



Pearson

Policy Watch

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



The week in a nutshell

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been high on the agenda this week, with the Department for Education launching a call for [evidence regarding generative AI in education](#). This builds on DfE's position paper on AI earlier in the year. Also announced, this time by Technology Secretary Chloe Smith, was [a series of investments](#) to develop trustworthy artificial intelligence (AI) research. Universities across the UK will receive £54 million investment in their work to develop cutting edge artificial intelligence (AI) technology.

The week began with the [monthly questions in the House of Commons](#) to the education ministerial team. Topics included the ongoing industrial disputes across education, Local Skills Improvement Plans, support for those with Special Educational Needs, and technical education in secondary schools.

And whilst Ofsted announced [changes to inspections](#), including changes to language and clarity around thresholds, the Education Select Committee detailed plans for its latest inquiry which will investigate Ofsted's inspections of schools.

Finally, we also saw IFATE publish its plan to unite and [simplify the skills system](#), and to improve access to training for businesses and people from all backgrounds.

Top stories

DfE launches consultation on generative AI in education

- DfE has published a [call for evidence on generative artificial intelligence in education](#). The exercise seeks views and experiences of the use of generative AI tools in educational settings in England. This includes tools such as: ChatGPT; Google Bard, Claude and Midjourney. Officials are keen to understand potential benefits and risks of this technology around its use in education.
- This follows the DfE's publication of [its position on generative AI](#) earlier this year.
- The consultation asks for views concerning: Experience with generative AI; Opportunities and benefits; Concerns and risks; Ethical and legal considerations; Future predictions and suggestions
- The consultation, which closes on 23 August, is available [here](#).

Government publishes creative industries sector vision

- The Government has [published its creative industries sector vision](#), with plans to grow the creative industries by £50bn and support a million more jobs by 2030.
- Framed around the key principles for driving growth - facilitating innovation and investment, and building a skilled workforce - the Sector Vision is backed by £77m in new government investment for the sector.

- The Sector Vision also commits the government to a new creative careers promise - a pledge backed by a package of actions to open up more opportunities to pursue careers in the creative industries.
- The Department for Education (DfE) and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will work with industry and cultural arm's length bodies to publish a new Cultural Education Plan later this year, setting out a long-term approach to support cultural education and creativity in schools in England.
- DCMS and DfE will work together with industry to understand current levels of access to high-quality specialist arts, music and creative media provision for 14-19 year olds across England and explore options for enhancing access to existing and new providers.

DfE launches sign language consultation

- The Government has launched a consultation on the content of a new British Sign Language (BSL) GCSE, with the aim for the qualification to be introduced for first teaching in schools from September 2025.
- The DfE is consulting on the subject content, which will require pupils to comprehend BSL, produce signs accurately, interact using BSL, and develop an understanding of the history of BSL.
- The consultation, which closes on 8 September, can be found [here](#).
- Ofqual has also launched a consultation, seeking view on proposed assessment arrangements for the new GCSE, which closes on 7 September. It can be found [here](#).

Education Committee launches inquiry into Ofsted's work with schools

- The Education Committee has [launched a new inquiry](#) into Ofsted's work with schools, in which it will assess how well the regulator is fulfilling its role in inspecting schools and whether and how it could be improved, to inform the work of the incoming Chief Inspector.
- It will look at the impact of Ofsted judgements on schools and pupils, including the impact on workload and wellbeing for all members of the school community, and the usefulness of Ofsted inspections for schools and parents. The inquiry will also look at Ofsted's complaints procedure and assess how accountable the regulator is in its work, as well as exploring the impact of the new Education Inspection Framework introduced in 2019.
- The call for evidence is open until 20 July.

Ofsted announces changes to inspection processes and consultation

- The regulator Ofsted has [announced changes](#) to school inspection processes, a revised complaints procedure and new investment in teacher wellbeing support. The changes include:
 - Doubling in size the DfE's investment in Education Support wellbeing assistance, to support an additional 500 heads by March 2024. In the longer term, the DfE commits to further expand its mental health and wellbeing offer beyond March 2024.
 - Inspectors will now return more quickly (within 3 months) to schools graded inadequate overall due to ineffective safeguarding, but where all other judgements were good or better. If the school has been able to resolve the safeguarding concerns it is likely to see its overall grade improve.
 - From September, Ofsted will offer schools greater clarity about the threshold for effective versus ineffective safeguarding through the inspection handbook.
 - Looking at how Ofsted can de-personalise the language used in inspection reports, particularly in reference to areas of weakness, so that they refer by default to 'the school', rather than to individuals.

