



Pearson

Policy Watch

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



The week in a nutshell

Gavin Williamson confirmed this week that the Government would be lifting “ swathes of [COVID related] restrictions” across education settings as part of step 4 from 19 July. This includes ‘bubbles’ ending, social distancing no longer being necessary, and schools will not need to stagger start and finish times.

Schools Minister **Nick Gibb** launched a consultation on the Government’s approach to National Funding Formula (NFF) reforms, and announced a £10m scheme to boost pupils’ core skills. Children’s Minister **Vicky Ford** announced a new £24m regional fund for children’s social care, to tackle issues faced by vulnerable children.

The **Education Committee** endorsed Dr Jo Saxton for the role of Ofqual chief. Saxton, a former academy trust boss and policy adviser to Gavin Williamson, was quizzed by the committee on Tuesday.

The Lords began **Committee Stage of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill**, with several amendments focussing the new Local Skills Improvement Plans proposals.

And in **Wales the Government announced its legislative programme** for the next year, including a new Bill on post-16 education and training.

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

Top stories

Williamson bursts school bubbles for Step 4

- ‘Bubbles’ will end for all children under 18 from 19 July, and contact tracing will be overseen by NHS test and trace, rather than the school or college. Social distancing will also no longer be necessary, and schools will not need to stagger start and finish times.
- From 16 August, the legal requirement to self-isolate for contacts of a positive case will end for everyone aged under 18 meaning that, from the autumn term, only those who test positive will need to self-isolate.

Gibb launches £10m scheme to help pupils boost core skills

- Pupils in participating schools are set to benefit from more support in maths and English
- Specialist training and materials will be provided to support focused sessions to boost numeracy and literacy skills and help pupils catch-up in these core subjects. Schools with high proportions of children from disadvantaged backgrounds will be prioritised for the schemes in order to support those most impacted by the disruption to education.

New research **links higher GCSE grades to a boost in lifetime earnings**

- Statisticians and economists at the DfE have established a direct link between GCSE attainment and an increase in lifetime earnings after tracking the earnings of more than two million people in England.
- Those who perform just one GCSE grade better than their counterparts across nine subjects have been shown to earn on average over £200,000 more throughout their lives.

The Education Committee **has approved the appointment of Dr Jo Saxton as Ofqual chief**

- The Committee held a pre-appointment hearing with the Government's preferred candidate for Chief Regulator of Ofqual on 6 July, agreeing that Dr Jo Saxton is appointable for the post.
- They add that they "seek reassurance that qualification standards will be maintained and that employers, institutions and learners will continue to have confidence in them."

New EPI study **compares pupil performance among UK nations**

- The study draws on the MCS and compares outcomes in reading, vocabulary, language and maths
- Pupils in Wales perform at a similar level to pupils in England – with the exception of reading
- Scottish children perform well at a young age, but this quickly fades as they get older – with pupils falling behind their English peers, especially in maths
- Pupils in Northern Ireland perform better than pupils in England and even those in high-performing London – this is not because of grammar schools

Research finds that **pupils lost a third of learning time during pandemic year**

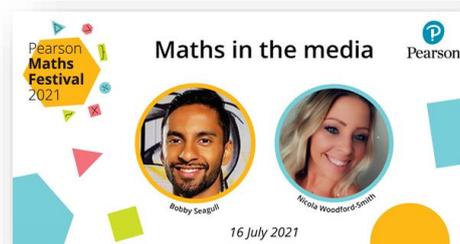
- New analyses from the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) examined learning loss since lockdown and the variation across the UK.
- The following maximum number of classroom days were lost over one calendar year: 110 days (England); 119 days (Northern Ireland); 119 days (Scotland); 124 days (Wales). These compare to a full year during normal times of 190 classroom days.

Drakeford announces **legislative agenda** and Miles authorises **delay to Curriculum for Wales**

- The Welsh Government announced its legislative programme for the next year, including a new Bill on post-16 education and training, new regulations on school and teacher support, greater support to learners up to the age of 25 with additional needs, and the delayed reform to HEFCW.
- Education Minister **Jeremy Miles** has also announced that secondary schools will have the option to continue with plans to start the Curriculum for Wales rollout start in 2022 with Year 7 or start in 2023 with Years 7 and 8 together.

