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## Policy Eye



### Highlights of week ending Friday 1 February 2019

(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 reports out this week. They include a new [strategy](#) for teacher recruitment and retention from the DfE, the first [report](#) from the newly constituted Social Mobility Commission and on adult skills, a new [report](#) from the CBI on sorting out apprenticeships, a [report](#) on future engineering skills from the Royal Academy of Engineering, another [report](#) on Degree Apprenticeships, the final set of [reports](#) from UCAS on 2018 uni entry and the latest [report](#) in the DfE's School Snapshot series. And that's just a selection.

In other news this week the House of Lords discussed and agreed new regulations for [accelerated degrees](#), the Science and Technology Committee [questioned](#) the newish HE Minister about his priorities, the Education Committee [examined](#) post-16 SEND and the government [issued its advice](#) on teachers' pay to the Pay Review Body. In addition, the DfE launched its application process for [T level capital funds](#) from the pot announced by the Chancellor in his Budget last autumn and issued [guidance](#) on the new insolvency regime for colleges, which came into effect at the end of January.

Elsewhere, the Institute for Apprenticeships formally [added](#) T levels to its responsibilities, Ofqual confirmed some [changes](#) to assessment arrangements to GCSE/GCE music and drama, the Children's Commissioner wrote an [open letter](#) to social media companies calling on them to tackle harmful online content, and Clark's shoe shops [reported](#) that its assistants were to be trained to help children hold conversations with them as they did a shoe fitting to help support language skills. Education from head to toe this week.

Here's a few pointers from the first two of those reports.

The new teacher recruitment and retention strategy first, launched at the start of this week, and described in a Guardian editorial as 'containing much that is sensible and desperately needed.' The Education Secretary highlighted teacher R and R as one of his top priorities early on in his tenure with added urgency coming from the rise in pupil numbers now hitting secondary schools and likely to run through to 2025. The most eye catching proposal in the strategy is the creation of an Early Career Framework, designed to stem the loss of teachers in the early stages of their career and to offer such teachers more in the way of support and reduced teaching time at such a crucial time. It comes with the promise of £130m new money to oil the wheels and in the words of ASCL's Geoff Barton 'has the potential to be a game-changer.'

Second, the first report from the new re-convened Social Mobility Commission which has promised to dig into education and skill issues in its initial work. This one covered adult skills and exposed the difference between the virtuous circle where high-skilled employers get plenty of training opportunities and the vicious cycle in which the low-skilled get very few. It's not a new problem but if they can crack that...



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## Top headlines this week

- 'Teachers to be offered cash to stay in school.' ([Monday](#))
- 'Ring-fence training funds for older men.' ([Tuesday](#))
- 'SATs markers told to ease up on backwards commas.' ([Wednesday](#))
- '20 universities account for bulk of rise in unconditional offers.' ([Thursday](#))
- 'Exam cheating Commission wants to future proof the system.' ([Friday](#))

## People/organisations in the news this week

### General Policy

- [In whom we trust](#). The global communications firm Edelman published the results from its latest Trust Barometer highlighting growing 'trust inequality' between the more trusting informed public and more skeptical mass population with people increasingly looking to their bosses to take a 'value' lead on a wide range of societal issues
- [Cities Outlook 2019](#). The Centre for Cities think tank published a new report looking at what sort of impact a decade of austerity had had on cities' spending power concluding that some, particularly in the North, had seen 20% cuts and calling for cities to be given greater freedom over spending with longer-term budgets
- [Government Committee on social media](#). The Commons Science and Technology Committee published a report into the impact of social media on young people calling for the government to introduce a statutory code of practice, for Ofcom to be given a monitoring role and for mandatory PSHE in schools to cover the good and bad effects of social media

### HE

- [End of Cycle data](#). UCAS published its final set of data on 2018 university admissions showing that while there was an improvement in widening participation generally in 2018, the disadvantage gap for entry to high tariff universities increased and the use of unconditional offers also grew
- [Uncomfortable](#). The Times reported on the latest report from UCAS on university admissions and in particular the use of unconditional offers, suggesting that the report made for uncomfortable reading for universities
- [Post-Brexit research](#). The Universities Minister explained in answers to the Commons Science and Technology Committee that it may be later this year before it's clear whether the UK will be able to continue as a participant in EU research programmes and that alternative sources of domestic funding may be needed if UKHE missed out
- [Erasmus arrangements](#). Universities UK called on the government to support the future funding of the Erasmus scheme which enables students to study abroad and which could be at risk in the event of a no-deal
- [Accelerated degrees](#). The House of Lords debated accelerated degrees and added its support to the legislation passed by the Commons last week that would see such degrees available from this September



