



Pearson

Policy Watch

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



The week in a nutshell

This week finally saw the publication of the much anticipated “**Levelling Up**” **White Paper**. A mixture of new policies and previously announced ones, the White Paper does not include any new spending commitments. As you would expect, education features prominently as Ministers look to tackle geographical disparities and close widening gaps. New missions aim at improving attainment at school, with “cold spots” receiving targeted help, and increasing numbers completing “high-quality” skills training. In outlining what levelling up means to him, **Nadhim Zahawi** said: “I want everyone to have a chance to see their potential flourish...It is everyone’s right to have a great, world-class education and schools have a key role to play in levelling up.” Reaction to the plans has been mixed, not least because of a lack of new spending promises.

The week began with **Education questions** from MPs. Topics covered included the adequacy of student finance, what DfE is doing to support young people into high quality jobs, SEND, and reading in schools.

DfE published its plans to create a **register for children not in school**, following consultation. It will also place a duty on Local Authorities to support home educating families.

In **Wales, trials of a longer school day began**. Ministers hope “that young people can gain in confidence and well-being from this approach, especially disadvantaged learners”. Whilst unions question the evidence to support extending the school day.

Susan Lapworth, currently Director of Regulation at the **Office for Students**, has been named its new interim Chief Executive. She takes over from Nicola Dandridge in May.

Top stories

Government publishes the long-awaited Levelling Up White Paper, with a mix of new pledges and re-announced policies.

- The White Paper outlines 12 missions in total, each with a different focus area. Those covering education and skills are:
 - “By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.”
 - “By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.”

- New announcements include:
 - **A new online UK National Academy:** offering a digital education service to support schools.
 - **55 new Education Investment Areas** in places where educational attainment is currently weakest.
 - From April 2022, the **Free Courses for Jobs programme** (where all adults in England who do not have a level 3 qualification are able to take one for free) **will be expanded on a trial basis** to enable any adult with a level 3 qualification or higher who earns below the National Living Wage or who is unemployed to access a further high-value level 3 qualification for free, regardless of their prior qualifications.
 - DfE will set up a **new Unit for Future Skills** which will work with BEIS and DWP to bring together the skills data and information held across government.
 - Successful Institutes of Technology will be able to receive **Royal Charter status**.
 - Government will target **£100m of investment in three new Innovation Accelerators**.
 - A **new devolution framework**, providing different powers and functions, which could include the devolution of Adult Education functions and the core Adult Education Budget

DfE response following [home education consultation](#)

- The government confirmed it will go ahead with the creation of a register for children not in school at the earliest available legislative opportunity. It also outlined their intentions to legislate to implement a duty on:
 - local authorities to:
 - keep a register of all children of compulsory age in their area who are not registered pupils at a state or independent school
 - provide support to home educating families
 - parents of children to supply information to such a register
 - proprietors of defined settings to supply information on relevant children

[New government consultation on proposed changes to the behaviour in schools guidance and the suspension and permanent exclusion guidance:](#)

- In response to the Timpson review of school exclusions, the government committed to working with sector experts to publish clearer, more consistent guidance.
- The revised behaviour guidance also makes clear that heads are best placed to make decisions on whether mobile phones should be in classrooms, considering the needs of their pupils.
- There will also be more consistent guidance to support headteachers with decisions about exclusions, making sure they are used in a proportionate and fair way.
- The consultation closes on 31 March.

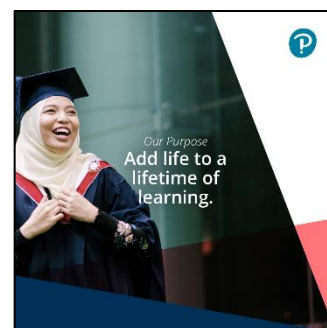
[A trial to extend the school day has begun in Wales](#)

- The trial involves 13 primary and secondary schools and one college, and adding an additional five hours a week to students' timetable.
- A total of **1,800 children will have a longer day for 10 weeks** and take part in sessions such as art, music and sport, as well as academic lessons. Teachers have decided how and what is delivered in each of the settings taking part in the pilot.
- The Welsh Government say the plans draw on international models and proposals made by the Education Policy Institute.

