

2015/7

30 July 2015

Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in July 2015

Main talking points

A month in which the traditional rush to get things out before the summer break was clearly evident.

Key headlines from the month

- Reception. Baseline assessment providers confirmed
- Phonics. Government offers grants to help share good practice
- Assessment. Review announced to consider how to assess pupils with low attainment
- Assessment without levels. Commission report now set for Sept
- Mindfulness. Wellcome Trust launch major new trial in secondary schools
- 2017 GCSEs, AS, A levels. DfE and Ofqual consult on content and assessment
- PSHE. Caroline Lucas MP re-introduces Bill on it
- Prevent. New duty on schools to help 'prevent' young people being drawn into terrorism
- Coasting schools. DfE draft definition
- Inspections. New arrangements outlined in a letter to schools
- Performance tables. Government confirms changes to 2015 arrangements
- School funding. Rates for 2016/17 set
- Child Poverty. Attainment at age of 16 to be included in new measures
- School to work. NIACE set up new website
- Social Mobility. Lords Committee takes evidence of impact on young people
- Teachers' Pay. Limited to 1% increase a year for each of next 4 years
- RSCs. Education Committee to conduct an autumn inquiry
- NEETs. Local council score cards to be published each summer
- Apprenticeships. New Delivery Board set up, trailblazer guidance updated
- Apprenticeships. Government consults on correct usage of term
- Functional Skills. Government commissions more work
- 25 + yr olds. Entitled to new National Living Wage of £7.20 an hour from April 2016
- FE funding. SFA confirms nature of cuts for 2015/16
- FE. Government announces area-based reviews
- Cornwall. Becomes first county to sign initial devo deal
- HE. Universities UK launches 'stay in EU' campaign
- Maintenance grants. Replaced by loans for new entrants from 2016/17
- HE funding. HEFCE confirms cuts for 2014/15, 2015/16
- HE fees. Commission calls for OBR-led review

Reports/Publications of the month (in order of publication)

- **Backing Soft Skills.** McDonalds serves up the results of its recent report and pulls together a working group including CBI, AoC, Pearson, to help create a new framework
- **Analysis of academy school performance in GCSEs in 2014.** NFER publishes its final commissioned report and finds differences in school performance 'not statistically significant'
- **Funding for disadvantaged pupils.** The National Audit Office reports on the effects of the pupil premium and points to a worthy scheme but one struggling for impact in places
- **Fixing a Broken Training System.** Prof Alison Wolf tackles the issue of apprenticeship funding and concludes that a national fund created out of an employer levy is needed
- **Changing patterns in vocational entry and support.** The Higher Education Academy reports on the growing numbers entering HE with a voc qual and calls for better recognition of them
- **Guide to the Skills System.** The Skills Commission offers a definitive guide and highlights six essential reform proposals including funding, stability and employer engagement
- **The Future of Assessment: 2025 and Beyond.** Exam board AQA invites commentators to publish their thoughts about the future in a series of essays
- **Summer Budget 2015.** All the details in the full 118 page Report
- **Inspiring Growth.** The CBI/Pearson annual education and skill survey finds employers continuing to report concerns about gaps in skills, training and employability
- **Schools revenue funding 2016-17.** The Education Funding Agency publishes its operational guide for LAs and school forums for the coming year

- **School and College Performance Tables.** DfE confirms requirements for this year's tables which will include first use of Progress 8 data for schools that opted in early
- **Access agreements for 2016/17.** OFFA reports on the latest round of agreements
- **Raising productivity by improving higher technical education.** HEPI's Pearson sponsored Paper highlights some essential principles for enhancing L4/5 provision
- **Analysis of the HE funding reforms announced in the Budget.** The IFS casts an informed eye over the changes and concludes lower and middle income groups could both be hit
- **Reviewing post-16 Education and Training Institutions.** The government sets out proposals for local structural reviews of post-16 provision with a tight timescale to match
- **Financial sustainability in the FE sector.** The National Audit Office completes its review and reports a worrying decline in the sector's finances over the last five years
- **Spending Review 2015.** The Chancellor sets out the timescale and guidelines
- **Alternative Providers of HE.** The government responds to earlier consultation by confirming measures intended to secure the quality of provision

Speeches of the month

- Jo Johnson's 1 July UUK **speech** sets out the three core manifesto objectives (teaching excellence/value for money/extending opportunity) that the Minister intends to pursue
- Nicky Morgan's 1 July Sutton Trust **speech** calls for schools to apply a more targeted approach to the use of pupil premium funds
- George Osborne's 8 July Budget **speech** includes significant changes to welfare, living wage, apprenticeship funding and HE as part of a new, 5 year settlement with the country
- Tristram Hunt's 9 July Education Reform **speech** summons the spirit of Jim Callaghan's Great debate as he calls for 'bottom-up' thinking on a Nat Bacc and other matters
- Nick Gibb's 9 July Education Reform **speech** grapples with the purpose of education and comes up with a love of knowledge, preparation for life and developing the skills for the future
- Jo Johnson's 16 July science **speech** outlines the ingredients of what's termed a 'One Nation Science' strategy built around regional mapping, STEM support and greater diversity
- Nicky Morgan's 16 July creative arts **speech** declares her and her government's unwavering support for the creative arts in schools
- Nicky Morgan's 29 July Teach First **speech** offers teachers more working groups to help consider reductions in workloads, better CPD and support for the College of Teaching

Quotes of the month

- *"While many firms do a brilliant job training their workforces, there are too many large companies who leave the training to others and take a free ride on the system."* The Chancellor on the case for an apprenticeship levy
- *"We expect cuts to unprotected depts between 2015/16 and 2019/20 of around £19bn to be announced in the Spending Review."* The Institute of Fiscal Studies on what lies ahead
- *"If assessing learning is hard, assessing teaching quality is harder."* Alison Wolf on the TEF
- *"I used to send very nasty letter to parents who didn't turn up to parents' evening and say you're not going to get your son's or daughter's report until you come and see me."* Sir Michael Wilshaw on how to deal with 'feckless' parents
- *"At the time we were laughed at by almost everybody. Now most schools are taking up the teaching of character, well-being and resilience."* Sir Anthony Seldon on school happiness
- *"A teacher cannot function on Twitter like someone who works in a supermarket or an accountancy firm."* Head teacher Geoff Barton highlights the dangers of social media

Word or phrase of the month

- 'Casual leadership.' In Ofsted's sights apparently

Steve Besley

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