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- [Where next for admissions?](#) Chris Ramsay, head of Whitgift School, reflected in a new blog on the HE Policy Institute website, the latest interest in a post-qualification application system, raising a number of fundamental questions particularly around timescales but acknowledging that debate needs to continue
- [Nottingham scraps unconditional offers.](#) The University of Nottingham announced that it would no longer use conditional offers from this September and would continue to make the case for a post-qualification application system
- [REF 2021.](#) The UK HE lead bodies released guidance and procedures for institutions to submit applications under the 2021 Research Excellence Framework process for which proposals need to be in by late November 2020
- [How to serve up data to HE policy makers.](#) The Times Higher reported on Nick Hillman's recent thoughts on the best way to present data to policy makers listing eight tips including the importance of killer facts and acknowledging that data can't always illustrate everything
- [Degree apprenticeship futures.](#) Universities UK called on the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) not to lower the funding band and take out the degree element of Digital and Technology Professional Degree Apprenticeships as it announced a new project to map out the way ahead for degree apprenticeships

## FE/Skills

- [To those that have.](#) The Social Mobility Commission published a new report on Adult Skills indicating that those in the top jobs with the highest qualifications tend to get the most training while the more disadvantaged, typically older men in manual jobs, receive the least training, calling as a result for more funding and opportunities to help redress the balance
- [Getting Apprenticeships Right.](#) The CBI published the first of what's intended to be a series of reports this year on the Levy, calling in particular for greater clarity on how T levels fit into the skills system and for the Institute for Apprenticeships to be given a strengthened role in leading skill development in England
- [Latest apprenticeship stats.](#) The DfE published the latest set of stats for apprenticeships covering the first quarter of this academic year showing a 13% increase on starts as compared to last year although down on the two years previous to that but with over 50% on the new standards
- [Degree Apprenticeships. Up to Standard?](#) The HE Commission published its report into Degree Apprenticeships concluding that while the concept was valuable, some of the standards adopted were inappropriate, some areas and businesses were missing out and issues remained with the levy
- [T level capital funds.](#) The DfE invited bids from eligible providers for additional capital funds, announced in last year's Budget, to provide for specialist and other high-quality equipment to help deliver T levels from 2020
- [Taking on T levels.](#) The Institute for Apprenticeships confirmed that it was formally ready to take on the role of technical education as well as apprenticeships from this week with one of its first duties being to confirm which Awarding Organisation would lead on which of the first T levels
- [Insolvency guidance.](#) The DfE published guidance for college bodies on prudent financial management and reducing insolvency risks ahead of new insolvency legislation which came into force at the end of the month
- [AEB devolution.](#) The Collab Group set out its thoughts on how best to support the eight priority areas identified in the London Skills Plan as objectives under the new devolved adult education budget



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- [Engineering Skills for the Future](#). The Royal Academy of Engineering published a new report on engineering, reviewing what progress had been made since its landmark Perkins Report in 2013 and citing teacher shortages, limited post-16 pathways and a restrictive apprenticeship levy as key barriers to increasing the number of engineers needed
- [Driving Engineering policy](#). The Royal Academy of Engineering hosted an inaugural reception for its newly formed National Engineering Policy Centre, set up to give engineering a stronger and more united voice in public policy making
- [National Retraining Scheme](#). Fiona Aldridge, Director of Policy at the Learning and work Institute, provided a useful update on the National Retraining Scheme, announced a couple of years ago and targeted at adults in work facing risks from technological change, but still to take off

## Schools

- [Teacher recruitment and retention strategy](#). The Education Secretary launched the Dept's new strategy, endorsed by a number of leading organisations and listing a number of proposals under four headings, all intended to help early career teachers, improve workloads and encourage teacher retention
- [Exploring flexible working practice in schools](#). The DfE reported on its literature survey into flexible working practices in schools much of which appears to be part-time and dependent on the attitude of senior leadership teams and where experiences appear mixed
- [Early Career Framework](#). The Education Endowment Foundation reported on the development and initial stages of the Early Career Framework ahead of the national roll-out proposed in the teacher recruitment and retention strategy
- [Consultation on school improvement](#). The DfE launched consultation on its proposals, included as part of the new teacher recruitment and retention strategy, to create a simpler approach for identifying which schools needed help and support that would see the coasting definition and floor standard scrapped and Ofsted's 'Requires improvement' metric used as a single benchmark
- [Disadvantage gap widens](#). The Education Policy Institute conducted further analysis of the latest performance tables looking particularly at attainment gaps and pointing to these growing in many areas
- [Curriculum Fund leads](#). The DfE announced which schools had been successful in leading the pilots for the DfE's new curriculum support programmes
- [New Free School wave](#). The DfE announced the criteria for the next wave of Free Schools with an emphasis, largely as before, on disadvantaged areas and areas where more good school places are needed
- [School snapshot survey](#). The DfE published the results from its latest snapshot survey conducted last summer among a selection of schools and just published with some interesting perspectives on among other things the EBacc (struggling to get teachers,) pupil behaviour (generally good) and headship (not many wanting to become one)
- [Latest pay award](#). The Education Secretary issued its advice to the body looking at school teachers pay this year outlining the current financial context and suggesting a pay increase limited to 2%
- [Pay and rations](#). Four teacher professional associations published a joint letter to the School Teachers Review Body setting out their priorities and calling for a funded 5% across the board pay increase from Sept 2019



