

## Policy Eye: (Election 2015)



### Highlights of week ending Friday 31 October 2014

*(Welcome to Policy Eye, a new nearly weekly additional service from Policy Watch offering a regular round up of UK education headlines and stories from over the previous 7 days and introduced to keep a special 'eye' on developments in the build up to the 2015 election.)*

#### The week in a word

Funding stories have been headlining for much of this week. HEFCE has been feeling the financial pulse of the HE sector (thankfully still beating soundly,) the Association of Colleges has set out its thoughts for the Treasury on where to save money and where to invest it, the Education Funding Agency has outlined its funding plans for 16-19 year olds for 2015/16, the National Audit Office has been examining the cost-effectiveness of the DfE's arrangements for overseeing the school system, the Institute of Fiscal Studies has been looking at whether graduates who went to private schools earn more than those who did not (they do) and Nick Hillman of the HE Policy Institute has trying to work out how much an Oxbridge education really costs. There are some eye-catching figures in amongst this lot. For example, in HE, the sector is banking on a rise in overseas fee income taking it to £4.2bn by 2016/17; FE has seen a 32% reduction in funding per qualification over the last couple of years, the NAO has identified that the DfE spends some £380m+ a year in overseeing efficiency and performance in the school system while the current pitch for an Oxbridge education is £16,000 a year. On their own and out of context, these figures offer us headlines and perhaps not much more but they highlight some of the big policy tensions such as student visas let alone the real cost of a university degree, the funding of skills training and the cost-benefits or otherwise of accountability requirements bubbling around in education at present.

#### Top headlines this week

- 'A levels a new level of confusion.' (**Monday**)
- 'Academy Trust backs Ofsted inspections.' (**Tuesday**)
- 'Support for campaign tackling 'time bomb' of low literacy.' (**Wednesday**)
- 'Weak schools 'improving too slowly' says watchdog.' (**Thursday**)
- 'Lavish praise does not help pupils.' (**Friday**)

#### People/organisations in the news this week

- Nicky Morgan who spoke at the Pearson sponsored Teaching Awards
- Shadow Business Secretary Chuka Umunna who joined the calls for greater regional devolution of powers in this case through metro mayors
- Peter Lauener, the Chief Executive of the EFA whose world just got a whole lot bigger by adding the role of Chief Exec for the SFA as well
- The BIS Dept which has updated its performance against key indicators such as skills
- HEFCE who announced the names of the people on the panel that would head its review of quality assessment arrangements

- The think tank IPPR who put forward modelled proposals for a postgraduate fee loan scheme
- Universities UK who published a report suggesting that a school-led system of teacher training could lead to significant teacher supply issues for certain subject areas
- Sheffield University who have decided to scrap library fines for students in an effort to create a better customer-based relationship
- The University of Pennsylvania who is proposing to offer a new degree level course on 'Wasting time on the internet'
- The Association of Colleges (AoC) who submitted a comprehensive funding dossier to the Treasury ahead of the Chancellor's forthcoming Autumn Statement
- The 157 Group of colleges who published a Paper on how colleges are changing to meet the rising skills challenge
- G4S who joined the Apprenticeship Trailblazer scheme (for the Security Industry)
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) who published details on 2015/16 funding arrangements for 16-19 year olds
- The Public Accounts Committee who announced a follow-up inquiry into the challenges of raising participation for 16-19 year olds
- The National Audit Office who published a report recommending some changes to the ways in which the DfE oversees the performance and effectiveness of the schools system
- Schools who according to the latest Omnibus research are planning to increase the amount of time they will allocate to maths teaching next year
- Pearson and National Numeracy each of whom hosted national numeracy challenges
- The Sutton Trust who published a commissioned 'starter kit' of seven strategies (starting with teaching quality) that constitute effective teaching
- Lucy Heller, the director of ARK schools who called for the political heat to be taken out of the arguments about school types
- Nestle who became the latest organisation to publish a report on the woeful state of careers advice, in this case that for STEM skills
- The Teacher Development Trust who have commissioned a range of partners to carry out a systematic review of teacher CPD
- The Group set up to review standards for teaching assistants who have launched a call for evidence that will run until November 21st
- The National Literacy Forum who launched their Vision for Literacy 2025 campaign with cross Party blessing
- The World Economic Forum whose latest annual gender survey saw Iceland once again top the polls as the best performing country in closing the gender gap in employment but also recognised that a further 100 countries were improving in this regard

### Tweet of the week

- *"I said on the show 'I feel like I have no life' and I still feel like this." Educating East End 's Joe Bisphan @GuardianTeach*

### Quote of the week

- *"The fact that in three days we've had over 21,000 responses just confirms how strongly teachers feel about this issue."* The Education Secretary on the bombardment of responses to the Teachers' Workload Challenge

### Number(s) of the week

- One hour. The amount of extra time per week schools plan to give key stage 4 maths next year according to a recent survey

### What to look out for next week

- Education Committee witness session on PSHE and SRE in schools (Tuesday)
- Education Committee witness session on Apprenticeships and Traineeships for 16-19 yr olds (Wednesday)