



Pearson

Policy Watch

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



The week in a nutshell

As MPs head into the Easter recess, we've seen a busy week of announcements and publications, not least the launch of the long-awaited Schools White Paper and SEND Green Paper.

The **Schools White Paper** sets out bold aims, which have welcomed by some. However, there are those who feel it does not go far enough in setting the conditions to meet those aims, tackling the disadvantage gap, or responding to the impact of the pandemic.

There has been relief at the publication of the **SEND Green Paper**, and a welcome for the new funding. However, as with the White Paper, many believe it does not offer enough to provide the system of support that is required.

Elsewhere the **Education Secretary and Universities Minister** issued the **Office for Students (OfS)** with new guidance on their priorities for the regulator in the year ahead (including involvement in the development of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement), as well as on the HE Strategic Priorities Grant.

Having been amended by the Lords, the **Skills Bill** returned to the Commons. Although MPs accepted the changes to the provision of careers advice, once again MPs rejected a delay to the defunding of qualifications that overlap T Levels. The Bill returns to the Lords next week.

Top stories

Schools **White Paper** launched, outlining ambitions and plans to improve schooling

- The White Paper, *Opportunity for All*, sets out four key new measures:
 - Schools will offer a minimum school week of 32.5 hours by September 2023
 - A new aim to increase the national average GCSE grade in English & maths from 4.5 to 5 by 2030
 - Ofsted will inspect every school by 2025, including the backlog of 'outstanding' schools that haven't been inspected for many years
 - All schools will have either joined, or be in the process of joining, a strong multi-academy trust (MAT) by 2030
- The White Paper is a mixture of new and previously announced policies, including: fully funded National Professional Qualification in Behaviour and Culture; new legislation to create new statutory guidance on attendance; a new 'National Behaviour Survey' which aims to better understand what parents, children and teachers think of behaviour in the school
- The government says its 'Parent Pledge' to raise English and maths standards should not lead to schools over-testing children, or labelling them as "behind" or withdrawing them from a rounded school experience in order to focus on maths and English.

- As trailed, Oak National Academy will become a government body with sole focus on supporting teachers to deliver the “very best” lesson content.

Ministers publish **SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Green Paper**

- The proposals in the Green Paper are backed by new funding to implement them worth £70m and plans to reform the system will be open for a 13-week public consultation. The Green Paper comes three years after the review was first launched.
- Proposals include:
 - Digitising Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and providing parents with lists of appropriate placements tailored to their child’s needs
 - A new legal requirement for councils to introduce ‘local inclusion plans’ that bring together early years, schools and post-16 education with health and care services
 - A reformed and integrated role for alternative provision

Department for Education **announces significant reworking of the National Tutoring Programme**

- All £395m of tutoring funding provided through the NTP for academic year 22/23 will go directly to schools.
- The move cancels the contract with current supplier Randstad, who were procured to match tutoring companies with schools – asking firms to register, and schools to bid for tutors using an online portal.
- In a **written ministerial statement**, Schools Minister **Robin Walker** said the DfE would launch a procurement process in April for a potential new supplier, which would be responsible for quality assurance, recruitment, deploying mentors and offering training.

Action for Children **publishes new research exploring childhood across generations**

- Through YouGov, the charity polled three UK generations – quantitative surveys of over 5,000 children and adults - to explore the biggest issues affecting childhood post pandemic.
- More than half of parents (57%) think that childhoods today are worse than when they were their child’s age. Almost two-thirds of grandparents (64%) agree. Children have a more positive outlook than older generations, but over a third (34%) still think that childhoods are worse than when their parent was their age.
- Mental health is a bigger worry for children now than in 2019. 42% said they were worried about their own mental health in our latest survey – compared to 29% in 2019.
- Recommendations include: that the government should roll out family hubs in every area of England; introduce a legal duty on local authorities in England to provide early help; develop and implement a cross-government strategy for reducing and ultimately eradicating child poverty in the UK.

The Education Policy Institute (EPI) has **published a new report on the extent of pandemic learning loss among pupils in England during the first half of the recent autumn term**

- The study was carried out by the EPI and Renaissance for the Department for Education.
- *Pupil learning loss at a national level* On average, pupils remain behind in reading and mathematics, compared with pre-pandemic progress. For secondary school pupils in reading, average learning losses increased between the summer and autumn terms.
- *Learning loss for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds* Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (those eligible for free school meals at some point over the last 6 years) have on average experienced greater learning losses than their non-disadvantaged peers.

