



Pearson

Policy Watch

Your guide to what's happening in the world of education



The week in a nutshell

The Government's plans for education catch-up, following the COVID pandemic continued to dominate. Last week **Sir Kevan Collins**, the Government's education recovery commissioner resigned after the package announced by Ministers "fell far short of what is needed". This week, **Gavin Williamson** gave a statement to MPs on the latest phase of support. Labour have made this a key issue with **Sir Keir Starmer** leading with it at Prime Minister's Questions, followed by an Opposition Day debate on the same subject (led by **Kate Green**) later in the day.

The **Secretary of State** ended the week announcing support for degree alternatives in order boost adult skills and job prospects. This includes a new £18m Growth Fund to help develop Higher Technical Education.

A new report by **Ofsted** has concluded that sexual harassment has become "normalised" for young people in school, online and in other unsupervised spaces, with girls suffering disproportionately. To inform the review, **Ofsted** visited 32 unnamed schools and colleges and spoke to more than 900 young people. 75% of girls questioned reported that pressure to provide sexual images of themselves happens "a lot or sometimes" at school.

As well as including all previous editions of Policy Watch, our **Policy Hub** includes our latest **policy blogs**.

Top stories

A new report by Ofsted has concluded that sexual harassment has become "normalised" for young people in school, online and in other unsupervised spaces with girls suffering disproportionately.

- It also highlights that teachers had "consistently underestimated" the scale of the problem and also found that inspections by Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate were "sometimes not robust enough".
- The report offers a series of recommendations for school and college leaders which included a "carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum", "high quality training for RSHE teachers" and "routine record-keeping to identify patterns to improve early intervention."

Gavin Williamson has announced a package of support aimed at boosting Higher Technical Education.

- It include a new £18 million Growth Fund to support further and higher education providers to expand high-quality Higher Technical Education. The fund will help providers to invest in equipment and develop the business links they need to offer training that will meet growing employer demands for skills in sectors including Digital, Construction, Health and Science.
- Up to £10 million for Institutes of Technology to develop and deliver higher technical short and modular courses in STEM disciplines like engineering, manufacturing, construction and digital.
- £2 million to support the development and delivery of high-quality modular training focused on upskilling employees to help address future skills gaps in high value manufacturing.

Ofsted has published its fourth [research review](#), which focuses on languages. It found that there had been a “worrying fall” in the number of pupils studying languages at GCSE and A Level.

- The review stated insecurity around Brexit and the impact that would have on attracting teaching talent and a lack of continuing professional development could pose challenges for schools when delivering a high-quality language curriculum. It recommends a “well-considered transition process” between primary and secondary school.

A new study by UCL and LSE [found](#) pupils whose parents had degrees were more likely to benefit from the change replaced grades determined by an algorithm to teacher assessed grades.

- The results from the analysis show that last year, pupils from graduate households were 15% more likely to obtain a better grade from their teachers than from the process of using Ofqual’s algorithm.
- The survey showed that there was no difference in assessed grades between pupils on free school meals however, teachers may “exhibit an unconscious positive bias towards pupils from backgrounds that tend to be associated with higher educational achievement.”

Careers & Enterprise Company chair Oli de Botton [committed](#) to making sure more students know all the options available to them beyond A-Levels, as lack of Baker Clause compliance continues.

- de Botton said they want to ensure that all students know all their options as this is central to the government’s levelling up agenda. Also noted was the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill which the DfE stated would enforce “tougher formal action against non-compliance” with the Baker clause.
- In response to de Botton’s comments, a DfE spokesperson stated that a consultation on proposals to “strengthen” the clause will be conducted in the summer and more details will be released in due course.

A new report by the AoC [calls](#) on the Government to implement a coherent system that spans education and welfare and works for those at risk of long-term unemployment.

- Recommendations to Government include:
 - Reform Universal Credit rules so nobody is prevented from being able to access training.
 - Extend the Lifetime Skills Guarantee to everyone, not just those without existing Level 3 quals.
 - Embed the role of colleges in supporting unemployed people and to see collaboration between the Local Skills Improvement Plans (contained within the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill) collaborating with Job Centre Plus.
 - To set out a national strategy for the role of skills and education supporting employment.

