

2014/11

28 Nov 2014

Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in November 2014

Main talking points

Very much skills month with 3 set piece Conferences, 4 major speeches and 9 reports (see below)

Key headlines from the month

- Early years. Practitioners call for a rethink on baseline assessment
- Maths hubs. The Chinese 'specialists' start work in a number of primaries
- RS. Consultation on new GCSE, AS, A levels launched
- PISA tests. UK schools invited to bid to use the tests next year
- AS. Cambridge University advises schools to use them
- Teachers' Workload. Evidence gathering phase closes
- TeachFirst. Goes for push into coastal towns, primaries and STEM teachers next
- College of Teaching. Education Secretary due to announce interest soon
- Pupil premium. Government confirms additional funding
- British values. The Dept issues guidelines to help schools deliver
- Functional Skills. Minister asks ETF to consider GCSE alternatives
- NEETs. Numbers down in latest quarterly figures
- Traineeships. Government flexes up for 2015
- Apprenticeships. The SFA publishes the latest guidance for trailblazers
- Apprenticeships/Traineeships. Education Committee continues taking evidence
- FE. The AoC issues a 10-point Manifesto for the 2015 election
- FE inspections. Ofsted publishes latest myth buster
- Skills. Government confirms new devolved arrangement with Greater Manchester
- Quangos. Down by a third in latest progress report

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

- **Engineering Skills Progress Report.** BIS reports on progress made in developing partnerships and a range of school activity one year on from the landmark Perkins Review
- **Socio-economic differences in university outcomes in the UK.** The Institute of Fiscal Studies crunches the data on students from poorer backgrounds and finds concerns all round
- **Greater Manchester Agreement.** The government signs up to plans to devolve responsibilities in areas like business growth and skills to the Combined Authority from 2017
- **EFA Business Plan 2014-2015.** The Education Funding Agency confirms priorities and headline figures in the latest version of its Business Plan
- **Student Loans: Government Response.** The government stands firm in its response to the earlier Select Committee Inquiry and refuses to call for a further review of the fee loans system
- **Our impact.** TeachFirst highlights the extent of its reach and impact over the last decade particularly in disadvantaged areas and gears up for more to come
- **A Better Off Britain.** The CBI proposes a range of measures to help close the attainment gap in schools and raise skill levels in its latest blueprint for economic recovery
- **Licensed to Create.** The RSA publishes a collection of essays from leading 'experts' on how best to improve teacher quality and innovation
- **SFCA Manifesto 2015.** The Sixth Form Colleges' Association calls for a re-coupling of the AS and a competitive process for establishing new sixth forms in its 2015 Manifesto brochure
- **Understanding the success of London's Schools.** Bristol University's Research Centre offers the latest research and finds the higher aspiration of ethnic groups a key factor
- **Implementing Rigour and Responsiveness.** The FE Minister updates the sector on the latest developments in his latest briefing for Governors and Principals
- **Skills beyond school.** The OECD looks at post-16 vocational systems across 20 countries and stresses the importance of employer engagement, work experience and responsive quals
- **FE Commissioner's Annual Report.** The FE Commissioner issues his first annual report and lists some of the lessons learnt from interventions undertaken in eleven colleges over the year
- **Still in tune?** The Skills Commission publishes the latest in a series of reports suggesting that the skills system is not fully in tune with the changing needs of the labour market

- **A roadmap for free education.** The National Union of Students calls for a scrapping of fee loans in favour of greater taxation from employers and the wealthiest in society
- **Too good to fail.** The HE Commission finds the current fee loan system unsustainable and lists six other funding models as possible alternatives
- **Traineeships Funding Consultation: Government Response.** The government confirms it will increase the flexibility of traineeships as it responds to earlier consultation
- **Why textbooks count.** Tim Oates explains why the best ones at least do and highlights the features of those used in best-performing jurisdictions
- **Growth Through People.** The UK Commission for Employment and Skills adds its voice to a more employer driven system as it publishes a further report on the state of the UK skills system

Speeches of the month

- Nicky Morgan's 10 November Your Life **speech** sets the context for this new campaign designed to raise awareness among school leavers about the importance of STEM subjects
- Ed Miliband's 10 November CBI Conference **speech** tells business leaders how a future Labour government would work with employers to create a fairer society with skills for all
- Nick Gibb's 12 November Reform **speech** espouses the virtues of school autonomy and claims that it's helping to drive improved school performance
- Nick Boles' 18 November AoC **speech** highlights latest developments around English and maths as well as some new flexibilities for traineeship programmes
- Sir Michael Wilshaw's 18 November CBI **speech** argues that the moment is ripe for reform of vocational education and sets out four priorities for achieving this
- Tristram Hunt's 19 November AoC **speech** ticks a number of boxes about voc quals and confirms that Labour is working on a White Paper on future reforms to the FE/voc system
- Nick Gibb's 20 November 'publishers' **speech** stresses the importance of high-quality school textbooks in learning and calls on publishers to stay ahead of the game
- Glenys Stacey's 20 November Westminster Education Forum **speech** puts the current A level reforms in context and explains how the accreditation process is going
- Tristram Hunt's 25 November Walthamstow **speech** calls for a new settlement between state and private schools with both sides working to new partnership arrangements
- David Laws' 27 November CentreForum **speech** calls for stronger local accountability and inspection arrangements for Academy chains
- Nicky Morgan's 27 November Birmingham **speech** sets out a new more collaborative vision of education

Quotes of the month

- *"Education is a partnership. It isn't a battle or a war."* The Education Secretary
- *"It's still by no means completely sorted out but it's a lot better than the situation we inherited."* Francis Maude on the government's quango reforms
- *"If we win the election, our focus will be on a revolution in vocational education and apprenticeships."* Ed Miliband addresses employers at the CBI Conference
- *"What I've found challenging is that you can be busy without achieving much."* The Shadow Education Minister on life in Westminster
- *"I have to admit it made me gulp when I first heard him say it."* The Skills Minister on how he felt when he first heard the Prime Minister's target of 3m more apprentices
- *"Often it is the ad hoc verbal feedback made in a lesson that that can have the most impact."* The general secretary of the NAHT on the pressure to keep records on everything

Word or phrase of the month

- *'Scope creep.'* A project that starts looking at one thing but ends up with 100s of others

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Policy Tracker on what happened in November 2014

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