government issues a White Paper and consultation on internet safety proposing a new duty of care on online companies overseen by an independent regulator
- **Health and wellbeing at work.** The CIPD along with Simplyhealth publish their latest annual report on health and wellbeing at work noting rates of absence down but reported stress levels up
- **Early access to mental health support.** The Children's Commissioner for England reports on how widely funding and support for young people's 'initial' mental health issues varies by region
- **Recognition of professional qualifications.** The government publishes new guidance to ensure teachers coming from Europe will be able to have their qualifications recognised to work in the UK

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- **Funding increases to teachers' pensions employer contributions.** The DfE confirms it'll cover 2019/20 employer costs for state schools and FE but not for independent schools and universities
- **Fair Access to Schools?** The Education Policy Institute reports on data showing that appeals and waiting system tends to favour families from more affluent areas with implications for social mobility
- **Appeals for GCSE, GCE summer 2018 series.** Ofqual publishes data on appeals made following last summer's exams showing an increase in the number submitted but fewer grades challenged
- **T levels. Make or break for Manufacturers?** The manufacturers' organisation Make UK reports that many of its members are not up to speed on T levels and calls for greater publicity
- **Skills shortages in the UK economy.** The Edge Foundation publishes its latest bulletin covering data and recent skills reports, highlighting concerns about a lack of skills provision in schools
- **Annual Teacher Survey.** The Sutton Trust publishes its latest survey carried out by the NFER showing how many schools in England are having to cut back to cope with budget cuts
- **Unexplained pupil exits from schools.** The Education Policy Institute investigates this growing problem in a new report sponsored by the National Education Union
- **Improving adult basic digital skills.** The government confirms its new digital skills entitlement for adults from 2020 with digital Functional Skills to follow from 2021
- **Reviews of marking, moderation and appeals.** Ofqual reports on its recent consultation confirming a number of changes notably around the consistency of centre-marked assessments
- **Establishing the Employment Gap.** The social charity Impetus and partners highlight evidence of an employment gap between many disadvantaged young people and their peers seeking jobs
- **Tackling intergenerational unfairness.** The House of Lords Committee looking into intergenerational issues calls for more funding for FE and lifelong learning among recommendations

Speeches of the month

- Damian Hinds' **3 April Schools and Academies Show speech** extols the benefits of Trusts and highlights how the newly launched EdTech strategy in particular will be able to help them
- Jeremy Corbyn's **16 April NEU Conference speech** promises that a future Labour government will scrap the current system of SATs and consult on a different system for assessing children
- Sally Collier's **24 April Apprenticeships Conference speech**, spells out how Ofqual is helping to ensure robust quality assurance operates when it comes to end-point assessments

Quotes of the month

- "I was big on computers as a kid" – the Education Secretary reveals he was a part-time geek when younger
- "In our view, this aggregate growth ambition is likely to be unachievable over the forecast period" – the Office for Students urges universities to be cautious about forecasting massive increases in student numbers

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- “The nice thing about the present system is that it is well defined, and we can see where the money is going” – the Skills Minister on the apprenticeship levy system
- “The language and methods of the market place have invaded our schools and universities and encroached on young people’s education” – Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn calls for a broader and more visionary model of education as he pledges to scrap SATs
- “It used to be very easy to make the promise to your kids that they would be better off than us, but this has completely changed” – the former president of ETH Zurich on educating for the future
- “Good quality broadband will connect your school reliably and quickly to the outside world” – the DfE offers the benefits of its expertise as it launches its EdTech strategy
- “A very modern” qualification’- Nick Gibb’s verdict on the EBacc when questioned in the Education Committee

Word or phrase of the month

- The Hamster curriculum. How to create a balanced curriculum apparently given it includes: Humanities, arts, maths, science, technology, English and RE

Steve Besley

Head of Policy @SteveBesley

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