- Ofsted has also [launching a formal consultation](#) on significant changes to the complaints system, most of which have been piloted over the last few months (closes 15 September).

PAC publishes education recovery report

- The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has [published a report](#) following its inquiry into education recovery in England's schools, in which it expresses alarm that it may take a decade for the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others to return to pre-pandemic levels. In brief, its recommendations are:
 - DfE should publish a plan setting out how, building on good practice, it will reduce the disadvantage gap as quickly as possible, and the expected trajectory.
 - DfE should develop a better understanding of why disadvantaged pupils have higher rates of absence than others and take targeted action to reduce these rates.
 - DfE needs to do more to understand why some schools are not taking part in the National Tutoring Programme and take more effective action to increase participation.
 - DfE should monitor how much tutoring is being provided, in 2022/23 and 2023/24 when it is providing a subsidy, and in subsequent years, and intervene if tutoring levels drop significantly.
 - DfE should set out measures of progress for the 2030 attainment targets and report progress against the measures to Parliament each year.

Pearson news

Student Diversity Ambassador Programme We launched the pilot cohort of the Student Diversity Ambassador Programme back in 2021, and we are thrilled to share the evaluation and feedback report with you. This has been undertaken with The Centre for Education and Youth. [Find out more here.](#)



Pearson tweet of the week

Pearson BTEC and Apprenticeships @PearsonBTECAppr · Jun 13 ...

The latest [#BTECBroadcast](#) is now live! This issue includes an update on the reviews of level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications as well as some exciting news on our newly approved HTQs...

Read our June edition and subscribe here spr.ly/6019OF8w5

[#BTEC](#) [#Education](#)

Other news

Parliamentary

- Commons: Education Oral Questions
- Commons: Science, Innovation and Technology Questions
- Commons: Healthy Start Scheme (Take-Up) (No. 2) – ten minute rule motion
- Lords: Free Music Education
- Lords: School Uniform Policies
- WMS: School Inspections
- WMS: Creative Industries Update
- Education Committee: Can Ofsted inspections be improved? Education Committee launches new inquiry
- Education Committee: Accountability hearings: children's social care and safeguarding (oral evidence)
- Education Committee: Correspondence from the Secretary of State regarding the Department's review of the statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)
- Science and Technology Committee (Lords): Letter from Baroness Brown of Cambridge to Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP, Secretary of State for the Home Office, Home Office, ref Visa policy for STEM talent

Regulatory and funding bodies

- Ofsted: Changes made to school inspections
- Ofsted inspection timings for schools
- Ofsted: Further education and skills inspections: statistical commentaries 2022 to 2023
- ESFA Update: 14 June 2023
- Ofqual: Vocational and other qualifications quarterly: January to March 2023
- IfATE: A Simpler Skills System
- IfATE seeks applications for Assessment Panel
- OfS: Protecting students as consumers
- SLC: Student Loans Company appoints Jason Dunham as New Chief Information Officer
- SLC: UK comparisons - to financial year 2023
- SLC: Student loans in England: 2022 to 2023
- SLC: Student Loans in Wales: 2022 to 2023
- SLC: Student Loans in Scotland: 2022 to 2023
- SLC: Student Loans in Northern Ireland: 2022 to 2023
- UKRI: Early decisions made for REF 2028
- UKRI: £54m to develop secure AI that can help solve major challenges
- UKRI: UK's creative industries benefit from significant funding boost
- UKRI: New network to maximise research and innovation funding impact

Schools

- MOU between DfE and Grammar School Heads Association (updated for 2023-27)
- Secondary and primary school applications and offers: 2023
- New drive to better understand the role of AI in education
- Education Secretary addresses London Tech Week
- British Sign Language GCSE moves one step closer to the classroom

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- [New board to oversee government's plan to improve music education](#)
- [NIOT: New development programme for CEOs of multi-academy trusts](#)

Further Education & Skills

- [DCMS: Ambitious plans to grow the economy and boost creative industries](#)
- [DCMS: Creative industries sector vision](#)
- [IfATE: Parliamentary launch for IfATE's Simpler Skills System report](#)
- [CaSE: The Skills Opportunity: Building a more innovative UK](#)

