

2013/6

29 June 2013

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

Main talking points

Much of the month was spent nervously awaiting the Chancellor's 2015/16 spending announcements. In the event, school protections continued but other parts of the system faced a mix of efficiencies. Elsewhere, it's been a difficult month for trees with a huge number of Reports published notably on GCSE reform, disadvantaged learners, funding and HE

Key headlines from the month

- Schools. Labour offer thoughts on changes to the school system
- Disadvantaged pupils. Still a big concern in latest Ofsted Reports
- 14-16 yr olds. DfE issue guidance on enrolment in colleges
- National Curriculum. History gets a further rewrite
- GCSEs. DfE and Ofqual launch latest bout of consultations
- A levels. New review panel announced
- Exam marking. Ofqual publish first in series of Reports
- ICT. Government issue order for switch to Computing
- Teaching. Education Committee announce inquiry into a College of Teaching
- Careers. National Careers Council sketch out a new vision
- Destination Data. Latest historic data published on outcomes for 16 and 18 yr olds
- FE. LSIS publish valedictory Report
- HE. Series of Reports set out challenging funding context

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

- **Lessons from Foundation Learning provision.** Ofsted report on issues arising from Foundation provision for 16-19 yr olds over the last 3 years
- **The Funding Environment for Universities.** UUK highlight the potential double whammy of higher fees and continuing visa restrictions on UKHE
- **An Aspirational nation: Creating a culture change in careers provision.** Changes from the National Carers Council include more 1-1 guidance and an Employer Advisory Board
- **Postgraduate education: better funding and better access.** The Think Tank Centre Forum call for both, citing a fall in postgrad numbers in English HE among p/t especially
- **Alternative Providers: Specific Course Designation.** BIS issue new guidance and conditions for alternative providers of HE in the UK for 2013/14
- **School Funding Reform.** The DfE report on their latest consultation and outline some additional flexibilities for 2014/15
- **Disruptive technologies.** McKinsey draw up a list of 12 technologies, from 3D printing to cloud technology, which they argue could radically alter daily working and social lives
- **Access agreement and strategic participation.** HEFCE and OFFA report on their annual monitoring of how individual institutions are tackling widening participation in HE
- **Review of Quality of Marking in exams.** The first of a series of Reports from Ofqual sees assessment design as a key factor
- **Education Committee Report on 2012 GCSE English.** The Committee come up with 26 recommendations to ensure similar situations don't occur again
- **GCSE.** The DfE launch consultation on the specs for the first wave of new GCSEs
- **GCSE reform consultation.** Ofqual launch consultation on proposed assessment and grading arrangements for the initial batch of new GCSEs
- **A Critical Path. Securing the Future of HE in England.** The Commission concludes its review of the future of HE with a call for a student premium and the return of Polys
- **Securing Independent Careers Guidance.** DfE/BIS issue guidance for the college sector
- **Most able students.** Ofsted call for better monitoring and streaming as part of its Report on how some of the brightest pupils fare in state secondary schools

- **HE: The Fair Access Challenge.** The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission find access to top universities for many state school students still a challenge
- **Information Economy Strategy.** The Prime Minister unveils the latest sector strategy with a £31m fund to help kick start developments
- **Unseen children: access and achievement 20 years on.** Ofsted's latest study into the prospects for disadvantaged children includes a call up to National Service Teachers
- **Charting a Winning Course.** PA Consulting's fifth annual survey find university chiefs planning for a very different future
- **A legacy of learning.** LSIS reflects on its achievements in supporting the learning and skills sector over the last 3 years as it prepares to pass the baton on to a new Foundation
- **Full-time enrolment of 14-16 year olds in colleges.** DfE issue guidance for colleges wishing to take the plunge
- **Education at a Glance 2013.** The OECD offers its latest voluminous survey of education and skills trends across OECD and other countries
- **Business Plans.** DfE, BIS and other Depts publish their latest progress updates and business plans, 16 actions outstanding for BIS, 15 for DfE
- **Spending Round 2013.** The Chancellor lines up the budgets for 2015/2016
- **Investing in Britain's Future.** The Chief Secretary outlines the 'infrastructure' money available for roads, rail, schools, housing and broadband

Speeches of the month

- Ed Balls' 3 June British Economy speech outlines some tough new realities for the Party including a zero-based spending review for the first year of a new Labour Government
- David Cameron's 10 June Plan for Britain's Success Speech lists the economy, welfare reform and education change as the big 3 pillars of an aspirational society
- Michael Gove's 11 June Statement sets the machinery in motion for the reform of GCSEs
- Stephen Twigg's 17 June RSA speech tackles the issue of school system reform
- George Osborne's 26 June Spending Announcement spreads the load across the spending Depts for 2015/16

Quotes of the month

- *"The economy is coming out of intensive care and heading for the recovery room."* The Chancellor delivers a better prognosis for the economy
- *"Conduct great meetings in which you have the relevant people around the table all with an equal voice. Get the rational first then test the irrational."* Lord Browne on good decision making
- *"I wonder how many times over the last half a century some movement in technology has been hailed as the solution for low cost education."* PA Consulting surveys changes in HE
- *"They could provide a model of the very best practice that would be available to colleges."* Labour considers a return of CoVEs (centres of voc excellence)
- *"Teaching has, in some cases, been twisted into an exercise in passing on exam techniques, not a way of inspiring deep thinking."* Michael Gove makes the case for reforming GCSEs
- *"A mark is a human judgement of a candidate's work and is only ever an approximation of the candidate's true score."* Ofqual on the challenges of good marking

Word or phrase of the month

- *'Iron discipline.'* What Ed Balls wants from future Labour spending plans
- *'Poverty of expectation.'* What Sir Michael Wilshaw feels hovers over the education system
- *'Smart austerity.'* Makes belt-tightening feel better

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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 June 2013

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