

2012/11

30 Nov 2012

Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in November 2012

Main talking points

A big month for learning and skills with the CBI Conference, the AoC Conference and this year, the Skills Show following in quick succession and provoking a range of announcements. Not much quieter elsewhere with notable developments on performance tables, A levels and apprenticeships and Reports from the CBI, Ofsted, Ofqual, NAO and both Education Committees amongst others all helping to keep the lights burning

Key headlines from the month

- Primary Schools. 400 underperformers to be converted to Academy status by end of 2013
- Calculators. Banned for KS2 tests from 2014
- Performance Tables. The Dept publishes the KS4 list for 2015
- GCSE English. Raw grades only to be issued for Jan 2013 assessments
- EBacc. 22 academics sign an open letter expressing concern
- RE. Cross party MPs get together to stop the subject being marginalised
- Engineering Diploma. Royal Academy of Engineering work up new model
- English and maths. SFA confirm additional monies for adults and apprentices
- A levels. Jan resits to go from Sept 2013
- School Governors. Education Committee announce new Inquiry
- 16-19 VQs. Government to consult on criteria for performance table recognition
- College estate. Further 'renewal grant' money allocated
- FE Guild. Project team put together, consultation due Jan 2013
- Employer Ownership Pilots. Round 2 bids launched
- Earn or learn. Scheme proposals due early next year
- Work Programme. Latest data indicate target likely to be missed
- Graduate jobs. Futuretrack survey reports job market remaining challenging
- University status. 10 more Colleges await university nomenclature
- University access. HEFCE and OFFA prepare report for mid Jan
- University freedom. New group set up to defend the freedom of British universities
- Unemployment. Drops to 2.51m, 963,000 for 16-24 yr olds but p/t working up

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

- [GCSE English 2012](#). Ofqual offer a second and more detailed surmise on the issues afflicting this year's GCSE English
- [Governance and leadership of the DfE](#). The Education Committee reports on its inquiry into the running of the Dept and considers some of the impact of rapid change
- [Skills Survey 2012](#). The Chartered Institute of Insurers report on strengths and weaknesses in the skills supply chain to their industry
- [Financial Health of the HE sector](#). HE passes the HEFCE medical but it seems that much depends on the strength of future student recruitment cycles
- [BIS Committee Inquiry into Apprenticeships](#). The BIS Committee complete its 11 month Inquiry into issues around apprenticeships and come up with 32 recommendations
- [DfE Review Report](#). The Dept follows up its own internal review by proposing some important changes to the future size, structure and workings of the Dept
- [Tracking the decision making of high achieving HE applicants](#). BIS and the Sutton Trust identify the barriers facing particular groups of students
- [Analysis of the consultation on A level reform](#). Ofqual report on the 1,000 or so responses to its summer consultation on A level reform and announce some initial change to resits
- [Decoding learning](#). NESTA reflect on the promised land of digital education and see schools purchasing a lot of kit with little regard to how it can best be used
- [First Steps](#). The CBI turn their attention to schools and throw their weight behind a streamlined curriculum, a balance between skills and knowledge and testing at 18 not 16

- [Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot](#). BIS and the UKCES release the Prospectus for Round 2 bids following the successful approval of over 30 bids from Round 1
- [Annual Innovation Report](#). The latest Foresight Report highlights over 50 new and developing technologies that could help stimulate future economic growth
- [Managing the expansion of the Academies Programme](#). The NAO report on how the Dept is managing a rapid expansion of the Programme and the effect on Dept budgets
- [Regulating AO Training Events for Teachers](#). Ofqual follow up their initial report by launching a consultation on some new regulatory measures for 'exam' board teacher seminars
- [Consultation on Chartered Status for FE Institutions](#). BIS follow up the Lingfield Report by asking for views on what should constitute the criteria for chartered status
- [Choice and Competition in FE](#). The Institute of Government offer a history lesson on the various attempts at reforming FE
- [The Richard Review of Apprenticeships](#). The latest Apprenticeship Report proposes a stronger shift towards funded employer ownership of standards and delivery
- [Ofsted Annual Report](#). Ofsted's latest Annual Report sees 70% of providers performing well but concerns about provision in some parts of the country
- [Review of Qualifications for 14-19 yr olds in Wales](#). The Welsh Government go for a single Qual Body but keep GCSEs, A levels and voc quals as part of a strengthened Welsh Bacc

Speeches of the month

- Elizabeth Truss's 9 November [speech](#) sets out how the Government is setting about raising maths standards such as removing the use of a calculator in KS2 tests
- Michael Gove's 9 November [speech](#) offers a stout defence of external exams and tests as helping ensure equal treatment and social justice
- Glenys Stacey's 14 November [speech](#) considers some of the challenges faced by the regulator when confronted by significant reform of the qualification system
- Vince Cable's 19 November CBI [speech](#) outlines how the Government is trying to encourage growth through its long-term Industrial Strategy
- Matthew Hancock's 21 November AoC [speech](#) brings some new funding but also a number of reforms to: apprenticeships; traineeships; qualifications; and standards

Quotes of the month

- *"It is probably neither as good as the zigs suggest nor as bad as the zags imply."* The Governor of the Bank of England on the uncertain state of the economy
- *We're not going to write great books about Joseph Conrad by getting them out sooner."* The Council for the Defence of British Universities on the pressures of market forces in HE
- *"It is complicated and off putting to an employer to have to undertake paperwork gymnastics to pigeon hole their system into a pre-defined set of curricular approaches."* Doug Richard gets the message across about freeing up the apprenticeship system
- *"Education England is not yet on the medal podium but is picking up pace."* The Chief Inspector reflects on the state of English education in his Annual Report
- *"I am as it happens a huge fan of teacher assessment, properly designed and administered but teacher assessment alone cannot bring the benefits proper external assessment can secure."* Michael Gove makes the case for external tests and exams

Word or phrase of the month

- *'RAPID.'* Recommend, Agree, Perform, Input or Decide: a planning model adopted by the DfE
- *'Sandpit.'* Space away from the frontline to be creative; apparently another planning term

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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 Nov2012

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