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- [More reactions to the Ofsted proposals](#). The Key organisation published the results of its initial poll of teachers about the latest Ofsted inspection proposals finding strong support for the two main proposals for a new 'quality of curriculum' measure and for splitting learner behaviour from personal development but less support for inspectors to be on site the day before to prepare for an inspection
- [Revisions to GCSE/GCE music and dance](#). Ofqual reported on its recent consultation to changes to performance rules in music and dance exams confirming some revised requirements and increased flexibilities for this summer
- [What's changed in the classroom?](#) The OECD published another hefty report looking this time at how things had changed in terms of classroom learning over the last decade, where technology has been an obvious driver but where in England at least formal learning in subjects like maths had also become prominent

## Tweets(s) of the week

- "India has signed up to the OECD's Pisa tests. Adding a big chunk of the world's population. India had joined before, did badly, and had opted out the last couple. But now going to take part in future rounds" - [@seanjcoughlan](#)
- "RG Chief Exec Dr Tim Bradshaw says 'Greater student choice is always good...but I wouldn't want disadvantaged students to rule out a three-year course because they didn't believe they could afford it' as accelerated degrees are approved by House of Lords" - [@RussellGroup](#)
- "Degree apprenticeships: disadvantaged students have to travel 12 times further than those in affluent area" - [@FEontap](#)
- "Have you noticed how many teacher conferences are now at the weekend? Some of them even have sessions about workload and work-life balance. With such good speakers to hear, of course we are going to them, but the scheduling irony seems lost on our profession at the moment" - [@Morsecat](#)
- "Clarks shoe shop will train children to speak well" - [@schoolsontap](#)

## Other stories of the week

- [Technology trends for 2019](#). Here's another of those lists of technology predictions for the year, this time from Deloitte and only recently picked up. It highlights four major trends: smart speakers to be the fastest growing connected device of the year; radio to retain its hold as one of the most popular mediums; 3D printing to grow but remain niche; and 5G to enter the mainstream
- [Desperate for a coffee](#). According to research, you should stick to four cups a day and shouldn't down one seven hours before you got to bed as it could disrupt a good night's sleep.

## Quote(s) of the week

- "I am determined that those who are called to this noble profession stay in it" – the Education Secretary launches a new strategy aimed at encouraging teacher recruitment and retention
- "The passing of this legislation is one of the great modern-day milestones for students and breaks the mould of a one-size-fits-all system for people wanting to study in higher education" – the Universities Minister welcomes the onset of accelerated degrees



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- “We fully fund adults to take English and Maths to level 2. From 2020, we will also be funding them for basic digital skills. Those are the vital skills that people need to get a job and get on in life” – the Chief Secretary to the Treasury is challenged in Parliament over adult skills funding
- “We are well-resourced to deliver our additional responsibilities” – Sir Gerry Berragan, chief exec of the Institute for Apprenticeships confirms the Institute is ready to pick up responsibility for T levels as well
- “A tangled mess” – the Chair of the Education Committee on the post-16 SEND system
- “We can legislate if we need to” – Health Secretary Matt Hancock calls on social media companies to do more to remove harmful content from its sites
- “Disgraceful” – the National Association of Head Teachers reacts to the latest pay proposals for teachers from the government
- “No school should have to spend a single penny on consultants to prepare for it” – Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman uses her latest Conference speech to urge schools not to look for expensive external solutions in preparation for the new inspection framework

## Number(s) of the week

- 30%. How many people in managerial and professional jobs had participated in training in the last few months compared to 18% from manual occupations, according to figures from the Social Mobility Commission
- 166,400. The number of apprenticeships starts between August and November 2018, up 13% on the previous year according to latest figures from the DfE
- 8. How many councils have overspent their special needs budget by over £300m this financial year according to a report from the BBC
- 2%. How much the government has suggested as pay increase for teachers this year according to the latest advice issued to the Pay Review Body
- 15%. How many more pupils there will be in secondary school by 2025 compared to last year, according to the DfE’s new recruitment and retention strategy
- 28% How many female teachers work part-time compared to an average of 40% of females in the UK workforce generally, according to the DfE’s recruitment and retention strategy
- 69%. How many respondents said they were not looking to become a head teacher, according to the latest snapshot survey of schools from the DfE
- 26.4%. The number of disadvantaged students entered for the EBacc this year according to a response to by the School Standards Minister to a question in Parliament
- 2 hours 11 minutes. How much time on average UK children aged 5-15 spend online each day as compared to 1 hour 52 minutes in front of a TV, according to the latest survey by Ofcom

## What to look out for next week

- Children’s Mental Health Week
- Education Questions to MPs (Monday)



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- Education Committee witness session with the Ofsted Chief Inspector (Tuesday)
- Safer Internet Day (Tuesday)
- ESFA webinar on T level funding (Tuesday)
- UCAS update on student 2019 applications (Thursday)