

## Policy Eye



### Highlights of week ending Friday 27 Nov 2015

(Welcome to Policy Eye, a nearly weekly service from Policy Watch offering a regular round up of UK education headlines and stories from over the previous 7 days.)

#### The week summed up

The big news this week of course has been the Chancellor's Autumn Statement and Spending Review announcements.

Much of the education world had been biting its nails since high summer when the Chancellor announced that he was looking to save some £20bn from public spending with parts of the education system likely to be in the firing line. In the event, a combination of more favourable tax receipts and debt interest payments added to the £27bn that as the media reported, the Office for Budget Responsibility found down the back of the Treasury sofa, and meant that things were not as bad as feared and education at least got off quite lightly. The Association of Colleges spoke of 'huge relief,' others followed suit.

Inevitably sober reflection is now following and we are yet to see the full breakdown behind the headlines but a few points are worth highlighting. Further details can be seen in an accompanying Policy Watch.

For schools three messages stand out. First, complete academisation remains the objective; *"our goal is to complete this schools revolution and help every secondary school become an academy."* Sixth Form College can now be added to the flanks and primary schools too this week have been offered incentives. Second, the schools budget may have been protected but efficiencies are expected; the government will be coming back and knocking on the door on this. Third, the long-awaited fair funding formula now has a schedule; consultation next year, implementation in 2017.

For FE, the vulnerable adult skills budget is assured at least in cash terms at £1.5bn and tuition fee loans extended to 19-23 year olds for level 3/4 courses but efficiencies are to come from a more responsive and specialised sector arising out of the area-based reviews; the government is clearly setting its hopes high here. The big challenges for colleges will be to grab a slice of the apprenticeship and higher-level tech provision on the one hand while positioning themselves in the reshaped local structures on the other; both hands will be full.

For HE, it was more a case of fine tuning and topping and tailing previous announcements many of which had been set out in the Green Paper. So further support for part-time students and postgrads, an increase in the maintenance loan threshold and support for research and science. The teaching grant will be further trimmed, some agency shuffling is already planned and universities will be expected to shoulder more of the widening participation requirements but the Review painted a positive picture of rising student numbers, domestically and internationally.

#### Top headlines this week

- 'Spending Review: Schools to get fair funding formula.' (**Monday**)
- 'Ofsted warning over private faith schools.' (**Tuesday**)
- 'Teachers work longer classroom hours.' (**Wednesday**)
- 'Autumn Statement: Apprenticeships Levy to raise £3m.' (**Thursday**)
- 'Teachers offered days off to lure them into jobs.' (**Friday**)

## People/organisations in the news this week

- The Chancellor of the Exchequer who set out government spending targets and priorities for the remainder of this Parliament in his **Autumn Statement** leaving many of those in education at least, pleasantly surprised
- The government who included its official **response** to the apprenticeship levy consultation as part of the batch of Papers issued with the Autumn Statement, confirming that it will go ahead with the introduction of the levy from April 2017 on paybills in excess of £3m a year
- The OECD who published its latest comprehensive **compendium** of key education indicators covering areas like funding, teaching and tertiary education across the 34 member countries, prompting debate in the UK about how low teachers' starting salaries were and how high tuition fees were
- Daniel Caro and Jenny Lenkeit, two Research Fellows at Oxford, who looked at the wider picture of education performance in PISA maths tests by factoring in socio-economic context and **found** that while some traditionally high performing countries such as Hong Kong and Korea continued to score well, others such as Turkey, Thailand and Indonesia moved up the rankings once the wider context was taken into account
- The think tank IPPR who published its second annual **report** on European Jobs and Skills highlighting five key challenges around youth and adult unemployment, productivity, education outcomes and vocational education and training
- Leading business consultancy Deloitte who are reported to be using a computer game as part of its **recruitment** process for school leavers to help identify those with particular creative and problem-solving skills
- The university think tank million+ who published a **report** highlighting ten steps including better promotion, investment and support, needed to help re-invigorate the creative industries
- The Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL) who published the final **reports** from its first group of Fellows all highlighting different aspects of FE leadership
- The Sutton Trust and PRIME (a group dedicated to widening access to the legal profession) who published further **data** showing that the profession has a long way to go to be considered truly representative
- The DfE who **published** a call for evidence on creating a registration system for schools in non-standard settings
- The DfE who **launched** a new Academy Chain Development Grant, worth up to £100k per chain, to encourage more primary schools to consider joining up
- Ofsted who published the results of its latest **survey** of parents and found 95% aware of what they do and 72% who found their reports reliable or very reliable
- The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) who launched a new **tracker** to try and help teachers find a better work-life balance
- So-called 'Dr of happiness' Andy Cope who provides 'inspirational' sessions for heads and schools, who highlighted the 10/5 principle this week (*smile at anyone who comes within 10 feet, say hello to anyone who comes within 5 feet*)

### Tweet(s) of the week

- *"Commentary by scheduling. On BBC2 the Autumn Statement. On BBC1 Bargain Hunt."* @PCollinsTimes
- *"Leadership is like a tea bag. You only know how good it is when it's in hot water."* @Julia\_Cleverdon
- *"Universities are too far into degree model to be able train students with skills needed to boost productivity."* @timeshighered
- *"Happiness in schools starts with the head teacher."* @schoolgoverning

### Quote(s) of the week

- *"I can tell the House as a result of this Spending Review, not only is the schools budget protected in real terms but the total financial support for education, including childcare and our extended further and higher education loans will increase by £10bn."* The Chancellor attempts to assuage concerns about education in his Autumn Statement
- *"Today's Spending Review will be a huge relief for further education and sixth form colleges following five years of stringent budget cuts."* The Association of Colleges responds to the Spending Review announcements
- *"This is absolutely not the end of austerity."* Paul Johnson, director of the Institute for Fiscal studies on not getting carried away following the Chancellor's Autumn Statement
- *"Headless chickens."* How everyone runs around when you set a challenging target such as 3m more apprentices within five years, according to Alison Wolf in evidence given recently to the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee
- *"It's patently unfair that Knowsley received nearly £750 less per pupil than Wandsworth."* Education Minister on the need for fairer school funding
- *"If you look at this in absolute terms, when you compare teachers' starting salaries, they are clearly not attractive in England."* The OECD's Andreas Schleicher on the low base from which teachers' salaries start in England
- *"There is a point when determination turns into obstinacy."* Former Education Secretary Estelle Morris reflects on the DfE's first six months in government

### Number(s) of the week

- 36.5%. The level of state spending as a share of output by 2020, down from 45% in 2010
- 2.4%. The growth forecast for 2016, same as for 2015
- £3bn. How much the apprenticeship levy is intended to raise a year
- £360m. The level of efficiencies and savings expected to come from the adult skills budget by 2020
- 20%. The core administrative savings expected from the DfE over the next four years
- £5. How much many students spend a day travelling to college or training place according to latest survey from the AoC/NUS
- £30,618. The actual average salary for a secondary teacher in England according to the latest OECD stats, higher than the OECD average of £28,813 but hugely dependent on other benefits and incentives

- £11,800. The per school value in England of technology equipment left lying around and unused according to research from cloud-based company **Instructure**
- 88%. The number of parents who were aware of the Ofsted rating of their local school according to Ofsted's latest survey of parents

### **What to look out for next week**

- Education Questions in the House of Commons (Monday)
- Ofsted's 2014/15 Annual Report published (Tuesday)