Pearson news

Pearson announce new company purpose Learning is no longer a stage of life; it's a lifelong journey. One that can lead to real growth and impact. That's where we come in. This week, we've announced our new company purpose: to add life to a lifetime of learning. [Click for more](#)

Pearson tweets of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Oral Questions to the Secretary of State for Education
- Statement: Levelling Up
- Debate: Government's Education Catch-up and Mental Health Recovery Programmes
- WMS: Capital Spending
- WMS: International Teacher Training Qualification
- WMS: Levelling Up Missions: Education and Skills
- Lords: School Trips: Passport and Visa Requirements
- Lords: School Absences
- Education Committee to examine children's mental health and wellbeing

Regulatory and funding bodies

- Ofqual: Special consideration policies for technical qualifications
- ESFA Update: 2 February 2022
- ESFA: In-year growth for 2021 to 2022
- ESFA: Academies general annual grant allocation guides: 2022 to 2023
- IfATE: Secretary of State reappoints Institute board members for three more years
- Office for Students: Susan Lapworth appointed interim chief executive of OfS
- QAA updates members on European developments in micro-credentials

Policy Watch

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Schools

- DfE: Further plans to level up opportunities for every child
- Education Investment Areas: selection methodology
- Consultation outcome: Prioritising schools for the School Rebuilding Programme – government response
- Consultation outcome: Teacher misconduct: the prohibition of teachers advice – government response
- COVID-19 12 to 15 vaccination programme funding for schools: conditions of funding
- ONS: Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination uptake in school pupils, England: up to 9 January 2022
- ONS: COVID-19 Schools Infection Survey, England: attitudes to vaccines and preventative measures, November to December 2021
- Case study: Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts
- DfE: Package to transform education and opportunities for most disadvantaged
- King's College London: Lonely teenagers at greater risk of poor educational outcomes
- Child sexual exploitation underreported with authorities struggling to keep pace, Inquiry report finds

Further Education & Skills

- Skills levels of 16 to 64 year olds by local authority
- Engagement with free courses for jobs
- Learning & Work Institute: One in three adults say they want to change job, but most think they lack the skills to switch

Higher Education

- HESA: Higher Education Staff Statistics: UK, 2020/21
- HEE unveils programme to help tackle health inequalities in rural and coastal areas
- Introducing the international qualified teacher status (iQTS) pilot (updated with providers)
- US research director appointed first chief executive of Advanced Research and Invention Agency

Scotland

- Exams on track

Wales

- Trial begins on school day reforms in Wales
- Oral Statement: Exploring reform of the school day and year
- Further education institutions: allocations 2022 to 2023
- Post-16 local authority: adult learning funding allocations 2022 to 2023
- Post-16 local authority: sixth form funding allocations 2022 to 2023

Consultation Watch

New consultations

- DfE: Teacher misconduct: regulating the teaching profession Closes: 14 March
- DfE: Revised behaviour in schools guidance and suspension and permanent exclusions guidance Closes: 31 March

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Ongoing consultations

- NI Department of Education: Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme - Prospective Remedy Consultation - Teachers' Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022
Closes: 13 February
- QAA: New Subject Benchmark Statement for Policing Closes: 28 February
- Keeping children safe in education: proposed revisions 2022 Closes: 8 March
- NI Department of Education: Consultation on Children and Young People's Strategy initial 3-year Delivery Plan 2021 – 2024 Closes: 9 March
- Public Accounts Committee: Financial sustainability of the higher education sector in England
Closes: 14 March
- OfS: A new approach to regulating student outcomes Closes: 17 March
- The Teaching Excellence Framework Closes: 17 March
- Constructing student outcome and experience indicators for use in OfS regulation Closes: 17 March
- Education Committee: Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Closes: 17 March
- Department for Education: School attendance: improving consistency of support
Closes: 28 March

What's happening in Parliament next week

Tuesday 8 February

Commons Committees

- Education Committee: Mental health and wellbeing

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG ON APPRENTICESHIPS. Virtual Fair to celebrate National Apprenticeships Week
- APPG ON ARTS, CRAFT AND DESIGN IN EDUCATION.

Wednesday 9 February

Westminster Hall

- Special educational needs and children's mental health services (Laura Farris, Con, Newbury)

House of Lords

- Advanced Research and Invention Agency Bill – Consideration of Commons Amendments

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG ON THE UK SPF. The Levelling Up White Paper and its implications for the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Thursday 10 February

House of Lords

- Baroness Merron (Lab) to ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the new Information Commissioner about the importance of protecting children online

Lords Committees

- Liaison Committee: Citizenship and Civic Engagement (with the Schools Minister, chief executive of NCS, and Ofsted education director)

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