

2014/9

30 Sept 2014

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

Main talking points

Some interesting reports out this month including those on primary school provision, GCSE grading, FE teaching and learning and HE student numbers but as the seven speeches listed indicate, election momentum is gathering pace.

Key headlines from the month

- Free school meals. Introduced for 5-7 and 16-18 year olds
- Free Schools. 35 more announced
- New national curriculum. Gets under way for most pupils
- SEN. New reforms come into effect
- Primary reading. New campaign launched to help more 11 yr olds read
- Lesson observations. Ofsted scrap individual grades in favour of general overview
- GCSE grading. Ofqual explains the new scale
- Research centre. Wellington College launches the first school-based centre
- 16-19 study programmes. Careers, English/maths singled out as weaknesses by Ofsted
- A level foreign languages. Ofqual outline some changes for summer 2015 on
- Careers guidance. Education Committee to hold follow-up inquiry as Morgan acknowledges issues
- Young people. Lib-Dems pledge discounted bus passes and ring fenced funding to age 19
- Voc Education. Government invites bids for a new research centre
- National College. Government declares Birmingham/Doncaster the home of the new HS2 college
- 2014 uni entry. UK and EU applicants up and big increase for those with voc quals
- HE tuition fees. Minister rules out any immediate increase

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

- **The Efficiency Index.** GEMS single out teacher salaries and class sizes as key indicators in the latest Education Efficiency Index which has the UK coming in at a high 1th
- **16-18 year-old participation in education and training.** The National Audit Office considers value for money in the latest 16-18 developments and worries about some of the cost benefits
- **Adult literacy and numeracy.** The BIS Committee questions the reliance on GCSEs and calls for a more joined-up approach to improve performance in this area
- **Great Education Debate.** The professional body ASCL emerges with three priority areas: ensuring achievement for all, prof development for teachers and greater system collaboration
- **Education at a Glance.** The OECD offers its annual sweeping survey of education system performance in 40+ countries and finds for the UK more graduates don't equal more skills
- **Students' educational and developmental outcomes at age 16.** The latest research from the EPPSE programme suggests that effective early years provision helps
- **Read on, Get on.** Charities, teachers and publishers get together to launch a new campaign to help more young and deprived children to read
- **Manifesto for a Numerate UK.** The National Numeracy charity calls for a new numeracy qualification as part of a 7-point Manifesto
- **Mobility Manifesto.** The Sutton Trust launches a 10-point manifesto intended to improve social mobility through education
- **Setting the Grade Standards of new GCSEs in England.** The consultation over, responses considered, Ofqual sets out how the new numerical scale is to apply for the first GCSEs
- **Early implementation of 16-19 study programmes.** Ofsted runs the rule over the new study programmes and finds limited evidence so far of any 'transformational' change
- **Governors' Handbook.** The DfE updates its latest guidance for school governors but retains the three core functions of strategy, challenge and financial audit
- **The qualifications of English and maths FE teachers.** The Education and Training Foundation surveys the workforce and finds gaps in support and skills levels
- **A guide to the removal of student number controls.** HEPI outlines three big challenges: the impact on numbers; impact on quality; how's it going to be funded?
- **Teaching, learning and assessment in FE and skills.** Ofsted surveys evidence from 20 outstanding providers as it seeks to demonstrate what works and why

- **Taking Action.** The National Careers Council reviews progress one year on and offers four more recommendations to help speed things up
- **Perceptions of Qualifications.** Ofqual's latest survey finds continued support for A levels, less for GCSEs and concerns about constant change
- **Developing new GCSEs and A levels.** The DfE and Ofqual consult on content and assessment arrangements for a further tranche of 2016 GCSEs and A and AS levels
- **Interim report on 2014 university entry.** UCAS summarises things one month on from results day and finds recruitment booming for those with voc quals especially
- **Primary Focus.** The think tank Policy Exchange calls for a mass academisation programme to help primary schools meet a growing list of challenges
- **Low-level disruption in the country's classrooms.** Ofsted concludes that some pupils could be losing up to an hour's learning a day from disruptive behaviour in some classrooms
- **Stand up for education.** The NUT launches a manifesto for education that includes more time for teaching rather than testing and a restored role for local authorities

Speeches of the month

- Greg Clark's 9 Sept UUK Conference **speech** sprinkles praise liberally to all corners and pledges to protect the sector from further cuts
- Tristram Hunt's 21 Sept Conference **speech** briefly outlines the three current education priorities childcare reform; fully trained teachers; a reformed vocational education system
- Ed Balls' 22 Sept Conference **speech** acknowledges the need to cut the deficit but promises to transform vocational education and support a compulsory jobs guarantee
- Ed Miliband's 23 Sept Conference **speech** sticks to a 10 yr programme of six goals: jobs, pay, apprenticeships, health, housing and wealth
- George Osborne's 29 Sept Conference **speech** pledges to abolish long-term youth unemployment and create more apprenticeships but the fight to reduce the deficit goes on
- Nicky Morgan's 30 Sept Conference **speech** adopts a highly conciliatory tone as it recognises concerns about teacher workload and reform pressures
- David Cameron's 1 Oct Conference **speech** calls for 5 more yrs to allow the Government to complete its programme of reform in areas like education

Quotes of the month

- *"I'm not a complicated man. I believe in simple things."* The Prime Minister explains his political philosophy
- *"I don't want my child to be taught by someone too tired, too stressed and too anxious to do the job well."* The Education Secretary feels the pain of overworked teachers
- *"If you get into government it will cause you no end of grief."* The ex-Universities Minister advises the Shadow Universities Minister about the perils of the graduate tax
- *"We're a regulator that is known, understood and feared-feared isn't always a bad thing."* Ofsted's Chief Inspector on the fear factor
- *"On the one hand in in the UK you can say qualification levels have risen enormously, lots more people are getting degrees but actually not all of that is visible in skills."* The OECD on the worrying gap in the UK between knowing and doing
- *"Rigorous, engaging and tough."* The PM's 3-word description of the new national curriculum

Word or phrase of the month

- Three new education typologies: 'VIFs,' 'Caves' and 'Gringos' or 'very important freshers,' 'colleagues against virtually everything' and 'graduates in non-graduate opportunities'

Steve Besley

Head of Policy (UK and International)

[@SteveBesley](#)