Pearson news

Post-COVID inequality forum In a post-COVID world, the role of education, learning and reskilling will be crucial in helping young people to make progress in their lives and in restarting the economy. Our new forum is addressing this vital issue. The first session explored youth access to the labour market – see our website to see evidence from our witnesses. [Explore what we've learned](#)



Pearson tweet of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Prime Ministers Questions (9 June)
- House of Commons Statement - Education Recovery (Gavin Williamson)
- House of Commons - Investing in Children and Young People (Kate Green – opposition day debate)
- House of Lords - Secondary Schools: Arts Subjects
- House of Lords - Lords starts detailed check of Professional Qualifications Bill
- House of Lords Statement - Education Recovery (statement & debate)
- House of Commons Library - Early years funding (England)
- All-Party Parliamentary Design and Innovation Group - Understanding the Importance of Arts and Design Recovery Post COVID-19
- Education Committee - Prison Education (8 June 2021)
- Education Committee - Letter from the Secretary of State for Education - Update on the Department for Education's response to COVID-19, dated 25 May 2021
- Youth Unemployment Committee - Youth Unemployment (27 May 2021)

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Regulators

Ofsted

- Ofsted - Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges
- Ofsted - culture change needed to tackle 'normalised' sexual harassment in schools & colleges
- Local Government Association (LGA) - response to Ofsted review of sexual harassment in schools
- AOC - Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges: AoC responds
- Independent Schools Council - ISC statement on Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges
- Children's Commissioner - Tackling children's experiences of online sexual abuse
- Ofsted - Curriculum research review series: languages
- Ofsted - Further education and skills inspections and outcomes: management information from September 2020 to August 2021 (Updated)

Ofqual

- Ofqual - Simon Lebus speech at the AELP National Conference 2021
- Ofqual - General Qualifications Alternative Awarding Framework (Updated)
- Ofqual - Consultation Outcome: guidance on appeals under the GQAA framework in 2021
- Ofqual - The use of assistive technologies for assessment
- Ofqual - Vocational and other qualifications quarterly: January to March 2021

Schools

- Government publishes education recovery package
- Education Policy Institute (EPI) – response to government's education recovery package
- Education Policy Institute (EPI) - Department for Education publishes new EPI research on pupil learning loss
- Department for Education - Reforms to teacher development
- Department for Education - Government Statistics - Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak – 23 March 2020 to 28 May 2021
- NAHT - outlines actions & commitments to furthering equality, diversity and inclusion in education for 2021/22
- NAHT - Education Recovery - a blueprint for a stronger and fairer system for all
- Careers & Enterprise Company: "Baker clause" not being implemented
- AOC - AoC signs Fair Education Alliance Letter on Education Recovery plans
- Voice The Union - Education: long-term recovery not short-term catch-up
- RSA - Blog: Lessons from inclusive and nurturing schools

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Further Education & Skills

- AOC - Unemployment, welfare and education - New AoC report and recommendations
- Education and Skills Funding Agency - ESFA Update: 9 June 2021

Higher Education

- Universities Alliance - Powering jobs and the recovery
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) - New statistical measure of the design and nature of work developed from Graduate Outcomes data
- Universities UK - Universities boosting academic skills and wellbeing of Year 13s
- HEPI - Reducing student loan repayment threshold to under £20,000 would save £3.8 billion and lower student loan write-off costs in England from over one-half (54%) to one-third (33%)

Scotland

- Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) - EIS Annual General Meeting 2021 - Education recovery & qualifications questions set to dominate online AGM
- Universities Scotland - Universities welcome show of strength in new world rankings

What's happening in Parliament next week

House of Commons

Tuesday 15th June

- Westminster Hall: Levelling up agenda (Bob Seely, Con, Isle of Wight)
- Education Committee (i) Safeguarding in Schools (ii) Accountability Hearings. Witnesses: Amanda Spielman, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector at Ofsted, Andrew Cook, Her Majesty's Inspector and Regional Director for the North West at Ofsted, Yvette Stanley, National Director for Social Care at Ofsted

House of Lords

Monday 14th June

- Professional Qualifications Bill [HL] – committee stage (day 2) - Lord Grimstone of Boscobel

Tuesday 15th June

- Skills and Post-16 Education Bill [HL] – Second Reading
- Oral question - Lord Farmer (Con) to ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to ensure that children with (1) 22q11 deletion syndrome, and (2) other genetic conditions, receive specialist support to address and prevent any loss of (a) learning, or (b) social skills, due to the disruption of their education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- Youth Unemployment Committee - Youth Unemployment investigation

Thursday 17th June

- Main Business - Debate: Case for the urgent levelling up of opportunities available to UK children which have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with regard to (1) education and skills, (2) health, (3) inequality, and (4) the elimination of child poverty