- *Pupil learning loss at a regional level* Substantial disparities in learning losses are apparent at a regional level, with pupils in certain areas experiencing larger losses than in other parts of the country. The rates of recovery between the end of the last school year and beginning of the current year also vary considerably.

Ofqual has confirmed how it will regulate new entry level and level 1 digital qualifications

- This follows a consultation on Ofqual’s proposals for the regulation of these Digital Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs), which are being introduced by the Department for Education (DfE). They will replace the existing functional skills qualifications in Information Computer Technology (FSQs in ICT).
- The qualifications will be available for teaching from August 2023, at entry level 3 and level 1.
- Following the consultation, Ofqual has decided to implement all the proposals, which were well supported.
 - setting a minimum weighting of 70% of marks to be achieved through the assessment of practical digital skills
 - assessments must be designed so they are authentic and relevant to life today
 - assessments will be delivered on-screen and online, but paper-based assessment materials will be permitted in exceptional circumstances

The Social Market Foundation has today published new research in which they show that careers advice and guidance risks entrenching inequality

- The report suggests that by steering people towards different educational and employment options according to their parents’ income and background, inequality is being ingrained.
- It found the shape and quality of IAG services is patchy, varying substantially across and within schools and colleges. And support for those pursuing vocational options tends to be weaker, with students carried towards university by inertia.
- There are six policy recommendations aimed at increasing the personalisation, accountability, and accessibility of IAG. They include: adding careers provision to the four ‘key judgements’ on which schools are graded in Ofsted inspections and setting the Careers and Enterprise Company the objective of tackling inequalities between schools in the level and quality of information, advice and guidance.

Pearson news

PTE now available on UCAS’ new one-stop platform Pearson and UCAS International have joined forces to introduce the Pearson Test of English (PTE) into Myriad by UCAS, giving non-native English speaking students the opportunity to learn about and schedule their English language skills assessment in the same place as they are conducting their research into master’s degree courses.



Pearson tweets of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Commons: Schools White Paper
- Commons: Skills and Post-16 Education Bill – consideration of Lords message
- WMS: National Funding Formula and School Improvement Consultation
- WMS: Schools: Capital Funding
- Commons: SEND Review
- WMS: High Needs Provision Capital Allocations
- Westminster Hall: Special Schools Eye Care Service
- WMS: Education Update
- Lords: Schools: Extremism and Intolerance
- Lords: Schools: Creative Subjects and the English Baccalaureate
- Lords: Schools White Paper
- Lords: SEND Review
- Lords: Down Syndrome Bill – third reading
- Lords: Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill – second reading
- Education Committee: Oral evidence: The future of post-16 qualifications, HC 902
- Education Committee to question Education Secretary on Schools White Paper and SEND Green Paper
- Liaison Committee (Lords): The Ties that Bind: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in the 21st Century - Follow-up report

Regulatory and funding bodies

- Ofsted: State-funded schools inspections and outcomes as at 31 December 2021
- Ofsted: New frameworks for joint targeted area inspections (JTAs)
- Ofsted: Inspecting education, skills and work activities in prisons and young offender institutions (EIF)
- Ofqual: Digital functional skills conditions and requirements
- Ofqual: Digital functional skills guidance
- Ofqual: Qualification-level conditions for functional skills qualifications
- ESFA Update: 30 March 2022
- ESFA: 19+ funding allocations guidance 2022 to 2023
- ESFA: Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2022 to 2023
- IfATE: Leading figures appointed to the Institute's Board
- QAA launches first suite of revised Subject Benchmark Statements
- QAA announced new 'Designated Quality Body for England' Board
- OfS: Guidance to the Office for Students on strategic priorities for FY22-23
- OfS: Guidance to the Office for Students on the Higher Education Strategic Priorities Grant for the 2022-23 Financial Year

Schools

- Schools White Paper delivers real action to level up education
- Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child (Policy paper)
- Length of the school week: minimum expectation

