



# Pearson

## Policy Watch

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



### The week in a nutshell

The focus for many in education remains the awarding of grades this summer. **Ofqual** has attempted to clamp down on external pressure on teachers to influence the grades that they award their pupils this summer through guidance. The regulator has recommended headteachers keep records should teachers come under pressure from students and parents to boost exam grades.

A new report from the **National Foundation for Educational Research** shows that the first lockdown in March 2020 led to a decrease in the wellbeing of teachers. However, the report also found that there has been a surge in the number of people applying to enter the profession, due to its “recession-proof” nature.

Elsewhere, Shadow Secretary of State for Education, **Kate Green addressed the ASCL's annual conference** in which she revealed that she would look to “design in” interventions such as summer schools and tutoring to the education system to aid the COVID recovery.

Finally, in Parliament MPs discussed the future of education, post-pandemic at a Westminster Hall debate called by Bob Seely MP, and the Education Committee took its first oral evidence as part of its inquiry into Home Education.

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

### Top stories

**A new report, published by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) shows that the first lockdown in March 2020 led to a decrease in the wellbeing of teachers.**

- NFER's report alludes to the “recession-proof” feature of teaching as over the course of the pandemic, there has been a surge in the number of people applying to enter the profession. The number of applications “increased rapidly” over the summer of 2020 and enrolments in postgrad ITT in 2020 were 20% higher than the previous year.
- The report notes that the public sector pay freeze announced at last year's Spending Review is unlikely to be sustainable over the medium term. A prolonged period of teacher pay freezes could prompt another teacher supply challenge once the wider labour market begins to recover.
- Amongst several other recommendations, the report argues that reducing teacher workload and supporting wellbeing ought to remain a priority for this Government.
- Additionally, the Spending Review, scheduled for autumn 2021 should account for a three-year package of teacher pay increase.

**Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Kate Green addressed the ASCL's annual conference.**

- Asked what her main priorities would be in the first year of a Labour Government, Green said she would be “looking at the need to address educational inequalities.”
- Green stated that Labour would like to embed “broader wellbeing in the ethos of the education system, as a pre-requisite for successful learning.” She noted that the recently announced **Bright Future taskforce** would “make children’s wellbeing a priority.”

**The SMF has released new analysis which shows that black graduates end up with “notably worse economic outcomes than white classmates”. This analysis stems from HESA’s data from a report for the Greater London Authority.**

- Analysis shows that black graduates are 12% less likely to gain a first class degree than white students of comparable backgrounds. Additionally, black graduates earn less than white, Asian and mixed-race graduates six months after graduating.
- The report also reveals that parental wealth and a student’s post-16 qualifications are both highly significant for their career paths after university. For example, students who enter HE with vocational qualifications such as BTECs are 10% less likely to gain a first class degree than A-Level students.
- **Responding, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan** stated that “it is clear that much more needs to be done to ensure that Black graduates are supported to achieve their full potential.”

**Ofqual is attempting to clamp down on external pressure on teachers to influence the grades that they award their pupils this summer.**

- In newly published **guidance**, Ofqual has recommended that headteachers should keep records if teachers come under pressure from students and parents to boost exam grades as it could lead to malpractice.
- Also published was information on **making “objective judgements”**. It states that grades should not be affected by a student’s positive or negative behaviour, character or personality, appearance, performance of their siblings, parental opinions, or the “knowledge of grades needed to meet a university offer”.

## Pearson news

**Ethical Framework for AI in Education** We have supported the publication of the Ethical Framework for AI in Education, developed by The Institute for Ethical AI in Education. It will support educators in all settings to procure and apply AI ethically, so that their learners can benefit optimally from this innovation. [Click here to find out more](#)

**Building edtech strategies for the future** We believe in the power of technology to enhance education. That's why we're proud to support the FutureofEdTEch2021 campaign. [Click here to find out more](#)



**BTEC Awards 2021** Nominations for the 2021 BTEC Awards are open. In an exceptional year, let us make sure we recognise the exceptional students whose hard work, determination & talent have shone through. Nominations for the BTEC Awards 2021 will close on 2nd April 2021. [Find out more](#)

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## Pearson tweets of the week



## Other news

### Parliamentary

- Education After Covid-19 – Westminster Hall debate Bob Seely MP
- Education Committee - Home Education (23 March 2021)
- Education Committee - Awarding of student grades: Committee writes to Secretary of State with concerns over the alternative arrangements for 2021
- Latest Education Committee correspondence – six letters this week
- Wes Streeting MP - Speech to School Exams Digital Conference
- House of Commons Library - Oxbridge 'elitism'

### COVID-19

- Department for Education - Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak: 23 March 2020 to 18 March 2021
- UNESCO - One year into COVID-19 education disruption: Where do we stand?

### Regulators & inspectorates

- Ofqual - NAHT School Leaders' Summit, Ofqual Chief Regulator Simon Lebus
- Ofqual - Frameworks for awarding qualifications in 2021: consultation outcomes
- Ofqual - New Consultation: Consultation on autumn assessment opportunities for VTQ and other general qualifications
- Ofqual - Consultation Outcome: Consultation on the general qualifications alternative awarding framework
- Ofqual - Consultation Outcome: Regulatory arrangements for the awarding of vocational and technical and other general qualifications in 2020-2021

### Policy Watch

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## Schools

- Department for Education - Flexible learning fund pilot evaluation
- Department for Education - Evaluation of the essential life skills programme
- Education and Employers - Starting Early: New research shows strong impact of career-related learning on primary-aged children
- Local Government Association (LGA) - LGA: 'Catch-up' education programme needs rethink to solve soaring inequalities and poverty exposed by pandemic
- STEM Learning - STEM Learning leads the discussion on the importance of attracting diverse and young talent into a workforce
- NAHT - New Education and Employers' research shows career-related learning could play a key role in schools' recovery
- Independent Schools Council - Everyone's Invited: 'Schools are deeply concerned and taking this issue very seriously'

## Further Education & Skills

- Department for Education - Apprenticeships and traineeships: March 2021
- Department for Education - Further education and skills: March 2021
- Learning and Work Institute - Pandemic has widened jobs and skills inequalities, putting 'levelling up' at risk
- AOC - Plan to clawback adult education funds targets
- Youth Unemployment Committee - How do we create and protect jobs for young people? Committee seeks views
- Labour Party - Toby Perkins responds to figures showing Government's apprenticeship incentive payment is failing to create the promised opportunities

## Higher Education

- UCAS - One in five students unintentionally block themselves from degree choices
- Royal Society - STEM sector must step up and end unacceptable disparities in Black staff and students academic progression and success
- Sutton Trust - The Sutton Trust comments on "Where Next?"
- Sutton Trust - One year on: evaluating our digital delivery
- SCL - Student Loans in England: 2020 to 2021

## Scotland

- Scottish Government - Mentor scheme to improve life chances for young people
- Scottish Government - Primary to secondary school transitions: analysis
- Scottish Government - Enhanced summer offer for all children

## Northern Ireland

- CCEA - GCE Teacher Support Guidance for Summer 2021 Awarding available online

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## Wales

- Statement by the Minister for Education: Mental Health and Wellbeing Support in Educational Settings

## Consultation Watch

### New consultations

- **Ofqual – Closing 7/04/2021**  
Consultation on autumn assessment opportunities for VTQ and other general qualifications
- **Department for Education - Closing: 02/06/2021**  
New Consultation: Environmental principles: draft policy statement

## What's happening in Parliament next week

### House of Commons

- The House of Commons is in recess. The House will next sit on 13 April 2021.

### House of Lords

- The House of Lords is in recess. The House will next sit on 13 April 2021.