Pearson news

Pearson Maths Festival 2021 We are delighted to announce our first ever Pearson Maths Virtual Festival. Running from the 5th to the 16th July, our two-week celebration of Maths features collaborative discussions and speeches with passionate Maths teachers, thought leaders, subject experts, students and most importantly, you. All the sessions will be virtual and will start after school at 4pm. Each event will be recorded so you can still watch later. [Click here](#)



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Pearson tweets of the week

Pearson UK @Pearson_UK · Jul 5

Listen to @rodbristow discuss the interim findings of our Future of Qualifications and Assessment project with @TomBewick on @SkillsWorldLive.

To watch visit: [skillsworldlive.com](https://www.skillsworldlive.com)

To find out more about our project, visit: bit.ly/389X0tQ



The Maths Factor @thefactor · Jul 5

The Maths Factor Summer Adventure with @carolvorders is opening this week! 🎉

Want to boost your child's #Maths progress?

Sign-up for FREE today 📧 pear.sn/OFvZ50Fp2tO



Other news

Parliamentary

- Covid-19: Education Settings – Gavin Williamson
- Prime Minister's Questions (7 July)
- WMS: National Funding Formula Reforms
- DfE: Covid restrictions in education settings to end at Step 4
- Skills and Post-16 Education Bill (Committee Stage – 6 July)
- Public Accounts Committee launch new inquiry into school funding

Regulators

Ofsted

- Research commentary: teaching about sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment

Ofqual

- Ofqual: rolling update
- Simon Lebus speech at The Apprenticeships Conference 2021
- Education Committee: Appointment of the Chief Regulator of Ofqual

Schools

- Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- Breakfast clubs programme 2021-2023
- Consultation outcome: Keeping children safe in education: proposed revisions 2021
- £10 million scheme to help pupils boost core skills
- GCSE attainment and lifetime earnings

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- New recovery fund to tackle harms facing vulnerable children
- Proposals to drive up training standards for teachers
- Initial teacher training (ITT) market review: overview
- National professional qualifications frameworks: from autumn 2021
- IELS thematic report: Young children's development and deprivation in England
- EPI: The evolution of cognitive skills during childhood across the UK
- CEP: Learning loss since lockdown
- APPG on Financial Education for Young People: Inquiry on primary-school aged financial education

Further Education & Skills

- Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- Apply to access the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset
- Welsh Government: New college courses for jobs in the green economy
- L&W: Learning at work: Employer investment in skills
- Resolution Foundation: Young people's mental health and labour market status as the economy reopens
- IFS: The labour market during the pandemic
- London Councils: Reforming apprenticeships for the recovery

Higher Education

- UCAS: More students ready to take next step despite pandemic

Wales

- Welsh Government's legislative programme announced
- More support to press on with curriculum reform
- New college courses for jobs in the green economy

Consultation Watch

New Consultations

- **Ofsted** – Proposed changes to Ofsted inspection frequencies for children's social care providers from 2021-22. **Closing 20 August 2021**
- **Department for Education** – Initial teacher training (ITT) market review: recommendations. **Closing 22 August 2021**
- **Department for Education** – Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula **Closing 30 September 2021**

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What's happening in Parliament next week

House of Commons

Monday 12 July

- The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill – Second Reading

Wednesday 14 July

- Westminster Hall: Developing a cross-Government strategy for improving outcomes for children and families

Thursday 15 July

- Adjournment debate: Alternative student finance

Commons Committees

Monday 12 July

- Treasury Committee: Jobs, growth and productivity after coronavirus

Tuesday 13 July

- Education Committee: The impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services
- Justice Committee: Secure Training Centres and Secure Schools

Thursday 15 July

- Public Accounts Committee: School funding

House of Lords

Wednesday 14 July

- Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale (Lab) to ask Her Majesty's Government what outcomes they expect from the Global Education Summit being co-hosted by the United Kingdom and Kenya on 28 and 29 July.

Thursday 15 July

- Skills and Post-16 Education [HL] – Committee Stage (Day 2)

Friday 16 July

- Education (Environment and Sustainable Citizenship) Bill [HL] – Second Reading

Lords Committees

Tuesday 13 July

- Youth Unemployment Committee (featuring Nick Gibb and Gillian Keegan)

Wednesday 14 July

- Public Services Committee: The role of public services in addressing child vulnerability (featuring Sir Kevan Collins)