

2015/9

25 Sept 2015

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

Main talking points

The start of another education year and no shortage of activity as per below.

Key headlines from the month

- Summer born children. Government planning to allow deferred school entry
- Assessment without levels. Government responds to final report
- Phonics standards. Up 3% to 77% for Yr 1's this year
- Literacy. Nicky Morgan launches latest drive to get more books in schools
- IT. BT steps up support for primary schools with more training and resources
- Money for Mandarin. Chancellor pledges £10m
- Free Schools. Government pledges biennial waves every year to 2020
- Academies/free schools. Labour indicates an interest in greater local control
- Admissions appeals. Up 8% this year
- Lie-ins. Some teenagers to be given longer lie ins to assess impact on GCSE results
- Smartphones in class. New behaviour group to look at
- ParentInfo. Government launches new online tool to help parents keep up with teenage trends
- Core maths. New post-16 programmes launched
- 2017 GCSEs and A levels. DfE and Ofqual consult
- Qual reforms. Ofqual sends out postcards to explain
- Enterprise advisers. Careers and Enterprise Company rolls out its new network
- Teachers CPD. Taskforce calls for views
- Inspections. New inspection teams for new inspection approach
- College of Teaching. New trustees announced
- Education Bill. Heads to the Lords
- Enterprise Bill. Starts its journey at the Lords
- Apprenticeships. Statutory definition included in the Enterprise Bill
- Area-based reviews. Latest list updated
- FE English/maths teachers. ETF launches latest training modules for teachers
- English/maths GCSE 16-19 resits. Funding conditions relaxed
- RQF. Ofqual outlines arrangements for the new post QCF quals framework
- Local devolution. AoC group to review of impact on skills and FE
- Undergrad numbers. UCAS report 3% increase for UKHE for 2015/16
- Degree awarding powers. Minister lifts moratorium
- Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Extends its remit into other HE settings
- Support for women at uni. Universities UK commissioned to set up new taskforce
- Campus extremism. HEFCE launches consultation on compliance with new Prevent duty
- HE quality assessment. BIS Committee announces new inquiry

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

- **Keeping up with the Germans.** The HE Policy Institute examines how the Germans removed tuition fees and what happened to student numbers
- **HE in Facts and Figures.** Universities UK offers its latest smorgasbord covering 2013-14
- **2015 Spending Review.** The Association of Colleges sends in its recommendations focusing on support for 16-18 provision, help with recruiting Eng/maths teachers and 3-yr budget plans
- **Universities UK** and the **Russell Group** also submit Spending Review dossiers calling for ring-fenced funding for science and research and support for high-cost subjects
- **Reviewing post-16 education and training institutions.** The government sets out its latest guidance for the area-based review process and announces who'll be 'done' next
- **A Guide to Regional Schools Commissioners.** NFER looks at how the RSC system operates at both a national and local level and point to a growing in-tray in each case
- **Key Stage 3: the wasted years?** Ofsted remove the question mark in its latest report
- **Students, Computers and Learning: Making the Connection.** OECD reports on the impact of technology on learning in the classroom and finds a lot of travelling in hope

- **Forming or joining a group of schools.** ASCL, NGA and brownejacobson launch a new guide for schools thinking of working together in collaborative arrangements
- **Guidance for HE providers on applying for degree awarding powers and HEFCE funding.** BIS releases updated guidance for HE providers as the moratorium is lifted
- **Progression of FE students and apprenticeships to HE.** BIS publishes the latest stats for cohorts between 2006 and 2012 showing steady increases in both cases
- **Differences in degree outcomes.** HEFCE reports on how far course and student characteristics affect chances of securing a top degree and finds many state school students do well
- **CBI submission to the Spending Review.** The CBI calls for protected funding for education and skills and improved voc skills in its list of recommendations for the Treasury
- **Commission on Assessment without levels.** The Commission gets to publish its final report setting out six recommendations on guidance, support and training
- **Government response to the Commission on Assessment without Levels.** Takes on board most of the recommendations though is cautious about implementation
- **Knowledge and the curriculum.** The think tank Policy Exchange publish a collection of essays by leading commentators to mark its Annual Lecture by E.D. Hirsch

Speeches of the month

- Nick Gibb's 5 Sept ResearchED **speech** highlights the traditional virtues of good teaching and learning and how the government is supporting them
- Jo Johnson's 9 Sept Universities UK **speech** sets out the key principles behind his forthcoming Green Paper for the sector and gets Vice-Chancellors talking as a result
- Sir Michael Wilshaw's 10 Sept School Improvement **speech** highlights 3 concerns: regional differences; primary-secondary transition; and the long tail of underachievement
- David Cameron's 11 September **speech** sets out 3 principles (innovation, devolution, efficiency) for making the state smarter and more effective
- Nicky Morgan's 24 Sept child literacy **speech** teams up with David Walliams again to launch the next phase of support and activity

Quotes of the month

- *"Across Whitehall we're looking in every dept at budgets that aren't protected."* Nicky Morgan on the dangers of a lack of protection ahead of the Spending Review
- *"We are not rushing to judgement though the silence is ominous."* Vince Cable and Chuka Umunna join forces to reflect on the government's industrial policy
- *"It's akin to Byron burger having to ask permission of McDonalds to open up a new restaurant."* The HE Minister on finding validation partners in HE
- *"My biggest frustration with the media coverage is the awful word Oxbridge."* The V.C of Cambridge on the need for distinctiveness
- *"I think fragile is the way to put it."* The Education Secretary on the mood in FE
- *"We don't ask much from government, usually it's best if they keep out of the way but a sustainable supply of well trained staff and the resources we need to deploy them-these are the basics and they're under threat."* The gen secretary of NAHT on the basic tools
- *"The government should gather a panel of experts to design a model curriculum. This content would then be laid out in a logical, sequential format: year by year, term by term."* How to design a curriculum by a former superhead
- *"Any head worth their salt should stand up and ban them."* Sir M Wilshaw on mobiles in school

Word or phrase of the month

- *'Cultural appeasers.'* School leaders who acquiesce rather than challenge, according to Ofsted
- *'Disengagement contracts.'* What lies behind a lot of poor teaching according to the HE Minister

Steve Besley

Head of Policy @SteveBesley