Policy Watch

Week ending Friday 18 March 2022

- Priority Education Investment Areas – selection methodology
- Ambitious reform for children and young people with SEND
- SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time (Policy paper)
- Fair school funding for all: completing our reforms to the National Funding Formula (Consultation outcome)
- Providing remote education: guidance for schools
- National Tutoring Programme simplified to reach as many pupils as possible
- EPI/DfE: Understanding progress in the 2020/21 Academic Year
- Action needed to improve citizenship education and civic engagement opportunities Committee says
- National Tutoring Programme: courses started and schools participating up to March 2022
- School and college panel: omnibus surveys for 2021 to 2022
- Local authority provision for school places and support for vulnerable children
- Summer schools research, final report: March 2022
- High needs provision capital allocations (Updated for 2022)
- New guidance: Children and young people (aged 18 years and under) who have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescent mental health
- Parent, pupil and learner panel omnibus surveys for 2021 to 2022
- Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children’s social care settings
- Secretary of State letter to local authorities about children arriving from Ukraine
- ONS: COVID-19 Schools Infection Survey, England: pupil antibody data, January to February 2022
- Social Market Foundation: Careers advice driving inequality in education, report shows
- NEU: Government’s evidence for forcing schools into MATs badly flawed

Further Education & Skills

- Ofqual: Rules set for new digital functional skills qualifications
- Thousands more global study and work opportunities for UK students
- Adult education budget: devolved grant determination letters 2022
- National Skills Fund (Consultation outcome)
- Free qualifications for adults with low digital skills
- Full-time enrolment of 14 to 16 year olds in further education and sixth-form colleges
- Further education skills index: 2020 to 2021
- Apprenticeships and traineeships: March 2022
- Further education and skills: March 2022
- Appointments made: April 2021 to March 2022

Higher Education

- HEPI: No growth in Chinese Studies graduates during China’s ascendancy

Scotland

- Supporting headteachers

Wales

- £25m to kick-start free school meals for all primary school children in Wales

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- Early years settings ready to support roll out of Curriculum for Wales
- Supporting curriculum design and delivery: government response
- The independent schools regulations and guidance: call for evidence (Consultation responses)
- Written Statement: Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act 2018 Implementation for Post-16
- Written Statement: Publication of Cymraeg 2050 Action Plan for 2022-23
- £13 million for trade unions to deliver learning support and upskill workers

Consultation Watch

New consultations

- Supporting schools that are not making necessary improvements Closes 28 March 2022
- SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time Closes 29 March 2022
- Scotland: Home education guidance Closes 13 July 2022

Closing consultations

- DfE: Changes to the School Admission Appeals Code Closes: 3 April 2022
- Wales: Statutory induction of newly qualified teachers in Wales Closes: 8 April 2022

Ongoing consultations

- Subject-level conditions and guidance for new French, German and Spanish GCSEs Closes 19 April 2022
- Ofqual: Regulating academic and technical qualifications at level 3 Closes: 20 April 2022
- Review of post-16 qualifications at level 2 and below in England Closes: 27 April 2022
- Lifelong loan entitlement Closes: 6 May 2022
- Higher Education reform Closes: 6 May 2022
- DfT: Transport labour market and skills Closes: 9 May 2022
- Wales: Draft framework for Welsh in English medium education Closes: 13 May 2022
- Office for Students: Working in partnership to improve international student integration and experience Closes: 16 May 2022
- Free early education for 2-year-olds with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) Closes 20 May 2022
- Wales: New registration categories for the Education Workforce Council Closes: 24 May 2022

What's happening in Parliament next week

The House of Commons is in recess until 19 April 2022.

Monday 4 April

Lords Committees

- Children and Families Act 2014 Committee: Oral evidence

Tuesday 5 April

House of Lords

- Professional Qualifications Bill – Lords consideration of Commons amendments

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Lords Committees

- Science and Technology Committee: Delivering and UK science and technology strategy

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG for Digital Skills. Subject: Digital skills and work: 'Level-Up Digital' – SMEs and Digital skills.
- APPG for Race Equality in Education. Subject: Tackling Afro hair discrimination in schools.

Wednesday 6 April

Westminster Hall

- Debate: Multi-academy trusts (Lord Lingfield, Con)

Lords Committees:

- Public Services Committee: Designing a public services workforce fit for the future

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG on Performing Arts Education and Training. EGM.
- APPG on Eye Health and Visual Impairment. Subject: The education of children and young people with a vision impairment, in the context of the pandemic and the SEND review

Thursday 7 April

House of Lords

- British Sign Language Bill – committee stage (Lord Holmes of Richmond, Con)
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill – committee stage (Baroness Sugg, Con)
- Skills and Post-16 Education Bill – consideration of Commons amendments

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG on Modern Languages. AGM.

Friday 8 April

The House of Lords rises for recess until 25 April 2022.