

2013/1

30 Jan 2013

Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in January 2013

Main talking points

Little sign of a thaw here with 24 top education measures listed as still outstanding in the Government's mid-term review launched at the start of this month. Evidence of momentum this month includes for schools, announcements on A level reform and a report on EBCs, for colleges, papers on Traineeships and the value of learning and for HE, latest application and grant figures. 21 major Reports and 20+ key headlines this month attest to the continuing momentum

Key headlines from the month

- Free Schools. Restrictions lifted on use of buildings, plans for maths schools emerge
- Academies. 3,167 now open or in the pipeline including first PRU
- Maths. Nuffield publish latest report into post-16 variants
- EBacc. Computer science in but petition for others reaches Number 10
- A level. Reforms confirmed for 2015
- Careers. Education Committee report on changes needed
- 'League Tables.' Latest tables confirm evidence of the EBacc and Academy effect
- Teachers. Teaching Agency and National College prepare to merge
- Inspections. Ofsted order stretch and challenge report into teaching of most able
- Teachers' pay. Government confirms move to new system from Sept 2013
- Wales. Minister confirms new Qual Body in place from Sept 2015
- 16-24 Traineeships. Government start initial planning
- 24+ Loans. Support funding and new materials available
- HE Grant. Down to £2.8bn for T/L but £5.8bn forecast to come from fee income
- HE applications. Relief as important Jan cycle figures up 3.5% on last year
- Postgrads. Pressure builds up for a better deal as numbers drop
- First class degrees. Up nearly 50% over the last five years
- Apprenticeships. Graduate frameworks to be developed this year
- Regional Growth Fund. Latest bidding round opens
- Education UK. New unit set up to drive export demand
- Unemployed. Drops to 2.49m, Labour propose new £1bn scheme

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

- [Youth Index 2013](#). The Prince's Trust undertakes its annual check on the pulse of young people and finds a slight drop in mood particularly for those whose job prospects are limited
- [Coalition mid-term report](#). Still in it together, the Coalition reports on progress so far against its initial 2010 pledges and concurs that there's plenty more to be done
- [Unleashing Greatness](#). The Academies Commission reports on its inquiry into academisation and calls for greater attention to be given to access, accountability and the quality of learning
- [Towards a new Vocational Education and Training](#). Tim Oates challenges a number of current tenets in the VQ system and argues for greater clarity on preferred routes
- [Technical Matters](#). Policy Exchange support the case for strengthening the UK's technical-vocational route around an academic core with clear vocational routes
- [Grant Letter 2013/14](#). The BIS Dept's annual Grant Letter for HE outlines funding and priorities as the shift from grants to loans continues
- [Traineeships](#). The Skills Minister launches a discussion paper on potential programmes for 16-24 yr olds not yet ready for employment or an apprenticeship
- [The Graduate Market 2013](#). The annual stock take of graduate vacancies and starting salaries in leading companies finds graduate vacancies still well below pre-recession levels
- [Towards universal participation in post-16 maths](#). The Nuffield Foundation look at how other countries manage to have such high numbers and suggest a new qualification might help
- [What's the value of a UK degree?](#) The million + think tank tot up the figures and come up with an average net premium of around £115,000 over a working lifetime

- [How to produce an access agreement for 2014/15](#). OFFA publish revised guidelines for all universities wishing to charge above the basic fee level
- [Careers Guidance for young people](#). The Education Committee publish their report on the newly devolved careers system and conclude that a number of changes are needed
- [14-18: A New Vision for Secondary Education](#). Lord Baker et al set out their thoughts on an education system of middle schools for 9-13 yr olds and 4 pathways for 14-18 yr olds
- [Reform of GCE A levels](#). The Secretary of State's letter to Ofqual confirms intended reforms to A and AS levels now due to be implemented in 2015
- [Key Stage 4 and 5 performance tables](#). The latest set of 'league' tables find EBacc achievement up but performance in A level facilitating subjects limited
- [Government response to the BIS Committee's Report on Apprenticeships](#). The Government accepts most of the Committee's recommendations but doesn't move on many
- [Government response to the Education Committee Report on DfE governance](#). The Government takes on board many of the recommendations following the Dept's review
- [The impact of league table reform on vocational education in schools](#). A year after proposed reforms, IPPR find schools narrowing choice to ensure 'league' table points
- [The Impact of FE learning](#). It really does improve life and job prospects for most according to this latest BIS commissioned research
- [International Lessons: Youth unemployment in the global context](#). The Work Foundation continue their work in this area seeing what lessons can be learned from others
- [From GCSEs to EBCs](#). The Education Committee pronounce on the Government's proposed reforms at Key Stage 4 and urge it to slow down and consider some of the concerns

Speeches of the month

- The Education Minister's 17 North of England [speech](#) spells out some of the steps being taken to improve maths performance in schools
- Charlie Taylor's 18 January North of England [speech](#) sets out some of the challenges facing the newly merged Teaching Agency and National College for School Leadership
- Stephen Twigg's 23 January Policy Exchange [speech](#) lays out Labour's approach to transforming vocational education and announces a review of work experience
- David Willetts' 24 January '8 great technologies' [speech](#) provides a progress report on the key technologies at the heart of the Government's industrial strategy

Quotes of the month

- *"On all the big issues that matter to Britain, we are heading in the right direction and I have the evidence to prove it."* The Prime Minister in his upbeat New Year message
- *"A choice between extended misery if the euro survives and catastrophe if it doesn't."* A leading economist with a less upbeat New Year message
- *"We want you to consider increasing the flexibility for those institutions that have shown strong recruitment patterns in 2013/14 and taper this away from institutions enjoying less demand."* The Government's latest Grant Letter looks to the market
- *"I could learn about veterinary somewhere else but it wouldn't come across as well as hearing it from a vet with his hand up a cow's backside."* A recipient to the Commission on vocational learning on why such learning is so important
- *"Do they think Silicon Valley wants people who can understand calculus and linear algebra or students who turn up saying 'don't worry we can Google everything?'"* The Education Minister defends changes to A levels

Word or phrase of the month

- *'Clunking and gridding.'* Maths techniques the Government doesn't like

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It is also possible to follow some of the team with [Steve Besley](#) and [Louis Coiffait](#) on Twitter, and to subscribe to our [YouTube](#) and [Vimeo](#) channels.

Policy Tracker on what happened in January 2013

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