

2013/11

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

Main talking points

November is traditionally FE and skills month with the Skills Show and the annual Colleges' Conference now established features. This year added spice came in the form of the Review into Adult Vocational Qualifications which was published at the start of the month, an announcement about the FE Commissioner and publication of a further Report from Labour's Skills Taskforce. Elsewhere this month, consultation closed on 16-19 accountability, thoughts emerged about middle tier management of the school system and worries grew about HE funding.

Key headlines from the month

- GCSE. DfE and Ofqual publish latest specs and design features
- Technology. EEF money helps school test out impact of new technology
- Languages. British Council Report laments current deficiencies
- Academies. Education Committee announces new inquiry
- School system. DfE muse creation of new regional tier
- 16-19 accountability. Consultation closes on recent proposals
- Careers. AoC, CBI and Skills Commission add to condemnation of current position
- Youth unemployment. Number of reports published as policy attention grows
- City deals. Core cities get more money to help with youth unemployment
- IT. Labour announces new Digital Skills Taskforce to report before election
- Apprenticeships. The think tank Demos become the latest to lead an inquiry
- FE Performance. New Commissioner announced
- FE system. Labour propose new licensed college system with fully qualified staff
- Adult voc quals. New employer designed principles proposed
- Graduates. More employed but in non-grad jobs
- MOOCs. London University's first online courses show high take up, low completion

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

- **The Move to Improve.** The Skills Commission examines intervention and improvement models and comes up with ten recommendations for FE
- **Education and Training Statistics for the UK: 2013.** The latest stats cover schools, colleges, quals and expenditure
- **Creating Excellence in College Governance.** The AoC identifies some of the barriers and sets out the five key themes of good governance
- **School Partnerships and Cooperation.** The Education Committee calls for Ofsted to be able to inspect school chains as part of its inquiry into school partnerships
- **Adult Vocational Qualifications Review.** Nigel Whitehead's review for UKCES comes up with a new set of employer derived principles for the design and development of adult VQs
- **The Outlook for Higher Education Spending.** The Institute for Fiscal Studies examines five possible scenarios where resource cuts could range from 7.9% at best to 24.7% at worst
- **The Funding Challenge for Universities.** Universities UK draws on the IFS research to build a case for additional capital expenditure and changes to the loans system
- **A Curriculum for Life.** The Youth Select Committee publishes its report on the curriculum for young people calling for greater attention to be given to PSHE
- **Family background and access to high status universities.** Recent research concludes that children from professional parents are 3x more likely to enter a 'high status' uni than those from working class parents
- **States of Uncertainty.** The think tank IPPR looks to Europe to see if any lessons can be learned about how to tackle youth unemployment
- **Pupils missing out on education.** Ofsted finds that only a third of local authorities are monitoring what's happening to children not provided for in full time education

- **Languages for the future.** The British Council argue that Spanish, Arabic, French and Mandarin Chinese head the most valuable languages and we're not very good at them
- **First Steps: A new approach for our schools.** The CBI awards the government a B/C grade for progress made over the year in its (the CBI's) five key reform areas
- **Maintaining curiosity.** Ofsted reports on its survey into science education in schools and concludes that hands-on wherever possible helps maintain curiosity
- **One System, Many Pathways.** The Skills Commission publishes the latest report into 14-19 provision and lists five guiding principles for reform
- **No more NEETs.** The think tank IPPR calls for a new youth guarantee coupled with a youth allowance as a way of tackling the NEETs issue
- **Transforming further education.** The 2nd report from Labour's Skills Taskforce calls for qualified staff and licensed providers as part of its new vision for a high-quality system

Speeches of the month

- David Cameron's 4 November CBI speech puts education reform as the second in his list of five things that will help the recovery of the economy
- David Laws' 7 November Teaching Leaders speech hails the growing role of high-quality teaching leadership
- Matthew Hancock's 14 November Skills Show speech points to English and maths, qualification reform and market responsiveness as key reforms for the skills sector
- Elizabeth Truss' 15 November ASCL/Microsoft speech spells out the changes happening to the curriculum for computing/ICT
- Matthew Hancock's 19 November AoC speech sets out the same TASQ (Traineeships, Apprenticeships, Standards and Quality) priorities for the sector as before
- Tristram Hunt's 21 November AoC speech sketches out Labour's vision for FE built around new Institutes of Technical Education with fully qualified staff
- Michael Gove's 22 November Mayor of London's education conference speech borrows the Obama line of school reform being the civil rights struggle of our time

Quotes of the month

- *"Our education system should help children out of the circumstances in which they were born, not lock them into the circumstances in which they were born."* John Major highlights the importance of education in improving social mobility in Britain today
- *"I want them to treat academic and vocational education on exactly the same footing."* Nick Clegg on what he wants for his children
- *"It'll come down to hundreds of recognisable qualifications across the entire landscape as opposed to thousands."* Nigel Whitehead identifies the impact of his review of adult VQs
- *"This is a staggeringly complex sector."* Tristram Hunt on getting to grips with FE
- *"We must not be sniffy about them."* The President of the Girls Schools Association on apprenticeships
- *"I hope we'll have the full, hearty backing of industry in being very radical about education."* David Cameron calls for employer support for his government's education reforms
- *"In particular we seem to be stuck in a cycle of endless exam reform which does little to address the underlying issues we identified."* The CBI on the government's education reforms

Word or phrase of the month

- *'Clickbait.'* Addicted to click-on technology
- *'Gangbusting.'* How an economist described the UK economy at present

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Policy Tracker on what happened in November 2013

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