

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

### **Steve Besley**

Head of Policy (UK and International)

#### *Pearson Think Tank*

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

*Policy Watches are intended to help colleagues keep up to date with national developments. Information is correct at the time of writing and is offered in good faith. No liability is accepted for decisions made on the basis of information given.*