Higher Education

- [DSIT: £54 million boost to develop secure and trustworthy AI research](#)
- [OfS: Students' consumer rights should be a priority throughout their courses, says regulator](#)
- [London Higher: London's universities and businesses should work together better, says new report](#)
- [TASO: Addressing the ethnicity degree awarding gap](#)
- [HEPI: How do Admissions Professionals use the UCAS personal statement?](#)

Scotland

- [Funding Gaelic projects](#)
- [Record number of school leavers in work, training or study](#)
- [Summary statistics for follow-up leaver destinations, no. 5: 2023 edition](#)
- [SFC: Early decisions made towards a more inclusive REF 2028](#)
- [SFC: Students Eligible for Funding](#)

Wales

- [Student Finance Wales information notice: FE schemes 2023 to 2024 \(SFWIN 05/2023\)](#)
- [School Governors: acting as a critical friend and the impact of governor training \(government response\)](#)
- [HEFCW: Consultation launched on the initial decisions for Research Excellence Framework 2028](#)

Northern Ireland

- [£30million boost to address economic inactivity, skills and education opportunities](#)

Consultation Watch

New consultations

- [Generative artificial intelligence in education call for evidence](#) Closes: 23 August 2023
- [Ofqual: GCSE qualifications in British Sign Language](#) Closes: 7 September 2023
- [GCSE British Sign Language \(BSL\): proposed subject content](#) Close: 8 September 2023
- [Changes to Ofsted's post-inspection arrangements and complaints handling: proposals 2023](#)
Closes: 15 September 2023
- [Education Committee: Ofsted's work with schools](#) Closes: 20 July 2023
- [UKRI: Research Excellence Framework 2028: issues for further consultation following the initial decisions](#)
Closes: 13 October 2024

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Ongoing consultations

- [Public Accounts Committee: The condition of school buildings](#) Closes: 6 July 2023
- [Welsh Government: Have your say in Summer 2023 exams](#) Closes: 7 July 2023
- [Qualifications Wales: Essential Skills Wales Qualifications Review Survey](#) Closes: 7 July 2023
- [Welsh Government: Proposed changes to the suite of Regulations under which independent schools in Wales operate](#) Closes: 17 July 2023
- [Improving support for children missing education](#) Closes: 20 July 2023
- [Welsh Government: Belonging, engaging and participating](#) Closes: 20 July 2023
- [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\): regulatory changes](#) Closes: 26 July 2023
- [Ensuring the resilience of the qualifications system](#) Closes: 2 August 2023
- [Northern Ireland: Department for the Economy 2023/24 budget consultation EQIA](#) Closes: 30 August 2023

What's happening in Parliament next week

Monday 19 June

House of Lords

- The Earl of Clancarty (Crossbench) to ask His Majesty's Government whether they will take steps better to facilitate school trips to the United Kingdom from European Union countries.
- Baroness Thornhill (Lib Dem) to ask His Majesty's Government whether they intend to take steps in response to the official statistics published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 10 May which found that 1,630 families with children were housed in bed-and-breakfast accommodation by English councils for more than the six-week legal limit between October and December 2022.

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG on Data Analytics: 'An ethnical AI Future'

Tuesday 20 June

Commons Committees

- Education Committee: Teacher recruitment, training and retention

House of Lords

- Lord Allen of Kensington (Lab) to ask His Majesty's Government what is their industrial strategy.

All-Party Parliamentary Group

- APPG on Apprenticeships
- APPG for T Levels
- APPG on Issues Affecting Men and Boys: 'Boys' Education Underachievement'
- APPG on a Fit and Healthy Childhood: 'Social media's risk to children'

Wednesday 21 June

House of Lords

- Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe (Lab) to ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of their engagement with medical research charities regarding (1) their negotiations for association with Horizon Europe, and (2) the alternative Pioneer programme.

All-Party Parliamentary Groups

- APPG on Kinship Care
- APPG on Penal Affairs: 'The role of prison employment advisory boards'

Thursday 22 June

House of Lords

- Lord Addington (Lib Dem) to ask His Majesty's Government what level of support is required for a teacher trained under the existing initial teacher training regime to support and educate any person attending a mainstream school with a diagnosis of dyslexia or autism.

Lords Committees

- Education for 11-16 Year Olds Committee (with HMCI Amanda Spielman)