

2013/10

30 October 2013

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

Main talking points

It's been a bad month for trees, not just because of the storms but also because of the huge number of reports published this month covering A levels, apprenticeships, core maths, secondary school accountability, HE regulation and university economic activity. Elsewhere, Free Schools, social mobility and adult skills have also been in the eye of various storms. With reports on GCSE, adult VQs and inspections to come, things aren't likely to calm down for a while.

Key headlines from the month

- Phonics test. DfE to withhold pass mark in future until tests completed
- Reporting pupil progress. NAHT set up Commission to establish how best to do it
- Accountability. DfE outline secondary school model for 2016
- A levels. DfE and Ofqual launch further round of consultations
- Maths. New qualification to be developed for beyond GCSE
- Teaching bursaries. More money added particularly for core subjects
- UTCs. New wing of Career Colleges announced
- Apprenticeships. Trailblazers lined up to test out new implementation plan
- Apprenticeships. Disturbing figures emerge about paying below the odds
- Traineeships. More money added for 19+ recruits
- Work experience. DfE provide further guidance for use in 16-19 Study Programmes
- Youth unemployment. Slightly (0.1%) up again in June-August figures
- Education and Training Foundation. Gains funding and new boss
- Adult skills. First major survey by OECD reveals some worrying gaps
- Adult literacy/numeracy. MPs debate in wake of OECD report
- HE. The OFT calls for info on how choice is exercised
- Part-time HE. Latest report seeks to reverse downward trend

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

- **The impact on demand of the Government's reforms of HE.** HEPI updates its earlier survey to include some worrying trends on part-time numbers
- **Evaluation of the Work Experience Placement Trials.** BIS reports back on the year-long college trials of different work experience models for young people
- **SEN Code of Practice, draft regulations.** The Government consults on the new draft regulations and proposed transition arrangements
- **Religious education: realising the potential.** Ofsted concludes that better guidance is needed before this can happen
- **Manifesto for further education and skills.** The 157 Group of Colleges calls for a stable policy landscape amongst its five manifesto requests
- **Report from the external panel on core maths.** The Advisory Committee drafts guidelines for the new 'core' maths qual intended to encourage more 16+ yr olds to continue with it
- **OECD Skills Outlook 2013.** The OECD publish the first results from their extensive survey of adult skills and highlight some glaring gulfs not just between but within countries
- **Regulating Higher education.** The Higher Ed Commission calls for a stronger, central body to be able to protect student interests as part of its 13 recommendations
- **Guide to funding and student number control 2013/14.** HEFCE explains how it all works in simple, definitive terms
- **Apprenticeship Pay Survey 2012.** BIS research points to a median gross hourly pay rate for apprentices in England of £6.09 but highlights considerable underpayment as well
- **Evaluation of the FE reform plan.** BIS reports on what impact the New Challenges, New Chances reform plan has had on FE and finds some providers more touched than others
- **Reforming the accountability system for secondary schools.** The Government confirms a shift from 5 A*-C to Progress and Attainment 8

- **Sir Andrew Witty's Review of Universities and Growth.** The review pushes for economic growth activity to become the third leg of university life alongside research and education
- **The power of part-time.** Universities UK conclude its initial report into the decline in part-time uptake and look for ways to raise the profile
- **Real Apprenticeships.** The Sutton Trust add their voice to the apprenticeship debate with a commissioned report calling for 3-year apprenticeships to become increasingly the norm
- **Social Mobility and child poverty in Great Britain.** The Commission finds middle/low income families squeezed and children in deprived areas being left behind
- **Family Learning Works.** NIACE's latest Inquiry report explains how and why it should
- **Robbins Revisited.** David Willetts reviews the state of higher education 50 years after the seminal Robbins report helped instigate the mass expansion of the sector
- **Trends in young participation in HE.** Mostly pre fee rise but interesting info from HEFCE
- **Consultation on new subject and assessment arrangements.** The DfE and Ofqual seek views on the subject content and assessment arrangements for the new A and AS levels
- **The Future of Apprenticeships in England.** The Government sets out how it intends to implement the new, post-Richard, apprenticeship system

Speeches of the month

- Michael Gove's 1 October Conference speech exalts his Dept's 'visionary' reforms for tackling the culture of low expectations
- David Cameron's 2 October Conference speech sets new ambitions on eradicating illiteracy and dumbing down, raising apprenticeship opportunities and learning or earning until age 25
- Matthew Hancock's 15 October Edge speech sketches out a new vision for colleges as social enterprises led by an elite tier
- Elizabeth Truss's 17 October School Leaders Summit speech expands on the Government's current reforms and implies there's plenty more where they came from
- Alan Milburn's 17 October Social Mobility Report launch suggests that things remain pretty difficult for a lot of children whose families are trapped on low wages and high living costs
- Nick Clegg's 24 October 'education' speech raises the temperature with a call for qualified teachers for all schools and a Champions League of Head Teachers for some

Quotes of the month

- *"A land of opportunity means educating our children and I mean all our children."* The Prime Minister on what his land of opportunity means for children
- *"Transient poverty, growing insecurity and stalling mobility are far more widespread than politicians, employers and educators have so far recognised."* The Social Mobility report on the realities for many
- *"Your employer will support your training and pay you at least the hourly national Minimum Wage."* The Skills Minister tells new apprentices what to expect
- *"We are midway through our reforms."* The Parliamentary Under Secretary digs in for the long haul
- *"If you want to set up a Free School when we are in Government we will be on your side."* The new Shadow Education Secretary tries to set the record straight
- *"So, yes I support free schools and academies but not with exemptions from minimum standards."* The Deputy PM ads another tune

Word or phrase of the month

- *'Thicket of complexity.'* How Sir Andrew Witty described the HE funding regime
- *'Englicious.'* Resource site to help teenagers grapple with English grammar

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Policy Tracker on what happened in October 2013

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